

Rochester Township

Board Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2024

Meeting was call to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Jamie Neisen.

Members present – Jamie Neisen, Matthew Kitzmann, Jeff Orth, Nathan Clarke and Randy Staver. Absent: Michael Melford

Guests – Pat McGowan, Dean Thompson, Jered Staton, Brian Mueller, Geoff Griffin, Gene Peters, Dan Pfarr and three members of the public.

Open Comments

- None.

Minutes – Jeff Orth moved to approve the minutes for the March 14, 2024. Matt Kitzmann seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed with Jamie Neisen abstaining.

Deputy's Report –

- Deputy Dean Thompson stated that there were 30 calls for service over the last month.

Treasurer's Report –

- Treasurer Randy Staver reported. There was no unusual activity to report.
- The onsite portion of the annual audit was completed on March 28th. The report from Smith Schafer will be presented at the May board meeting.
- Randy reported that he is checking into possible State funding reimbursement for the Presidential primary election. The township may be able to recover most of the costs, which were primarily election judge wages. There is a May 1st deadline that Randy will work with. It is conceivable the township could receive as much as \$1,800 in reimbursement.
- Randy explained a billing cycle issue related to a couple of vendors. The township often does not receive a statement in time to create a payment in line with the monthly board meeting. He would like to be able to pay some of those expenses, when necessary, using the township credit card.
- Jeff Orth moved approval of the treasurer's report. Matt Kitzmann seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Rochester Township Claims – Jeff Orth moved and Nathan Clarke seconded to accept and pay Rochester Township claims #5481-5506 in the amount of \$68,733.56. All voted in favor and the motion passed. Randy was asked to follow up on how certain bills such as Charter are divided between Rochester and Cascade townships under Joint Powers.

JPB Claims – Jeff Orth moved and Nathan Clarke seconded to accept and pay Joint Powers Board claims #6516-6542 and the Rochester Township share in the amount of \$23,301.37 and a payroll share of \$14,188.50. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Road Maintenance Supervisor Report –

- Some equipment repairs but manageable.
- Chris Lien will be out on a medical leave into August.
- Bid prices for road materials came in somewhat lower than expected.
- The new bucket comes in next week.
- Still waiting on one more bid on a road repair project.
- Pat is spending more time on preventive maintenance on vehicles with a focus on the fuel systems.

Land Use Plan Resolution –

- Will be revisited in May 2024.

2630 Wild Rose Lane SW –

- The property owner and a potential buyer are currently in litigation regarding a possible purchase. Some township individuals including Matt Kitzmann and Randy Staver have been subpoenaed to testify to certain board discussions and/or actions taken with respect to the property. The civil hearing is currently scheduled for April 15th.

Land Use Planning Workgroup –

- No new information to report.

Speed Study –

- Randy Staver distributed new speed data that has been collected for one month along 8th Street and one month along Weatherhill.
- A letter was mailed to various township residents inviting them to the May board member to offer input. Brandon Theobald will be present to help answer questions.

Von Wald Youth Shelter –

- Dan Pfarr, CEO with 180 Degrees, addressed the board and updated on various activities that have occurred at the shelter. They operate four shelters. They have been operating the Von Wald shelter since 2012.
- Dan spoke about some of the outreach they are doing and various program services offered. Mental health, family dynamics and high-risk behavior are examples of frequent calls for service.
- Interestingly, Dan said this is the first generation that has grown up with social media and cell phones and the trend mirrors increases in mental health issues.
- Education and life skills are another area of focus. Some residents come to the facility not even knowing what grade level they are at.
- Von Wald receives high recommendations from residents who have been in the program.
- There have been many group home closures across the state. Dan encouraged anyone interested in touring the facility and learning more about the services to contact the facility.
- Dan would like to offer an annual report to the board in April of each year.

Westridge Hills –

- Geoff Griffin and Gene Peters spoke to the potential project of 272 acres. They wished to discuss the project and the idea of donating community park space of up to 60 acres to the township. Alternatively, it could be owned by an association. The land is located south of the current township garage land.
- Gene has owned the land since 1988.
- Because of the geology, it would be difficult to install sewer and water lines. Instead, community wells and septic systems would be used. There is a large gas line that runs through the property which also complicates running sewer / water lines.
- Geoff thinks a special district is an appropriate approach.
- Matt Kitzmann said that historically townships have not been amenable to owning community parks but that attitudes have shifted.
- The GDP shows 44 lots of about 2 acres each.
- Nathan Clarke commented that the general overview is that the proposed development looks to serve a higher price point and, more philosophically, does not support the general question of lack of housing and especially affordable housing. He wants to make sure we are broad in our thinking.
- Gene Peters commented that the installation of the gas pipeline complicated development. He also stated that it is not good agricultural land. Gene also commented that the township is not set up to support affordable housing.
- Jeff Orth commented that the town board also has an obligation to support the kind of development and housing that the public wants.
- Matt Kitzmann commented that smaller lots that were available previously were not desirable until the layout was redesigned.

