

Rutland Charter Township

Regular Board Meeting

June 11, 2025 / 7PM

Meeting called to order by Supervisor Mayack at 7pm. Moment of Silence. Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call - Members Present:

Sandy Greenfield, Marti Mayack, Robin Hawthorne, Sandy James, Gene Hall, Jason Watson

Members Not Present:

Brenda Bellmore - excused

Others Present:

Dana Yarger, Jane Cybulski, Sue Bender, Kristina Porritt, Vince Porritt, Todd Porritt, John Archer, Mike Jones, Fran Jones, Patrick Jansens, Terrick Smith, Doug Lectka, Bob Teunessen, Mark Jordan, Nickie Haight

Approval of Agenda:

There are 2 additions to the original agenda, under New Business: a Hold Harmless agreement for Image SFX for the Music Festival and BIRCH Ambulance Discussion. Motion by James, seconded by Greenfield to accept the June 11, 2025 agenda. All ayes. Motion passes.

Guests:

Jane Cybulski gives an update from the Library monthly meeting and her report is available on the back table. She also mentions that the library is doing a survey and would appreciate everyone filling it out.

Patrick Jansens from Barry County Emergency Management speaks about the Rock the Country concert coming to the Barry Expo Center this weekend. He says there are 50,000 people expected, they have been coordinating and planning for 6 months, they have support from all surrounding areas, residents should expect traffic delays, there will be parking across the road and in the expo center fields, maximum capacity is 30,000, there will be a drop off lane in the neighborhood across the road. He says there is a Community Notification text to receive updates - text "Rock" to 226787.

Open Comments:

John Archer asks when the next Planning Commission meeting is and Mayack tells him the first Wednesday of every month.

Todd Porritt thinks the township owes him money and tries to start personal attacks on board members. He is immediately shut down by Supervisor Mayack. Mayack tells Porritt that he is welcome to voice his concerns about township matters, but he will no longer be allowed to personally attack board members at RCT meetings.

Terrick Smith asks if there is an update on the possibility of a Meijer coming. Mayack plans to give an update in his report.

Jim Partridge is a BIRCH Board member. He expresses to the board that providing fire and emergency services to our township residents is of utmost importance. He says that BIRCH members have saved thousands of dollars in coming together for fire services and he would like to see the same with ambulance services. At this time, there are 3 ambulance services around us and those are Thornapple, Mercy, and Nashville. They all currently help each other out.

Partridge feels the most cost effective way to provide ambulance services is through BIRCH. He is asking that each township in BIRCH contribute \$20,000 to purchase an emergency vehicle and a cot. They need the funds up front, even though they do not know the exact cost, so that they can bid when a unit comes up for sale. He explains that the BIRCH townships could get a refund if the \$20,000 turns out to be too much, but could also need to chip in more if the \$100,000 still comes up short. Partridge says they will have the unit in service Mon-Fri from 8am-8pm, but that could be adjusted due to call volumes. He says this will be a backup unit that the fire department can use to help. Partridge believes that since this is going to be a fire based ambulance, the fire millage funds could be used towards it. Hawthorne and Greenfield say that since it is not in the ballot language, the fire millage cannot be used and the money would have to come from the general fund. Partridge shares that Hastings and Carlton townships have already committed the \$20,000 funds, he will be asking Irving next week and Baltimore the week after that.

Consent Agenda:

Motion by Hawthorne to accept the consent agenda, seconded by Watson. All ayes. Motion passes.

Supervisor:

Mayack begins by apologizing for the chaos of last month's meeting. He says he is new and learning and he will never let that happen again.

Supervisor Mayack says the Hastings City Council will review RCT's proposal for a 425 to have the city run sewer to just the Meijer lot. He says they will still have to figure out the water. He says they are meeting soon to work through things like maintenance costs, and he should have more details by the July RCT Board meeting.

Hawthorne says RCT will not negotiate the 92 sewer agreement. James wants the public to know that this process will take time and not going to happen overnight. Hawthorne says it would be 2028 before the building would start and that is tentative at best. Mayack says there is a lot the attorneys will have to work on before anything goes forward. He suggests that RCT residents attend Hastings City Council meetings because there is always a lot of information. These meetings can also be watched live.

Clerk:

Board Members have the Clerk's Report Voucher/Payroll and there are no questions. Hawthorne shares that legislators want voter machines replaced at 10 years old, which would mean RCT's machines would need to be replaced by 2028. She says there is nothing wrong with the ones we have and they are only used a few times a year at the most. James asks why they cannot inspect the ones we have, so we can use them longer. Hawthorne says the financial burden will be on the township unless the state steps in to help.

Treasurer:

Greenfield says her report is in the board member's packets and on the back table. She shares that taxes go out July 1st and residents can pay at the township until September 15th.

Trustees: None

Planning Commission Liaison Report - Bellmore excused absence

Commissioners Report:

Commissioner Bob Teunessen thanks Mark and Patrick for their work on the SXT concert. He rode around the expo center today and is impressed by the planning and organization. He says they have a good plan for traffic and parking.

Teunessen says the new COA ground breaking will be June 25th at 3pm at Harvest Point. He is impressed with the fundraising efforts. The new site has a temporary permit for a driveway out to M79 Highway for construction. They hope to make that permanent in the future.

