

Township of Breitung Regular Board Meeting 08-15-24 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, Treasurer Jorgine Gornick

Public: Tom Gorsma, Dan Reing, John Jamnick, Terry Carlson (The Tower News), Jen Shuster-Dahlin (The Tower News), Jodi Summit (The Timberjay), Jim Battin, Trudy Hendricks, Dianna Sundahl and Terry Sundahl (arrived at 6:51 PM), Karen Wellander, Rick Newton, Kalee Bjorgo (last three left at 6:35 PM)

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

Acceptance of Agenda

Motion by Supervisor Peitso to accept the agenda as presented

2nd by Supervisor Tuchel

Motion Passed 3-0

Approval of Minutes and Treasurer's Report

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to approve the minutes of the 07/18/24 Regular Board Meeting as presented and the July 2024 Treasurer's Report as presented

2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion passed 3-0

Correspondence

- None

Public Input

None

Reports

- Police – Attached, Chief Reing commented that there had been continued instances of speeding as well as minors out past curfew, which he had addressed. Audience member Rick Newton commented his appreciation for extended patrolling and that there had been less issues with minors in the area.
- Fire – Attached
- Road and Bridge – Attached, Maintenance Supervisor Gorsma commented that the work on flood damaged areas continues and that the sewer laterals on Church Street had been completed.
- Recreation – None
- Wastewater Board – Supervisor Tuchel discussed updates on the Water Treatment Facility, noting that the old buildings had been removed, wells were to be capped, and that the logging work on Breitung Township property was nearly complete. The next step on the Rapid Filtration Bed project would be to work with the engineer and driller to choose points for drilling samples.

- Ambulance Commission – Supervisor Tuchel discussed a meeting held with the Ely Hospital CEO regarding the option to form a combined ambulance service with Ely, Tower-Soudan, and Babbit under the umbrella of the Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital. The positives of a move like this would include higher levels of care, training, and leadership. He noted that the presentation did not include any dollar amounts or staffing options, two major points that would need to be addressed in order to get the communities to sign on to such an endeavor. The next meeting for the ambulance commission would be on August 26, 2024. Additionally, he mentioned that the new ambulance should be here in the next week or two.
- Housing – Attached

Reports so noted.

Old Business:

2024 Infrastructure – IRRR

The Thompson Farm Road, Center Street, and Echo Point project was discussed; Chairman Tomsich noted that the IRRR Pre-Application had been approved and that the Township was now able to make the final application for grant funding, due September 30th. It was requested that JPJ review the initial cost estimate to be sure it was accurate given rising material and labors costs and it was confirmed that the project also included Swamp Road (adjacent to Echo Point Road). Additionally, it was noted that Breitung now holds contract with CDBG for the work on Center Street and Chairman Tomsich requested that JPJ survey the project and get it ready for bid. A request for a letter of support had been sent to Fortune Bay, and the project is currently awaiting fund commitment letters from the MN-DNR and the Prospector ATV Club. It was noted that a resolution would need to be passed at the September meeting to make the full application

2024 Culture & Tourism - IRRR

Supervisor Peitso requested a cost estimate from JPJ for updates to the dugouts and crow's nest. Once we have the estimate, we would be able to consider making application for the grant.

Blight

Chief Reing noted that there had been some improvements and that more and more had been getting done. He would continue to monitor known blight sites and contact property owners as necessary.

Ordinance Number 90-03A – Water & Sewer

Continuing agenda item – ordinance still under review by the water commission.

Flood

Chairman Tomsich noted that Breitung Township is on the books with FEMA and that we are currently in waiting mode to be contacted by FEMA directly for infrastructure repairs/improvements. Clerk Zak noted St Louis County had opened a Crisis Management Center for residents affected by the flooding. Chairman Tomsich discussed the Water Commission providing interest-free loans up to \$5,000 for flood damages. Audience member Rick Newton questioned whether anything was being done to deter this from happening again should the area receive similar weather in the future. Chairman Tomsich noted that the Township had been making slow progress by addressing and improving sewer laterals. Supervisor Tuchel took the opportunity to explain that in the past 25 years the Township has invested millions of dollars to improve their wastewater infrastructure and that the rainfall that occurred this year was even more significant than what was had in 1999; it took a lot more rain this time to do the same damage that was done last time, had the improvements not been made, the damages could have been far worse.

McKinley Park

Supervisor Peitso reported that there had been an additional theft of coins from the shower, a camera had been purchased and was in the process of being installed outside the store. Campground managers had requested to have a way to have guests get ahold of them in the off season, it was determined that the phone line would be kept on throughout the off-season so messages could be left.

New Business:

Pay Bills as Presented

Motion by Supervisor Tichel to Pay Bills as Presented

2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion Passed 3-0

Police Clerical Support Request

Chief Reing provided a letter of request accompanied by a job description to hire clerical support for his office. Due to increasing need for paperwork, his time spent in the office was limiting his time spent in the field; he estimated that he would need someone to work roughly 4 hours/week. Questions from board members included whether the position would need to be a union employee, whether a portion of the money should be requested from the City of Tower, research should be done on pay. Chief Reing agreed to look further into the matter.

Police Pursuit Model Policy

Chief Reing presented an updated Police Pursuit Model Policy, which was provided by the Post Board. The Post Board provides the minimum regulations, police department will not deviate from their policies.

Motion made by Supervisor Tichel to keep all Breitung Police Department policies in compliance with post board policies now and in future updates.

2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion passed 3-0

2025 Levy Discussion

Chairman Tomsich discussed that the June 2024 flood showed us how vulnerable the Township of Breitung is to natural disasters, he recommended that the board present a levy increase of \$50,00.00, breakdown as follows:

\$5,000 to General Fund – Liability & Worker’s Compensation Insurance

\$5,000 to Road & Bridge – Medical insurance, benefits & wages

\$40,000 to Road & Bridge – Road maintenance & snow removal

The increase would result in a 7.25% raise in levy, Chairman Tomsich indicated that this would help to improve roads and mitigate future issues. Supervisor Tichel raised concern about the high percentage increase, sharing that he felt residents could be unhappy about it.

Motion made by Supervisor Tichel to recommend \$50,000 levy increase per parameters above

2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion passed 3-0

Continuation of Annual Meeting

Thursday, August 15th, 2024 at 7:00 PM at the Breitung Community Center

Next Regular Board Meeting

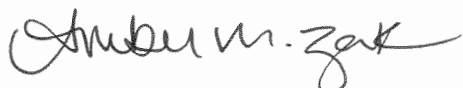
Thursday, September 19th, 2024 at 6:00 PM at the Breitung Community Center

Adjourn

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 PM

2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion passed 3-0

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amber M. Zak". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a long, sweeping underline.

Respectfully Submitted

Amber Zak

Clerk, Breitung Township