

CITY OF RUSHFORD VILLAGE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2025
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
43038 State Hwy 30, Rushford Village, Minnesota 55971-5167

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The September 16, 2025 Council Meeting was called to order by Acting Mayor Mike Ebner at 7:00 p.m. in the Rushford Village Office. Council Members present: Travis Link, Robert Hart and Rick Ruberg; Public Works/Maintenance Supervisor Darrin Dessner, Planning/Zoning Administrator Jon Pettit, City Attorney Joseph O’Koren, Treasurer Judy Graham and Clerk Mary Miner
Absent: Mayor Dennis Overland

AGENDA was approved as presented

Motion by Ruberg, 2nd by Link, Carried.

MINUTES from the September 2, 2025 Regular Council Meeting approved as presented

Motion by Link, 2nd by Ruberg, Carried.

CITIZENS/OTHERS PRESENT: Jayme Longmire-CEDA, Laura Qualey-CEDA, Kirsten Zoellner-Fillmore County Journal

FINANCIALS: Receipts as of September 15, 2025 \$3,261.31, Expenses as of September 15, 2025 \$25,502.82
Estimated September Receipts \$10,000.00/Estimated September Expenses \$43,000.00
CD’s renewing at current advertised rates

Motion to approve the financials are presented

Motion by Ruberg, 2nd by Link. Carried.

PLANNING / ZONING–Pettit: New Permits /Inquiries/Updates;

New Permits:

- #1731-Heather Grigg-42x41x48 Chicken Coop-North Money Creek
- #1732-Brett & Janet Wynia-4 Season Room-Hayes St
- #1733-Robert Forsythe-4 Used Window & Used Tin, North Side of Barn-Ridgeview Rd
- #1734-Brad & Connie Welsh-24x40 Post Frame Unattached Garage-Dunn Ln
- #1735-Val Gudmundson-Roof & Siding Storm Damage Repairs-State Highway 30
- #1736-John & JoAnn DeGeorge-Roof Storm Damage Repair-Oakview Loop
- #1737-Benjamin Bernard-11.4kW Roof Mount Solar Array-Indian Chapel Rd
- #1738-Leanne Kasper-Garage Roof Storm Damage Repairs-Crimson Ln

Permit Status/Projects in Process/Inquiries/Updates:

• **Evan Meier-44959 Plummer St-Front Yard Landscaping:**

- Pettit reported Meier attended the Planning and Zoning meeting. He wants to landscape his front yard with a block type barrier which would be in the road right of way. The Planning and Zoning board did not have a favorable recommendation for this. Meier was told Attorney O’Koren told Planning and Zoning nothing can be put in the road right of way
- Meier did not attend the Council meeting, no action was taken

• **The Nature Conservancy-Leon Quarve Property-Ridgeview Road:**

- CRV Received a letter the Nature Conservancy will be purchasing 35.35 forested acres from Leon Quarve. This property is along Ridgeview Road.
- Pettit stated while Planning and Zoning was discussing this the Laura Qualey from CEDA gave a little hope there might be a way out of this. CRV continues to lose taxes continually. This land is connected to approximately 300 acres the Land Conservancy already owns and there is approximately 80 more acres owned by Quarve that could potentially be bought by the Land Conservancy later on. CRV does not get any taxes from land owned by the Nature Conservancy or the MN DNR
- Laura Qualey-CEDA, shared there is a state statute exemption for townships that have become cities, MN Statute 477A.14 subdivision 3C might be something to look into. It states as long as a city has not passed an ordinance that prohibits hunting in the and if payments have been received from 2006 or after that CRV may be able to get PILT payments. There are six cities that were former townships that are listed in the exemption. Hart asked if CRV was to start receiving money again would it be retroactive to when payments were stopped around 2018, Qualey was not able to answer that question
- Pettit reported Gordon Johnson stated during the Planning and Zoning meeting he had spoken with Greg Davids a while back and was told if the Fillmore County Commissioners would agree to pay CRV PILT money for state owned land within CRV boundaries Davids would sign the order. Johnson agreed to attend a commissioner meeting with someone from the Council

