

## **Township of Breitung Regular Board Meeting 07-18-24 at 6:00 PM. In Person Meeting at the Breitung Community Center**

### **Present In Person:**

**Board Members:** Chairman Tim Tomsich, Supervisor Matt Tuchel, Supervisor Erin Peitso, Clerk Amber Zak

**Public:** Tom Gorsma, John Jamnick, Terry Carlson (The Tower News), Jodi Summit (The Timberjay), Jim Battin, Trudy Hendricks, Mike Korpi, Karen Wellander, Rick Newton, Kalee Bjorgo (last four left at 6:43 PM)

Call to Order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Tim Tomsich

### **Acceptance of Agenda**

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to accept the agenda as presented

2<sup>nd</sup> by Supervisor Peitso

Motion Passed 3-0

### **Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to approve the minutes of the 06/18/24 Regular Board Meeting as presented

2<sup>nd</sup> by Supervisor Peitso

Motion passed 3-0

### **Approval of Treasurers Report**

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to approve the June 2024 Treasurers Report as presented

2<sup>nd</sup> by Supervisor Peitso

Motion passed 3-0

### **Correspondence**

- Tower-Soudan Historical Society – Thank you
- IRRR Meeting Recap – Breitung Township highlighted, page 4
- St. Louis County – Cannabis Business Moratorium
- Ely Area Community Foundation

Correspondence so noted.

### **Public Input**

Several Breitung Township residents were in attendance to discuss flood impacts on their homes and to issue complaints regarding ATVs in town:

Karen Wellander: Experienced sewage back up into her home during the June 18<sup>th</sup> flood, questioning what could be done to help in the future, requested the Breitung Township do something, wondered if there could be some sort of compensation.

Kalee Bjorgo: Experienced sewage back up into her home during the June 18<sup>th</sup> flood, concerned it will happen again. Indicated that insurance coverage available was very poor, wondered if there was anything available through the county.

Rick Newton: Stated that since this same thing had happened before (1999), there was precedence and something should have been done the first time, was interested in compensation to help with repairs as it was not only an aesthetic issue, it was also a health issue. Questioned whether there could be some sort of diverter system.

Chairman Tomsich: Any changes go through the Water & Sewer Commission first, then it would come to Breitung Township board. Suggested that backflow preventers could potentially be installed, could discuss with an engineer on how to fix, indicated that renovations on South Street were expected in the next 5 – 10 years at which time changes could be made to the way the laterals are set. Noted that residents had never been compensated before for damages and was not aware of any compensation given by the water commission previously. Mentioned that the clerk would be meeting with FEMA to see what is reimbursable, but was under the impression that the claims would be for town infrastructure, not private structures.

Supervisor Tuchel: The issue is due to the elevation of the basement in relation to the elevation of the lift station. The ownership of the sewer, lift station, etc. is that of the Wastewater Board. An Equalization Basin could be a potential fix but it would be a \$1M job.

Mike Korpi: Raised the issue of ATVs and motorcycles being a problem on South Street and the bike trail; requested that enforcement be taken in the form of arrests, tickets, etc. – something more than a warning. Further complained about lack of police presence and indicated that it was a major safety issue as well as he had seen young children riding without helmets.

Jim Battin: Encouraged Mike to call 911 when the incident was occurring and indicated that he could remain anonymous by state law; cameras are not admissible by state law, therefore a phone video would not be considered evidence. Stated that adults are allowed to drive ATVs on county roads, not kids. Stated that offenders should not be physically confronted, 911 should be called each time there is an incident.

Trudy Hendricks: Questioned whether there would be any way to have an additional full-time officer hired.

Chairman Tomsich: Hiring an additional full-time officer would be extremely costly, could discuss the option with the City of Tower to see if they are seeing the same needs. The DNR has been working with our enforcement officers to curb ATV issues.

Supervisor Tuchel: If there were enough people requesting additional law enforcement, it would be something that could be considered.

## Reports

- Police – Attached
- Fire – Attached
- Road and Bridge – Attached, Tom Gorsma indicated a very busy June and July, as per usual. Noted that they were well under way with the process of checking for lead water lines and that was keeping their crew busy
- Recreation – None
- Wastewater Board – Tuchel noted that they had experienced a well fail, stated that the water plant project has not begun
- Ambulance Commission – Tuchel stated they would be meeting on 7/29/24, would be taking a look at the Ely EMS Study
- Housing – Attached

Reports so noted.

