

**Breitung Township**  
**Regular Board Meeting 01-20-2026, 6:00 PM**  
**In Person Meeting at the Timothy Tomsich Community Center**  
**33 First Avenue, Soudan MN 55782**

**Present In Person:**

**Board Members:** Chairman Matthew Tuchel, Supervisor Erin Peitso, Supervisor Stephen Tekautz, Clerk Amber Zak, Treasurer Teresa Dolinar

**Public:** Police Chief Daniel Reing (Arrived at 6:02 PM), John Jamnick (JPJ Engineering)

Call to Order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Tuchel

Pledge of Allegiance

**Acceptance of Agenda**

Motion by Supervisor Tekautz to accept the agenda as presented

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

Motion Passed 3-0

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Supervisor Peitso to approve the minutes of the 12-16-2025 Regular Board Meeting as presented

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

Motion passed 3-0

**Approval of Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Dolinar made comments to the board regarding the status of incorporating the new accounting system (CTAS). She stated it would be going live in February, was currently putting in extra time working on reconciliation and cleaning up financials so the board and the township would be able to have a clearer picture of current finances. Clerk Zak commented on the use of multiple difference systems between herself and the treasurer, stated that it would be much easier and clearer once both positions utilized the same systems.

Motion by Supervisor Peitso to accept the December 2025 Treasurers Report as presented

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

Motion passed 3-0

**Correspondence**

- St. Louis County – Planning & Zoning
  - Chairman Tuchel noted that he had looked into the proposed ordinance amendments and realized that it was quite lengthy; he had requested a shortened version of the changes from the county but had not yet heard back. He noted that these changes may affect some of our residents or future residents.
- Northwoods Partners – Thank you
- IRR&R – Breitung Township Featured
- RAMS – Meeting Notice & Agenda

Correspondence so noted.

## **Public Input**

None

## **Reports**

- Police – Attached, Chief Reing noted that he had receive quotes late in the day for equipment for the squad, the quote included everything but the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch), which would also likely need to be replaced before year-end.
- Fire – Attached
- Road and Bridge – Attached
- Water – Attached
- Wastewater Board – Chairman Tuchel noted that the RIBS project was currently in the 60-day public comment period for the MPCA permits, once those were received the project would be going out for bids.

He noted that the water plant had changed the media in both the filters, does not expect the water quality to change.

He noted that lines in Tower had failed a lead test and 3 of 10 copper samples. Corrosion control had been added, likely should pass from now in, the next test would be done in approximately 6 months.

- Ambulance – Supervisor Peitso announced that the Sprint Medic had officially started; medics would be running a Monday – Friday, 8 AM – 8 PM schedule. Medics would respond to all calls but would only give assistance in for advanced life support calls and would only bill for those calls in which they assisted. She noted it was a 1-year program unless funding for the project can be found beyond that.

She continued with news on the Tower Area Ambulance Service; they were considering moving to billing utilizing a special taxing district instead of receiving payments from the service areas. A levy would be made to all who receive coverage from the TAAS; the TAAS would have control of the funds, not the City of Tower. Chairman Tuchel indicated that this was not a new idea for the TAAS but it was far from a simple solution; there were a lot of issues to consider about entering into such an agreement. Supervisor Peitso asked for questions/concerns to take back to the TAAS. Chairman Tuchel referenced the following issues/questions:

- Where would the proposed housing be for ambulances? Currently, it was provided by City of Tower
- Does everyone (all townships, towns, cities, etc) have equal partnership or is divided based on population?
- Will the service area include Embarrass and will they be represented on the board?
- How will payments from Bois Forte work – they currently have a seat on the board, but cannot be legally levied

Supervisor Peitso agreed there were a lot of gray areas, she explained that all of the members would have to agree to become part of a special taxing district as well as someone to run the service.

- Housing – No meeting/report
- Recreation – Discussion was had between supervisors regarding staffing the rink, including the pros and cons of having the warming shack open unattended or pulling attendants during slow time. Supervisor Tekautz noted that there had been no known issues to date with leaving the rink open, Chairman Tuchel asserted that if we post that the rink will have an attendant, we should keep the attendant until close.

Discussion on closing the rink due to cold temperatures was also had, it was noted that if temps reached -5 degrees, the rink and warming shack would remain open but there would be no attendant on duty (even if scheduled).

Supervisor Peitso further noted that local residents Fred & Suzie Precht had indicated interest in hosting a skating party. Supervisor Peitso planned to get ahold of the Joint Powers Recreation Board to provide some funds for skating party food & beverage. She also planned to speak with someone at Zup's regarding vendors sponsoring parties.

Supervisor Tekautz noted that the Lake Vermilion Joint Powers Recreation Board was considering broadening their assistance to work with ATV groups due to the growing popularity.