- The letter states in 2024 Fillmore County received \$540,294.20 for 18,733.76 acres eligible to receive PILT. Because CRV is a city it does not receive PILT payments from Fillmore County
- **Ben Bernard 11.4kW Roof Mount Solar Array-Indian Chapel Rd:**
 - Pettit reported a permit application for a 11.4kW roof mount solar array has been submitted by Ben Bernard
 - Pettit does not see any issues with the permit application but because of the size it does require a public hearing

Motion to set Ben Bernard 11.4kW roof mount solar array public hearing for Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 6:45 pm

Motion by Hart, 2nd by Ruberg, Carried.

- Ebner and Miner will be out of town

ROADS/WATER/SEWER:

- **Roads/Utilities Update:** Dessner reported:
 - Trees on Tower Ridge and Ridgeview roads have been removed
 - Dunn culvert extension is completed. More rock will be added
 - He has been grading roads and will be doing more this week
 - He plans to start mowing road ditches next week
 - He and Zach from MRWA were able to find the MIsna water shutoff. They were not able to find the Lyle Johnson shutoff. The line was traced from the house to across highway 16 so it is possible the shutoff is on the watermain side of Highway 16 or it could be under the uprooted tree in the yard, he will continue to try to find it
 - He is working with Rick Lee to get the fluoride to the right level. Zach from MRWA run him through the pumps so he is more comfortable making the adjustments Lee wants him to make to get the readings we want
 - The hydrant at the South Rushford park is cracked and needs to be replaced
 - He and Ebner installed the new merry-go-round and he has spread the woodchips around it
 - Ebner reported the Ford F450, plow and spreader/sander are at Darr's Auction
- **South Rushford Park Water Hydrant:**
 - The hydrant is cracked and needs to be replace
 - Dessner reported the current hydrant is a Iowa hydrant which costs about \$200.00, Dessner priced a Merrill hydrant at Menards for around \$120.00

Motion to approve the purchase of a Merrill hydrant from Menards for approximately \$120.00

Motion by Link, 2nd by Hart, Carried.

- **Road Vacation Request-Peterson Lane:**
 - CRV received a request from Jonathan Peterson to vacate Peterson Lane. According to Peterson CRV does not maintain the road and he would like it vacated.
 - O'Koren stated there are two ways a street vacation can be done. 1) a petition by a majority of the abutting landowners 2) Council resolution which requires a super majority 4/5th vote of the Council to initiate.
 - The Council has no obligation to act on any request made by petition or someone asking. If this is something the Council wants to consider it will take time for the process to get done.
 - O'Koren stated when he looked on Beacon it appears there are probably five property interests that would be there so as of right now there is not a valid petition but if they wanted to join in they could and CRV would have to provide written notice and publication of a public hearing
 - O'Koren stated CRV should consider if there is a public benefit CRV could derive from vacating this road, this is a statutory standard for vacating a public street. CRV should be considering if there could be a future use for this road. Could the impact of vacating the road cause someone to lose access, could there be future development back there. What is the reason CRV would want to vacate this road
 - Peterson Lane comes off Tower Ridge Road on the County side. Hart questioned if anyone else lives on Peterson Lane. O'Koren stated according to Beacon there might be a few properties in the back like the Tuff property which appears to be the main one. The Runkel Trust and Machett Trust could also be affected
 - Ebner asked if Planning and Zoning should take a look at this. Pettit stated he feels Planning and Zoning may look at it as Jon Peterson will not live forever and the new owner might want to develop or do something in the future that wouldn't have that access ever again
 - Ruberg asked if CRV maintains the road now. Dessner and Ebner stated they have never done anything to the road. Peterson told Miner he rocked the road himself. Pettit stated there are other roads like this one CRV has been told they do not want service on the road unless they request something be done
 - Ruberg stated CRV is receiving money from the County to maintain this road and questioned why we are not maintaining it. CRV does not receive money from Fillmore County for road maintenance.
 - Pettit stated Planning and Zoning would probably question what the public good would be by closing it
 - Link stated it would be hard to give up that access. He feels it would be good to keep it open for potential future options and he does not see a benefit for CRV to vacate
 - O'Koren stated it is a lot easier to vacate than it is to reacquire city streets. City streets are platted so it is much more difficult to go through an eminent domain proceeding to acquire a platted street once it has been vacated.

