

Rutland Charter Township

Regular Board Meeting

September 10, 2025 / 7PM

Meeting called to order by Clerk Hawthorne at 7pm. Moment of Silence. Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call - Members Present:

Sandy Greenfield, Robin Hawthorne, Sandy James, Gene Hall, Brenda Bellmore, Jason Watson

Members Not Present:

Marti Mayack - excused

Others Present:

Pat Sharpe, Sue Bender, Dave Jackson, Dan Lipstraw, Terrick Smith, Mike and Frances Jones, Nickie Haight

Approval of Agenda:

Hawthorne adds an item to the agenda under New Business for tree trimming at the township hall approval. Motion by Hawthorne, seconded by Greenfield to accept the September 10, 2025 agenda with one addition. All ayes. Motion passes.

Hall makes a motion to have Clerk Hawthorne run the meeting in Supervisor Mayack's absence, seconded by James. All ayes. Motion passes.

Guests:

Jane Cybulski gives an update from the Library monthly meeting and her report is available on the back table. James shares that she is impressed with all the activities and involvement at the library. Hawthorne asks if there has been any more vandalism and Cybulski says no. Hawthorne also shares that RCT received a copy of the Library's Proposed Strategic Plan.

Open Comments: None

Consent Agenda:

Motion by James to accept the consent agenda, seconded by Greenfield. Roll Call Vote: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - Yes, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Yes, Watson - Yes. Motion passes.

Clerk:

Board Members have the Clerk's Report Voucher/Payroll and there are no questions. Hawthorne shares that there will be a special election for the Barry and Kent ISD millage on November 4th.

She shares a brief update about the Meijer Project. She says the JPC will handle the planning. Meijer has shared with RCT some of their proposed plans that include a 15ft retaining wall, berm, and retention pond with a fence. Corewell Health will keep 6 acres along M37 where nothing will be built. Meijer plans to leave the large oak trees, add 5ft pine trees, and build 176ft from the neighborhood. There will not be pole lights in the back of store facing the neighborhood, but there will be deliveries happening in the back.

Meijer is hoping for an entrance on Tanner Lake Rd and a light at that intersection, but there will be nothing further down Tanner Lake Rd. These plans are still just proposed and will be subject to MDOT approval.

Treasurer:

Greenfield says her report is in the board member's packets and on the back table. She shares that tax payments will be accepted at the township through September 15th. Her office will be open 9am-5pm that day.

Trustees:

James is concerned about safety at Tires 'N Such on the corner of Heath Rd and M37. She says there is a trailer sitting there now, as well as additional tents and structures, and the tires are piling up again. She says people cannot tell if something is for sale or he is fixing it or if it belongs to him. Hawthorne says he can have 2500 tires and is allowed to have more than just tires. Bellmore says the PC has talked about this as well. Hawthorne and Greenfield will speak with Rick Argo the Enforcement Officer and Stacy Graham the Zoning Administrator about checking in with Tires 'N Such again.

Watson reminds everyone that tomorrow is the 24th anniversary of 9/11 and shares the sad news of the Charlie Kirk assassination.

Bellmore asks about the proposed Rank Choice Voting. She says it is confusing for voters and the states that have implemented it already are trying to go back. Hawthorne agrees and says clerks are not in favor.

Planning Commission Liaison Report: There was no Planning Commission meeting in September, so there is no new report.

Commissioners Report:

Commissioner Dave Jackson gives an update from recent commissioner meetings. Commissioners will be meeting twice a month instead of every week going forward. They will be holding a detailed meeting about the jail. The Health Department is facing \$850,000 in cuts and more are coming. The commissioners are looking into options to help them, including a possible split from Eaton Country. The new COA was denied the permanent drive onto M79. Jackson believes Rank Voting would be stressful, confusing, expensive to implement, and may not have any grants or support for the new expenses.

Unfinished Business:

Accept Ordinance #2025-198 for Second Reading - Chickens in CR on minimum 1 acre.

Motion by Bellmore, seconded by James, to accept Ordinance #2025-198 for second reading and adoption. Roll Call Vote: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - No, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Yes, Watson - Yes. Motion passes 5-1.

New Business:

Budget Amendments for parking lot resurfacing and contribution to BIRCH for Ambulance

Motion by James, seconded by Hall, to approve the two budget amendments. Roll Call Vote: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - Yes, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Yes, Watson - Yes. Motion passes.

Tree Trimming Quotes

Murray Asphalt has requested to have some trees trimmed that overhang the parking lot for the re-paving project. There are 3 quotes to decide from. The work will be done this fall, before the election in November. The quotes include clean up and Greenleafs (the neighbor) has been notified.

Motion by Greenfield, seconded by Bellmore, to approve the quote from DPH for \$600. Roll Call Vote: Hall - Yes, James - Yes, Greenfield - Yes, Hawthorne - Yes, Bellmore - Yes, Watson - Yes. Motion passes.

Open Comments:

Sue Bender shares that she has a petition that needs 650,000 signatures to ban Rank Voting in Michigan. She says the Republican Party does not support this initiative. She shows a mock ballot and walks through the steps that would happen with votes if Rank Voting is implemented. She says it will delay results, cost more, make fraud easier, and be confusing for voters. She says 17 states have voted to ban it and most other states are not adopting. In Michigan, the ban has passed in the House and is now going to the Senate. She shares that with Rank Voting, votes would be redistributed from the lowest vote getters, and given to the voter's second or third choices, if there is not a clear winner. A clear winner would have to get 50% of the votes, so one of the losers could become the winner if votes have to be redistributed. She asks for RCT to stand against Rank Voting and to encourage residents to sign the petition to ban Rank Voting.

Terrick Smith asks for clarification on the Meijer proposal. He asks where exactly the retaining wall and pond will be. Hawthorne says the retention pond would be on the other side of the tree line and the retaining wall would be past that. Terrick says there is already a slope, so a 15ft wall would sit high up above the neighborhood. Hawthorne says it is all a proposal right now and Meijer would not leave any of their plans. She says once Meijer actually applies the PC and JPC will work on the details. All residents within 300 ft will get a letter and the meetings are open to the public.

Frances Jones asks how the 15ft elevation for the Meijer retaining wall was determined, Hawthorne says the Meijer engineers would have determined that. Jones asks how big the pond will be and Hawthorne does not have the dimensions but says it will be huge.

Jones asks what the CR stands for in the chicken ordinance, Hawthorne says it stands for Country Residential.

Jones is also concerned about Tires 'N Such. She says there is standing water in those tires with will attract mosquitoes that can carry encephalitis. Hawthorne says the regulations from EGLE and the state override township regulations.

Jones says there is no reason to vote on whether a voter in the US must be US citizens because that is already the law.

She invites everyone to a meeting on the 25th at 6:30pm at the Delton Library to go over petitions that are available to sign. This meeting is being put on by a non-partisan group.

Adjournment:

Motion by Greenfield, seconded by James to adjourn at 8:03pm. All ayes. Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Nickie Haight, Recording Secretary