Commissioner Teunessen says the solar project has started in Johnstown township. He is pleased that they have gone out of their way to purchase non toxic panels.

There was a recent meeting about plans for a new jail. At this time, the commissioners are trying to partner with many different people and organizations. There are many issues to consider when building a new jail and there should be mental health and juvenile support as well. They are exploring every avenue possible in order to not raise taxes. The study that was done on the current jail showed it is in terrible condition. The existing building is not repairable.

He says there was land donated in Delton for a new water and sewer system.

Watson asks Teunessen about water on the property where the solar panels are going. Teunessen says there have not been any drainage problems. Teunessen also shares that Consumers Energy is not in the solar business, but has been forced into it. The panels are on Hickory Rd, people think the silt fence is ugly. Teunessen says the ordinance the county wrote is good and working.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

Approve Resolution 2025-310 BIRCH Fire Agreement renewal

Hall explains that there were a few wording changes, but nothing has changed with the coverage. Watson asks who from the RCT board is on the BIRCH board. Mayack and Hall are on that board but any board members can attend.

Motion by Hall, seconded by Greenfield, to approve Resolution #2025-310 BIRCH Fire Agreement renewal. Roll Call Vote: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - Yes, Mayack - Yes, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Absent, Watson - Yes. Motion passes.

L-4029 2025 Tax Rate Request

Hawthorne says RCT has to levy the whole amount instead of lowering the rate like in the past, due to more BIRCH costs.

Motion by James, seconded by Hall, to approve L-4029 Tax Rate requests. Roll Call Vote: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - Yes, Mayack - Yes, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Absent, Watson - Yes. Motion passes.

2025 MTA Annual Dues

Hawthorne explains that RCT does not pay for the premium package, so there is no legal support, and still a cost to attend trainings, they do get a monthly magazine. The board discusses that the MTA has strong lobbyists and they are a great support to townships.

Motion by Mayack, seconded by Watson, to approve to pay the dues invoice for MTA for 2025/2026. Roll Call Vote: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - Yes, Mayack - Yes, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Absent, Watson - Yes. Motion passes.

New furnace for the township hall

Mayack explains that 1 of the 5 furnaces in the township hall went down. Insight Mechanical advised getting a new one and they were able to get a great price on one. This is the second of the 5 to go bad and there are 2 more from the same year. The AC unit is very old and will need to be replaced soon as well.

Motion by Watson, seconded by Mayack, to pay the invoice for the furnace. Roll Call Vote: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - Yes, Mayack - Yes, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Absent, Watson - Yes. Motion passes.

Hold Harmless agreement for Image SFX for Music Festival

This is in addition to the 2 already approved. Friday night of the festival will stay the same, but this will add to the Saturday night show.

Motion by James, seconded by Mayack, to approve the Hold Harmless Agreement for Image SFX. Roll Call Vote: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - Yes, Mayack - Yes, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Absent, Watson - Yes. Motion passes.

BIRCH Ambulance Discussion

Hall gives an update from the BIRCH meeting about ambulance service. He says the new unit would only be back up and would give BIRCH employees experience and could some day be able to offer their own ambulance services. BIRCH is asking for \$20,000 from each of the 5 townships. Hall plans to get a detailed list of all the things that \$100,000 would be spent on. He says they could decide to pay those amounts as they go. He says there are 2 ways they could give the funds. Either give the \$20,000 up front or get the breakdown and pay the bills individually. Hall asks for board member's thoughts.

Hawthorne says they could approve up to a certain amount, so they would not have to wait until the next board meeting, if they need more than the \$20,000. Hawthorne asks if a new unit is needed. Hall says there is adequate service right now, but there is a worry of how long Mercy will continue and he wants to plan for the future. Greenfield asks if the townships would be responsible for upkeep and maintenance costs. Fire Chief Jordyn says costs will not increase because there will only be one ambulance going out at a time. The new unit will be backup and covered by existing insurance and BIRCH costs. He says they received a grant to train the employees. He is waiting on a total cost, but vehicle prices change every day.

Partridge says the 3 existing ambulance services are not always available since they have hospital runs too. He strongly believes that fire and emergency services are not a luxury, they are owed to residents of the BIRCH townships. He thinks an incentive for emergency training is a good idea.

Mayack agrees that RCT has a duty to be prepared and to offer these services to its residents. He shares that BIRCH is a non-profit, but Mercy is not.

Board members discuss options and ideas.

Motion by Hall, seconded by James, to approve the concept of a back up ambulance for BIRCH and to commit to financial support, not to exceed \$50,000. Roll Call Vote: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - Yes, Mayack - Yes, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Absent, Watson - Yes. Motion passes.

Partridge thanks the board. Mike Jones asks how it is decided how much each township pays into BIRCH. Mayack explains each township pays a percentage based on the taxable value of the township.

Open Comments:

Sue Bender gives the board a quick update from the local Republican party and is available for any questions.

Adjournment:

Motion by Greenfield, seconded by James to adjourn at 8:15pm, all ayes. Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Nickie Haight, Recording Secretary

PROPOSED