Non use of a street is not a statutory reason to vacate a street, there has to be some sort of public purpose or public good

- Hart questioned what the next step should be. O’Koren stated there is not a petition from the landowners so the Council would have to act on its own to initiate the proceeding by a 4/5th vote
- Hart asked if Peterson should be the one to instigate the next step and petition the Council to vacate the road. O’Koren stated if there are five properties this would involve, three out of the five would have to petition the Council, the Council would have no obligation to act on that unless the Council feels it’s a good idea to do it
- Graham asked what of those properties involved would not have any other access, O’Koren felt the Runkle property would be the only one. Hart stated they do not access that property from this road, they would come in from another way through Tuff Lane. O’Koren stated they are still a property that abuts this so under the statute they would be a person with standing to petition. O’Koren stated the Runkel/Tuff property would be two of the landowners, Jon and Lori Peterson would be two and the Machett property immediately to the south where it forks could possibly be considered abutting. Peterson would need three of the five to sign a petition
- Link asked if Peterson said why he wanted the road vacated. Miner stated he called and wanted to know why it was still a CRV road. Link does not see a public benefit especially if Peterson did not give a reason
- O’Koren stated it is up the Council as to what they want to do. He will not provide a recommendation either way, he will provide the benefits and drawbacks and can type up a memo but the main thing the Council needs to look at is if there is a public benefit to vacating the street
- Ebner questioned if CRV leaves it open and doesn’t do anything would we need to put a minimum maintenance sign up, O’Koren stated it probably wouldn’t hurt
- Hart stated if Peterson and his neighbors brought a petition to vacate the road it would then be up to the Council to decide if they want to act on that petition. O’Koren stated the Council would still need to state what the public purpose would be to vacate the road. When the findings to vacate the road are done it would need to be noted what the future use of the road might be
- No action will be taken at this time unless Peterson brings a petition forward. Miner will call Peterson

OTHER:

- **Rushford Fire Department Mill Rate Meeting-September 23 @ 6:00 pm:**
 - The Rushford Fire Department will provide an update on their finances and equipment needs
 - This meeting will be continued so Council can all attend the meeting
- **Part-Time Public Works/Maintenance Position Update:**
 - Miner shared with the Council the email sent on Tuesday, September 9th did not reach the Fillmore County Journal. The ad was supposed to run in the Fillmore County Journal the weeks of September 15th and 22nd, it was not in the September 15th edition
 - The part-time ad is on the R-P Valley and CRV websites, posted on the CRV door and at Rushford Foods, Rushford State Bank, Merchants Bank, Peterson Post Office and Rushford Post Office
 - Miner asked the Council if they would like to extend the application deadline to allow for 2 weeks of publication or have it published once the week of September 15th

Motion made to publish for 1 week in the Fillmore County Journal **Motion** by Hart, 2nd by Link, Carried.

- **Jayne Longmire-CEDA:** Longmire introduced Laura Qualey, CEDA Regional Manager
 - Longmire sent an email asking what the Council would like her to focus on. Forming a Tri-City meeting group again has been suggested by different people in the community. It was suggested to hold off scheduling anything until after the Rushford election. Longmire would like input as to who should be included in the group. She would also like to know if CRV would like Longmire to be the facilitator and help determine discussion points.
 - Longmire feels the three cities could work together to find possible ways to share city services and resources, promote housing growth by figuring out a way to offer more dense housing developments which would allow for smaller and more affordable housing for the elderly population
 - Longmire and Qualey have looked at the potential for tiny homes or more dense communities and how that could work on current homesteads or farms. Being able to build another house on the property might help the elderly population that owned a farm and decided to pass it down to a family member or sell it stay of the property.
 - Longmire stated the more dense housing areas should be single level and handicap accessible. This could be something the cities could collaborate on to have access to city sewer
 - Qualey suggested reviewing the CRV ordinances and potentially revise and update to make them relevant to what is needed today such as allowing for smaller affordable lot sizes. CRV should want to make it possible for people who once lived in the area or have a family farm to come back to CRV to purchase land, build a house and live. Qualey stated CRV needs to think outside the box and build relationships with Rushford and Peterson to start this type of housing or to work together to get more tourism to this area to show people what is available so they might want to relocate here.
 - Longmire stated she attended the Planning and Zoning meeting and they were open to this type of development but there needed to be developers and investors to make it happen.

