

Breitung Township
Regular Board Meeting 02-20-2025, 6:00 PM
In Person Meeting at the Breitung Community Center
33 First Avenue, Soudan MN 55782

Present In Person:

Board Members: Chairman Tim Tomsich, Supervisor Matt Tuchel, Supervisor Erin Peitso, Clerk Amber Zak, Treasurer Jorgine Gornick

Public: Tom Gorsma, Trevor Banks, Chief Daniel Reing, Jodi Summit (The Timberjay Newspaper), Terry Carlson (The Tower News), Steve Tekautz, Paul Peltier (RAMS), Dianna Sundahl, John Jamnick (JPJ), Trudy Hendricks

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 01-16-24 Regular Board Meeting as presented and the January 2025 Treasurer's Report as presented

2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion passed 3-0

Correspondence

- Widseth
- Disaster Training Opportunities
- Dave Denniston – Property Offer
- IUOE Representative
- SLC Association of Townships

Correspondence so noted.

Public Input

None

Reports

- Police – Attached, Chief Reing mentioned the ongoing investigations into two recent structure fires in Tower and having spent significant time in January on those incidents
- Fire – Attached
- Road and Bridge – Attached, Maintenance Supervisor Tom Gorsma mentioned having their first water line freeze and that some residents were running water to avoid frozen pipes
- Wastewater Board – Supervisor Tuchel touched on the Rapid Infiltration Basin project having been submitted to MPCA & USDA, noting an archeological survey still needs to be completed; the wastewater board is looking at a potential construction date of September 2025. Noted that the water plant was also coming along in construction and that if the RIBs project was approved, they were expecting completion in 2026.
- Ambulance Commission – No meeting/report
- Housing – No meeting/report

Reports so noted.

Old Business:

Current Infrastructure Projects

- 2025 Infrastructure Project – No change, deferred until after 7-1-2025 when the next round of IRRR funding becomes available.
- 2022 and 2023 Infrastructure Projects – Projects and change orders complete, waiting for final pay estimates
- McKinley Loop Trail – No change, waiting to hear if there is approved grant funding in April 2025.
- Thompson Farm Road Project – Chairman Tomsich discussed a major update from MN-DoT: they have requested a by-pass lane on the Southbound traffic lane, physical removal of Old Thompson Road entrance, otherwise close to approval by MN-DoT. Chairman Tomsich noted they were hoping to go to bid by April. Supervisor Tuchel expressed concern about the added by-pass lane, noting that Breitung would be expected to cover the costs of construction; he would check with Eric Fallstrom regarding increased cost and whether additional funds could be received for that

Flood/FEMA process – Clerk Zak updated the board on status, explaining that she was expecting approximately \$150k in remediation and mitigation costs. She further noted that several projects went over the limit of mitigation expenses and it was not clear whether those would be covered; also, several projects had been submitted for payment but whether money would be received for those items was questionable.

Police: Squad Replacement

The board reviewed two quotes received by Chief Reing for squad replacement. Discussion was had regarding the cost of several pieces of equipment not included in the quotes (light bar, radio, etc.). Chief Reing noted a 5 – 8-month lead time on receiving the vehicle and that he preferred a truck for storage capacity, passenger room, better maneuverability in snow. The board requested a quote on additional equipment and installation, tabled until next meeting.

Sewer Ordinance

Chairman Tomsich brought to the boards attention that the ordinance would be up for discussion and motion at the annual elector's meeting next month. He specifically explained that the goal of the ordinance was to reduce the Inflow & Infiltration, which would in turn improve the functioning of the system during major events such as the June 2024 flood; further, the ordinance has added penalties for non-repair of sewer laterals, clarification of when and how lines are inspected. Supervisor Tuchel suggested adjusting the rates section to state "current year's user rates" so that the ordinance would not need to be adjusted with each rate change.

New Business:

Pay Bills as Presented

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to Pay Bills as Presented

2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion Passed 3-0

RAMS Presentation

Paul Peltier from RAMS (Range Association of Municipalities and Schools) was on hand to provide a presentation on his organization. After reviewing the mission, usefulness, and membership dues of the organization it was decided that Breitung Township would benefit from a membership.

