

Royalton Township Regular Board Meeting Minutes
6052 Royalton Road, Braham, MN 55006
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25 February 2025
Approved

7:30 p.m., 25 February 2025, Chair Jeff Schlaeger called the Royalton Township regular board meeting to order, with Supervisor Pete Belland, Treasurer Jenessa Saumer, and Clerk Duane Swanson present, and Supervisor John Graham absent. Septic Administrator Amy Thompson, Zoning Administrator John Kemen, Deputy Clerk Andrea Anderson, and Road Superintendent Dan Saumer, along with members of the planning commission and the public attended. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Supervisor Belland moved, Chair Schlaeger seconded, to approve the agenda as presented, with the addition of rental issue, children's highchairs, and brush cutting. The motion carried unanimously.

Supervisor Belland moved, Chair Schlaeger seconded, to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting of 28 January 2025 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer Saumer read her report, noting that as of 1 January 2025, the township had a beginning balance of \$333,606.14 in the treasury. Deposits were \$5,655.98, disbursements were \$7,356.63, leaving an ending bank balance on 31 January of \$334,396.53. Outstanding checks were \$2,491.04 and a certificate of deposit in the amount of \$50,000 was in place, leaving a spendable balance of \$281,905.49. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approve the report. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Schlaeger called for discussion of checks #11451-11476 in the amount of \$9,057.00. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approve payment of the checks as presented. The motion carried unanimously with Chair Schlaeger and Supervisor Belland voting "Aye."

Clerk Swanson explained that Federated Coops' bills arrive too late in the month for payments to be approved at the regular board meeting and still get to the company before the due date, thus incurring late charges. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to authorize Treasurer Saumer to establish an account permitting electronic payments. The motion carried unanimously.

Guests:

Mike Wickeham was present to request permission to hold Braham firearm safety training at the town hall. He noted that they could no longer meet at the school, that many of the students use this training for their trap-shooting competition at school, and that others use it for hunting and safety. The Department of Natural Resources provides insurance for these classes, which usually last from 6:00 to 8:30 in the evening. He requested use of the town hall for meetings on 28 April and 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 12 May 2025. All licensed instructors volunteer their time. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approve the request of Mr. Wickeham to use the town hall and to waive the rental and damage deposit costs, which is customary practice for resident non-profits. The motion carried unanimously.

Andy Schreder, the town's building official, representing Rum River Construction Consultants (RRCC), addressed the board, noting his 20 years in building inspections, the last eight years as owner of RRCC. He referenced his recent conversation with Chair Schlaeger, which led to his presence at the meeting. He noted the discussion at the planning commission about reassessing the town's adoption of the state building code. He reiterated that the code sets minimum standards for safety and that the building official conducts plan reviews and inspections. Without these inspections, which lead to granting a certificate of occupancy, homeowners may find it difficult to access certain mortgages or insurance. He noted that the board retains direct control of setting fees, that RRCC frequently uses remote virtual inspections to reduce costs, and that RRCC has been reviewing policy of setting maximum fees for certain accessory and remodeling projects for which work is done by

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homeowners. He stressed his availability for continuing discussion. Chair Schlaeger thanked Mr. Schreder for his presentation.

Planning Commission recommendations:

The planning commission discussed and approved the proposed land split and boundary adjustment for Joseph Pates, PID 290136003 (12014 Brunswick Road). Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approve the request, based on the certificate of survey by Straightline Surveying, Inc., dated 3 February 2025, contingent upon receipt of a quit-claim deed documenting the boundary adjustment needed to make the "Remaining Tract" and "Tract B" both meet the 10-acre minimum lot size, and to authorize the clerk to report said approval to Pine County. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approve the planning commission's recommended amendment to section 5 of the Royalton Township Code of Ordinances defining recreational camping vehicle and to approve the Permit Application Disclosure that would accompany any application for a conditional/interim use application to operate a campground. The recommended language had been reviewed by town legal counsel. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approve the planning commission's recommended amendment to section 5 of the Royalton Township Code of Ordinances defining "Short Term Rental" and to add recommended language to section 22 of the Royalton Township Code of Ordinances regulating short term rentals via an Interim Use Permit. The recommended language had been reviewed by town legal counsel. The motion carried unanimously.

Planning Commission Chair Jessica Johnson noted that a proposed cannabis ordinance remained with town legal counsel for recommendations. She requested permission to hold two working meetings on this issue, assuming that language was received from counsel. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to set working meetings for Monday, 3 March, and Monday, 10 March 2025. The motion carried unanimously.