- Longmire asked if CEDA should help identify a location for development and help draft a RFP, work on getting a 3-city collaboration going first before diving into a housing development possibilities or work on tourism to get more people to discover our area.
- Working with Rushford to be able to offer housing opportunities would bring more people which would help the Rushford businesses and maybe bring in new businesses to the area. Right now Rushford is hurting downtown, they have several empty store fronts.
- Longmire stated the CRV Revolving Loan Fund has approximately \$240,000.00. She reached out to DEED who gave her the names of two other state department people (Business Expansion Unit Manager and Executive Director of Office of Business Finance) to contact to see what this money can be used for and if some of the restrictions can be lifted so it could be used for housing incentives and have more flexibility. Qualey stated if the funds could be used for housing they could maybe used as matching dollars to draw a developer here using the fund as an incentive. Longmire is waiting to hear back from the state department
- Longmire asked the Council to reach out to her with any ideas or to suggest who should be included in the tri-city group
- **2026 Proposed Levy Resolution #2025-09-16:**
 - Miner stated after adding everything to the budget that was asked for she set the proposed 2026 levy at \$655,455.00 which is approximately \$5,000.00 more than the proposed 2026 disbursements. This would be a 14.5 % increase which is a lot and by December when the final levy is set it should be cut in half or better
 - Miner stated the fire department mill rate might change after the mill rate meeting which would impact the 2026 budget
 - Miner stated the big items are \$30,000 for a generator, part-time assistant at 25 hours for 52 weeks and \$25.00 per hour, Employee wage increase of 3% COAL with a step, tool budget increased to \$4,000, mower trailer for \$3,500, \$106,000 in CDs for the grader, trucks, bridges, streets and lawn mower, trash contract goes up every year
 - Hart asked Miner what she would propose be cut, Miner stated that is for the Council to decide
 - Graham stated they need to stay within the budget of each category once it is set would be helpful.
 - Ebner stated he spoke with Overland before the meeting. Overland would like to keep the proposed budget high for now and after tonight the Council will need to start picking it apart and figure it out. There could be things we do not know about at this time. Ebner agrees it is too high but this is a wish list that will need to be reduced
 - Graham stated the line items are what need to be looked at, not the total amount. Link stated there are areas that can be whittled down.
 - Link stated he realizes the proposed levy is a high number so there might be backlash from citizens. Ebner stated this might be good for people to hear because there are things that are not in the budget that should be taken care of like a few road washouts
 - Link stated to do it right it might take a decent increase to maintain things and equipment the right way. Ebner stated part of the problem is our state funding is being cut. To make up for it there needs to be increases
 - Ebner stated Overland wanted him to remind everyone this is the proposed budget and after tonight the work starts by taking a hard look at the want list
 - Link stated he feels there are little things that can be chipped away at but as far as some of the big things it gets scary if you stop putting \$106,000 away for the future just to try to save money, this is something that has to be planned for. Hart agrees money needs to be put away for future projects like chip sealing and the cost to do those projects is not going to go down but questioned if we need a generator, we don't know for sure, it would be great to have. He stated for there is an expense for every item and we are not being affluent even at the 14.5%.
 - The 2026 proposed receipts are \$769,978.00 (with the proposed levy of \$655,455.00/14.5 % increase) and the proposed disbursements are \$764,099.00 a difference of approximately \$5,000.00.

Motion made to increase the 2026 proposed levy by 14.5% (\$83,005.00) and approve the Proposed Levy Resolution #2025-09-16 in the amount of \$655,455.00 **Motion** by Hart, 2nd by Ruberg,

Carried.