- Jered Staton commented that the area would need to be supported by organized utilities and public transportation before an affordable housing development would be considered feasible. There are currently no plans for the city to support this area with utilities.
- Geoff noted that the best land for affordable housing is flat whereas much of this area varies greatly in topography.
- Jered said the land is in the city urban reserve area and a special district, developed as proposed, would likely be viewed favorably by the City of Rochester.
- Geoff commented that there are extensive pedestrian trails.
- Jered suggested that the next step is for the developer to work with the city to see how amenable they are to the proposal. Special District language would need to be written for the area.
- The Board generally felt that the developer should pursue working with the city on reviewing the plan. Gene asked if the township is supportive of the concept and there was no dissention. The developer will participate in a predevelopment meeting with the city and county.

Bolander / Passe CUP –

- Based on board discussion at the previous meeting, Jered Staton visited with the principals involved in the project. Jered presented a letter the township is being asked to sign in support of Bolander and Sons LLC seeking a floodplain development permit to in turn support their application for a Conditional Use Permit. The letter does not grant approval of the CUP.
- Nathan Clarke moved to approve the request and sign the letter as presented. Jeff Orth seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Annual Reorganization –

- Randy Staver presented a draft version of the 2024 reorganization document. Edits were offered. Randy will find out what the current mower rate is.
- Matt Kitzmann moved to approve the reorganization as edited. Nathan Clarke seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed. Nathan Clarke will assume the chair role beginning at the May meeting.

2024 Road Tour –

- Matt Kitzmann, Jamie Neisen, Nathan Clarke, Jeff Orth and Pat McGowan participated in the annual road tour on April 2nd. A summary of the tour is contained in separate minutes.
- Matt Kitzmann moved to endorse the road improvements as outlined. Nathan Clarke seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Waste Hauling – Recycling –

- Jamie Neisen wished to discuss whether the township should also add a recycling container.

- Randy commented that Aspen cannot give us a cost until we specify the size of container and frequency of pickup. Pat commented that they occasionally have larger items such as road debris but that usually goes in the trash container.
- The board asked for a quote for the smaller container and every other week and a quote for a two-yard dumpster.

Town Hall Maintenance –

- Randy Staver raised the question of any preferred townhall maintenance that might be addressed. This could include painting, carpet cleaning or other repairs or improvements. Some lot repairs were noted. Pat was asked to get a quote for chip seal on the lot. Jamie suggested that we could use some ARPA funds. Matt Kitzmann said he could pursue the carpet cleaning.

Rochester Fire Department Contract –

- Matt Kitzmann, Nathan Clarke and Randy Staver met with Chief Eric Kerska and Deputy Fire Chief Holly Mulholland on April 8th to discuss the current contract, which ends 12/31/2025. A key part of the discussion related to how the city determines the cost of fire department services. Census and household data was reviewed. The fire department will also be visiting with the other three townships (Cascade, Marion and Haverhill) in hopes of again creating a single contract for the four townships. For budgeting purposes, a new contract should ideally be in place by the fall of this year.

Lilly 4 Surety Agreement –

- Gene Peters was present to discuss the surety agreement for the road project in Lilly 4 that will serve during the warranty period. It will basically take the form of a deposit with a bank in the amount of the surety previously determined. The Board was amenable to the proposal.
- Jeff Orth moved to authorize the chair to sign the depositor agreement assuming it does not change substantively. Matt Kitzmann seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed. This will potentially allow the developer to timely meet the deposit criteria and so the remaining funds may be returned to the developer.

Deer Population –

- Nathan Clarke wished to discuss the deer population. He suggested reaching out the DNR to see what options might be available. Jamie suggested that Arthur Handelman may have a contact. Pat also has a contact. Nathan will follow up.

Reports:

TCPA Report –

- Jeff Orth said that TCPA met earlier this week. Finances are somewhat negative YTD but activities are on track. A question was asked whether a non-elected

person can serve with TCPA. The group will need to explore a bylaws change. John Johnson will serve as chair this year but would like to retire at the end of this term.

Board of Appeals & Adjustment Report (Township Board) –

- There was no additional action requested this month.

Planning and Zoning Commission Report –

- There will be a meeting on April 16th where the draft language for a solar ordinance and solar farm ordinance will be discussed.

Board Chair Report –


- No information to report this month.

Other Business –

- None

Meeting Adjourned – Matt Kitzmann moved to adjourn the meeting. Nathan Clarke seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 10:31 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Randy Staver, Clerk / Treasurer

Nathan Clarke, Vice-Chairman