## Old Business:

### Animal Ordinance – 91-04A

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to pass Ordinance 91-04A, Amendment to Ordinance 91-04 as present  
2<sup>nd</sup> by Supervisor Peitso  
Motion Passed 3-0

### Stuntz Bay Access Road

Supervisor Tuchel has been in contact with Mesabi Bituminous who had stated they would commit to keeping the road open the entire length of construction, however there would be extensive delays at times; the road would be kept passable at night as well. At this time, there was no start date, but it would now likely be in September.

### 2024 Infrastructure – IRRR

Chairman Tomsich stated that they had submitted the pre-application without the inclusion of broadband. Of the project, approximately \$10.7M is funded with an additional \$700K remaining; the board would be asking the IRRRB for the max grant leaving the township to fund the remaining approximate total of \$400k. More information to come on the status of the LRIP.

### Blight

Chairman Tomsich updated the board that blight letters had been sent, some properties were needing 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> visits, any additional blight issues should be brought to Chief Reing's attention.

### 31 Jasper Street – Handicap Parking Request

Supervisor Tuchel indicated the issue had been resolved and no action would need to be taken on this request

### Ordinance Number 90-03A – Water & Sewer

Chairman Tomsich stated the ordinance was still under review by the Water Commission at this time.

**New Business:**

Pay Bills as Presented

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to Pay Bills as Presented

2<sup>nd</sup> by Supervisor Peitso

Motion Passed 3-0

Request to be heard: Debra Lekatz

Resident was not in attendance, Tom Gorsma agreed to reach out to her to discuss driveway issues

IRRRB Culture & Tourism Grant

Chairman Tomsich indicated that the grant cycle would be opening back up and that the recreation committee should consider what projects to pursue. Options discussed included the baseball field structure improvements, paving of the rink and potential uses, playground equipment for younger children. For any of these items, cost estimates would be necessary

Resolution #2024-20

Chairman Tomsich discussed the IRRRB FY25 Regional Trails Grant Program; he indicated that the township had received a \$20K grant from the Blandin Foundation to get the Hoodoo Point Loop Trail Project started and stated there was an approximate \$43K still needed for planning and reviews. A pre-app to the IRRRB had been submitted and with the applications opened by the IRRRB, a resolution would be needed. If funds were received, there would be a remaining balance of approximately \$2K to be covered 50/50 by Breitung and Tower.

Motion by Supervisor Peitso to pass Resolution #2024-20

2<sup>nd</sup> by Supervisor Tuchel

Motion Passed 3-0

Wastewater Capacity Logging

Supervisor Tuchel discussed a logging project suggested by the City of Tower; to obtain core samples via drill rig, logging would need to be performed in the area that is being considered for the rapid filtration system. The wastewater board was in agreement to the logging, it would be an approximate 10 acres of Breitung's land adjacent to the township gravel pit with no modification to the gravel pit, the DNR would be administering the logging contracts. Further, although small, it would be revenue positive to Breitung. Tom Gorsma stated a concern for the newly installed bike trail; Chairman Tomsich agreed that it would be an issue that would need to be discussed with the logger.

Motion by Chairman Tomsich to approve logging as outlined on map provided

2<sup>nd</sup> by Supervisor Peitso

Motion Passed 2-0, Supervisor Tuchel abstaining due to conflict of interest

2022 Infrastructure Improvements

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to pay \$81,050.41 to Mesabi Bituminous for Project No. 22-003 as recommended by JPJ Engineering

2<sup>nd</sup> by Supervisor Peitso

Motion Passed 3-0

McKinley Park

Supervisor Peitso provided an update on several concerns happening at the park:

- During the off-season, there is no phone line to get ahold of McKinley Park management for guests, is there a way call forwarding could be set up, or a message available to callers for the off-season months?
- Shower coin receptacles had recently been broken into several times. Tom Gorsma was working on making them more secure. Installing cameras outside of the building was considered, increased police presence also a possibility.

**Next Regular Board Meeting**

Thursday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 6:00 PM at the Breitung Community Center

**Continuation of Annual Meeting**

Thursday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 7:00 PM at the Breitung Community Center

**Adjourn**

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 PM

2<sup>nd</sup> by Supervisor Peitso

Motion passed 3-0



Respectfully Submitted

Amber Zak

Clerk, Breitung Township