OTHER UPDATES / MEETINGS:

- October 19-24, 2025-Sunday thru Friday-Miner vacation
- October 30, 2025-Thursday 5:00 pm-8:30 pm-SEMLM Meeting-SE Service Coop-Rochester

Next Meetings: Council: September 23, 2025 Continued meeting for Fire Department Mill Rate meeting at Rushford Fire Hall @ 6:00 pm, October 7, 2025 Regular Council Meeting @ 7:00 pm at CRV Hall Office and October 21, 2025 Ben Bernard Solar Array Public Hearing @ 6:45 pm and Regular Council Meeting @ 7:00 at CRV Hall Office

Zoning: October 21, 2025 @ 5:30 pm at CRV Hall Office

Motion made to Continue Meeting to Rushford Fire Department Mill Rate Meeting, September 23, 2025 @ 6:00 pm at Rushford Fire Hall at 8:11 pm by Hart, 2nd by Link.



Continued September 23, 2025 Rushford Fire Department Mill Rate Meeting 6:00 pm Rushford Fire Hall

The September 23, 2025 Rushford Fire Department Mill Rate meeting was called to order by Chief Nick Smith at 6:10 pm at the Rushford Fire Hall.

CRV Members Present: Mayor Dennis Overland, Council Member Travis Link and City Clerk Mary Miner

Absent: Council Members: Mike Ebner, Robert Hart and Rick Ruberg

Fire Department Report

- Chief Smith provided handouts and reviewed the 2023 financials
- Mill Rate Fund #615-2022 ending balance of \$559,510.78 with 2023 revenues of \$115,362.76 and 2023 expenses of \$163,897.79 bringing the 2023 year end cash and investment balance to \$510,975.75
- Chief Smith reviewed the 2024-2025 city mill rates at .0165, CRV 2024-2025 mill rate amount was \$24,638.13. Total 2024-2025 mill rate amount for all cities is \$100,845.80
- Chief Smith reviewed the projected equipment replacement costs and reported the 2006 Int'l Fire Truck that was scheduled to be replaced in 2026 will be put on hold for a couple of years because the cost to replace it is very inflated and they are hoping the cost will come down
- Work will continue on enlarging two more of the overhead doors to ensure any trucks purchased in the future will fit through them
- In the last year two new 800 radios and two new battery operated saws were purchased from Weiser Construction for \$800.00. The Fire Department receives money from the Relief Association (gambling funds) and apply for grants to help pay for various things and equipment
- Chief Smith feels the mill rate, .0165, can stay the same for the next two years
- Dwayne Ostrem-Arendahl Township, had concerns that if the mill rate remained the same it would not allow the fund balance to grow and cover the cost of new equipment when everything is costing so much more to replace. Smith stated he did not feel this would be an issue.
- Chief Smith reported the turnout gear is required to be replaced every 10 years. The gear will need to be replaced next year. The cost for one set is \$4,000.00 and they will need 30 sets. They are looking at cheaper sets for \$3,000.00 per set. This is an OSHA requirement. This cost is split with the City of Rushford. They are looking for grants to help cover the cost

Ambulance Report

- Paul Corcoran reported for Joey Busse, Ambulance Director, Busse has COVID
- Corcoran reported everyone's ambulance contract almost doubled. Some of the reasons for this are a full-time ambulance director was hired, payment was made on the new ambulance, new electric cot was purchased for \$50,000.00 and installed into the rig, training is not done in Rochester instead of inhouse, they continue to try to recruit more staff
- They staff the ambulance with 2-3 night people at \$1.00 per hour and 3 daytime people at \$5.00 per hour. Corcoran stated this does not seem like a lot but it adds up quick. Corcoran stated if another ambulance service had to be brought in the cost would be much higher
- Overland stated in the past when there was a full-time ambulance director the training was done inhouse and suggested this be looked at again to help save money. Corcoran said he would pass the suggestion along to Busse
- Kathy will mail the contracts to each city
- Mill Rate meeting ended at 6:40 pm

Due to lack of a quorum there was not a Motion to adjourn the Continued September 25, 2023 CRV Council meeting