Planning Commission Chair Johnson requested approval of language amending Ordinance 008-2010 removing Royalton Township's adoption of the state building code and establishing procedures for consideration of site permit applications. Town legal counsel had been involved in the wording of these changes. Board discussion involved around the impact of these changes on construction within the township and the difficulties of employing licensed building officials. By consensus, the board decided on the need for additional discussion before proceeding with these recommendations.

Old Business:

Septic issues: No updates were available on the alleged dumping of sewage at PID 295231000 (1995 Royal Heights Lane), although Supervisor Belland noted that it appeared some clean-up activity may have started.

Zoning issues: Regarding PID 295137000 (5214 Royal Woods Road), Clerk Swanson noted that a pre-trial hearing had been held on 19 February, with the judge granting a continuance until 15 May to address zoning violations. The alleged zoning violations at PID 290043000 (8011 Cabin Drive) remain with the planning commission.

Road issues: Clerk Swanson introduced the draft call for gravel quotes. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to authorize the clerk to call for quotes for "for approximately 4,000 cubic yards to up to 5,300 cubic yards," with quotes and accompanying documentation to be submitted by 7:00 p.m., 25 March 2025. The motion carried unanimously.

Campus building issues: Treasurer Saumer reported no further word on a proposed garbage hauler. There were no updates on technology issues from Travis Kemen or on the website domain change. Road Superintendent Saumer updated the board on his continuing efforts to reglue the hall floor carpet tiles.

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Clerk Swanson updated the board on election matters and the progress of absentee balloting. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to endorse the recommendation of Elisa Mill as an election and ballot board judge, replacing Janet Hawkinson. The motion carried unanimously.

By consensus, the board decided not to participate in the Minnesota Department of Administration's cooperative purchasing program, considering the town's purchases are relatively few. This issue will be removed from the agenda.

Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approve up to four officers to attend the Minnesota Association of Township's spring short course in Duluth on 4 April. The motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

The board discussed the proposed levy for 2026 that would be submitted to the annual meeting. Noting the serious deficit in the fire fund and the significant inflation in the last 16 years since the levy was raised, Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to propose the following levy for 2026: General fund, \$104,000 (remains the same); road and bridge fund, \$70,000 (remains the same); fire fund, \$46,000 (raised from \$25,000); and equipment fund, \$20,000 (remains the same), for a total of \$240,000 (up from \$219,000). The motion carried unanimously.

Clerk Swanson introduced the proposed contract with the Pine County assessor's office to conduct assessment services for the next three years at a cost of \$5.00, \$4.00, and \$3.00 per parcel for assessment years 2026, 2027, and 2028, respectively. Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to approve and sign the proposed contract. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Schlaeger noted the letter from the Braham fire chief about its attempt to bond for equipment replacement costs and the materials relating to the proposed southern Pine County fire district in members' packets.

Clerk Swanson noted that he has received a request for a three-day rental of the town hall. By consensus, the board approved this request contingent upon receiving the standard rental fee for each of the three days plus a onetime damage deposit fee of \$200.

The board received suggestions of the need for highchairs and/or booster seats for use during rental events. Several offers of donations were heard.

The board, by consensus, instructed Road Superintendent Saumer to acquire prices for a two-week rental of a brush cutter for this summer.

Public Forum:

Patrice DeGray noted her support for the levy increase recommendation and called for investigations of the Braham and Pine City fire departments due to their increasing costs compared to that of Rush City.

Correspondence:

Chair Schlaeger noted the very complete report of the Rush City fire department for 2024 and the meeting of the Pine County Township Officers Association on 29 March 2025.

FYI:

Chair Schlaeger reported that the report of January building permits had been sent to the US census bureau and a response had been sent to the Minnesota state auditor's survey regarding audits.

The next regular meeting of the town board will be at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, 25 March 2025.

At 8:35, the board concluded its regular business and met as the statutorily required board of audit to review the 2024 financial records of the clerk and treasurer. Because the supervisors had verified claims and receipts at

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each monthly meeting only a sampling of documents was checked during the audit. Receipt numbers 761918, 761935, and 761948 were selected and verified to be accurate. Check numbers 11050, 111076, and 11121 were selected and verified to be accurate (additional checks were also verified but not recorded by number in the record). Supervisors reviewed the cash basis accounting report, statement of investment (\$50,000), and statement of indebtedness (none). The clerk's and treasurer's statements of receipts and disbursements were reviewed and found to match each other. Both supervisors in attendance signed the board of audit report.

At 8:55 p.m., Chair Schlaeger moved, Supervisor Belland seconded, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,




Duane P. Swanson, Clerk


Jeff Schlaeger, Chair/Supervisor

John Graham, Vice Chair/Supervisor


Pete Belland, Supervisor


Jenessa M. Saumer, Treasurer