- Lake Vermilion Lodging Tax Joint Powers Board – January meeting had been cancelled, the next meeting was scheduled for April

## **Old Business:**

### **Current Infrastructure Projects**

- McKinley Loop Trail – John Jannick explained that the Wetland group had met on 1/9/26, maps had been updated, discussion regarding clearing of land for the project. Chairman Tuchel commented that this is likely becoming a 2027 project due to the slow pace the project has taken to this point; a major concern was that of the tree clearing which can only be done during certain months due to long-eared bats utilizing the trees for roosting. Additionally, easements need finalizing. There was some concern as grant documents indicate that the money needs to be used by the end of the year; Chairman Tuchel received word from Eric Fallstrom that the money needs to be “encumbered” by the end of the year, meaning that bids have been put out and accepted. John Jannick was open to the idea of the project being completed in 2027 but was still hopeful it could be wrapped up in 2026.
- Thompson Farm Road Project – John Jannick commented that the plans were being distributed for final MNDoT signatures, there would be special provisions provided to Eric Fallstrom and then he would send it to bid. Bids should be awarded at the County Board Meeting in March if everything goes according to plan until then; Whoever has low bid will be reached out to by Chairman Tuchel to get the property cleared in time, otherwise an outside contractor will need to be hired. It was noted that May 22 is the grand opening of the DNR campground.
- Stuntz Bay Access Road – Nothing new, waiting on final payment from St Louis County to Mesabi Bituminous

Flood/FEMA process – Attached, Clerk Zak noted that the immense ICE presence and ongoing protests, many of the states Emergency Management team were wrapped up in the cities. She felt the Stuntz Bay project had been paid out incorrectly, but she stated she continued to work the MN-HSEM to get the project fully funded.

Broadband Project – Nothing to report.

### **McKinley Park Management Agreement**

Motion by Chairman Tuchel to approve the red-line updates to the McKinley Park Management Agreement and sign the agreement

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

Motion passed 3-0

## **New Business:**

### **Pay Bills as Presented**

Motion by Chairman Tuchel to Pay Bills as Presented.

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

Motion Passed 3-0

### **Street Parking Issues**

Supervisor Tekautz noted that he had received several complaints regarding overnight street parking; a particular residence on Jasper Street regularly kept their vehicle on the street despite many warnings and discussions. Chief Reing indicated that the next step would be towing of the vehicle. Clerk Zak suggested providing Maintenance Supervisor Gorsma with some sort of notice he could place on vehicles, especially those that were new in town, when the issue arose at locations.

### **Resolution 2026-01: Appointing Election Judges**

Motion by Chairman Tuchel to approve Resolution 2026-01

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

Motion passed 3-0

### **Resolution 2026-02: Appointing 2026 Absentee ballot Board**

Motion by Chairman Tuchel to approve Resolution 2026-02 with correction to year on document

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

Motion passed 3-0

### **Resolution 2026-03: Designating Township Election Hours**

Motion by Chairman Tuchel to approve Resolution 2026-03 with correction to year on document

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

Motion passed 3-0

### **League of MN Cities: Workers' Compensation Deductible**

Motion by Chairman Tuchel to select the \$250 deductible, in keeping the same as last year

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

Motion passed 3-0

### **League of MN Cities: Liability Coverage Waiver Form**

Motion by Chairman Tuchel to not waive liability coverage, in keeping the same as last year

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

Motion passed 3-0

### **Soudan Post Office Rental Agreement – full lease available in clerk's office**

Clerk Zak explained that the post office works to place their lease agreements 1 – 2 years ahead of time due to the fact that moving a USPS facility can take between 12 – 18 months. The current lease expires on 03/31/2028; the current lease up for discussion would cover 04/01/2028 – 03/31/2033. Clerk Zak indicated that it would be a disservice to the residents of Soudan to remove the post office. Supervisor Tekautz agreed and questioned what else the space at the end of the building would likely be used for if it did not house the USPS office.

Motion by Chairman Tuchel approve and sign the lease documents

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

Motion passed 3-0

Breitung Fire & Rescue: Chris Suihkonen recommendation for Lieutenant

Chairman Tuchel noted that the previous Fire Lieutenant, Lance Dougherty, had tendered his resignation from the position last month, and that the Fire Department's Board of Trustees had voted in Christopher Suihkonen to fill the position. Supervisor Tekautz questioned whether Chairman Tuchel approved of the appointment, he indicated that he did.

Motion by Supervisor Tekautz to appoint Christopher Suihkonen as the new Fire Lieutenant for Breitung Fire & Rescue

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

Motion passed 2-0, Chairman Tuchel abstaining due to potential conflict of interest

Material Pit Sales Agreement

Chairman Tuchel summarized the agreement, noting that the price of the gravel could change depending on demand and that it should be looked at each year to determine a competitive rate.

Motion by Supervisor Tekautz to approve and sign the contract with Mesabi Bituminous

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

Motion passed 3-0

Next Board Meetings

Regular Board Meeting on 02/17/2026 at 6:00 PM

Board of Audit Meeting on 02/17/2026, immediately following Regular Board Meeting at approximately 7:00 PM

Adjourn

Motion by Chairman Tuchel to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 PM

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

Motion passed 3-0

Respectfully Submitted

Amber Zak  
Clerk, Breitung Township