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to enroll in a RAMS membership

2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion Passed 3-0

Police: Part Time Application

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to offer John Shennet employment, having already passed background procedures and post requirements

2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion Passed 3-0

Police: Defensive Tactics Training

Chief Reing requested the opportunity to attend tactics training, certification is on a 2 year basis and his certification is up for renewal

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to approve training for Chief Reing

2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion Passed 3-0

Fire Truck Replacement

Chief Banks provided multiple quotes for a similar truck to replace the Tender #2. Significant discussion was had regarding the price of a new rig; the board requested that Chief Banks look into whether fire trucks were on a State Bid as the police squads were. If so, the purchase of the truck could be brought before the electors at the annual meeting for a vote. If not, the township would need to put out a notice for bids for the equipment.

Fire: Turnout Gear

Chief Banks discussed the need to order turn-out gear for 11 suits of the fire department as required by OSHA (10-year life on suits). He provided a quote, totaling roughly \$72k; he had applied twice for FEMA grant in the last two years and had not received it. The board indicated that they may need multiple quotes to approve the purchase, directed Clerk Zak to look into it.

Fire: 75th Anniversary Party

Chief Banks requested holding a party to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Breitung Fire & Rescue, indicating the possibility of a spaghetti feed, prizes, activities to be held at the Breitung Community Center on April 26th, 2025. He indicated that the party would be free for attendees and that the department would work to receive potential donations from businesses for the cost of putting on the event.

Motion by Supervisor Peitso to approve the 75th Anniversary event for Breitung Fire & Rescue
2nd by Chairman Tomsich

Supervisor Tuchel abstained due to possible conflict of interest

Motion Passed 2-0

Public Computer/Printer

Discussion was had regarding the public computer and printer located in the community center. It was noted that the computer had not been updated since 2019 and an attempt to use the printer recently had been unsuccessful. Supervisor Tuchel questioned whether it was still considered useful to the township; it was noted by Treasurer Gornick and Deputy Clerk Sundahl that the computer did receive use, it had been obtained with grant funding. It was decided to have the computer and printer updated as possible by an IT firm. Once it was restored to working condition, it was suggested that Clerk Zak advertise its availability on Facebook, as many residents may not be aware of it.

LMCIT: Worker's Compensation Coverage

A deductible selection was required by the board; in keeping with the same decision from last year the board opted for a \$250 deductible considering minimal premium savings for a higher deductible and the cost if someone should get hurt.

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to elect a \$250 deductible for the Worker's Compensation Plan through LMCIT for the policy period 03/1/2025 - 3/1/12026

2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion passed 3-0

LMC: Liability Coverage Waiver Form

A Liability Coverage Waiver Form was required by LMCIT for coverage ahead of the effective date of coverage.

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to select "Does Not Waive" on the form

2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion passed 3-0

4M Fund

Chairman Tomsich updated the board on a fund that Breitung Township currently has access to. Its use had been discontinued previously when interest rates went down. However, with increased rates at this time, the township could place its funds into the 4m fund to receive the higher rate of interest. It was noted that signature cards would need to be updated and signed.

Nemanich Bench

Chairman Tomsich explained that he had been in contact with Tom Nemanich who had requested to place a bench in honor of his late father, Jerry Nemanich, along the Armstrong Bay Road. The new bench and plaque would be paid for and installed by Tom Nemanich; it was decided that he should work with Tom Gorsma to find a suitable place within Breitung Township's property that would not interfere with snow plowing.

Motion by Chairman Tomsich to give permission to install said bench

2nd by Supervisor Tichel

Motion passed 3-0

Post Office Faceplates

Chairman Tomsich explained that upon the remodeling of the Soudan post office, Breitung Township had purchased the faceplates of the old mailboxes; they had then sold them individually to those that wanted them. At this time, there were 121 remaining faceplates; these would be placed for auction on a government equipment website. Chairman Tomsich would update the board with the sale information at the following meeting.

Set 2nd alternate date for Annual Meeting

Motion by Supervisor Tichel to set March 25th as the 2nd alternate for the Township Annual Meeting

2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion passed 3-0

Next Board Meetings

Board of Audit Meeting: February 20, 2025 immediately following the Regular Board Meeting

Board of Canvass: March 11, 2025 at 8:30 PM

Breitung Township Annual Elector's Meeting: March 11, 2025 immediately following the Board of Canvass

Regular Board Meeting: March 20, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Adjourn

Motion by Supervisor Tichel to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 PM

2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion passed 3-0

Respectfully Submitted

Amber Zak

Clerk, Breitung Township