

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

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The December 16, 2025 Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Dennis Overland at 7:00 p.m. in the Rushford Village Office. Council Members present: Mike Ebner, 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

CITIZENS/OTHERS PRESENT: Kirsten Zoellner-Fillmore County Journal, Jayme Longmire & Laura Qualey-CEDA,
Ben Bernard-Rushford-Peterson Schools

AGENDA was approved as presented Motion by Hart, 2nd by Ruberg, Carried.

MINUTES from the December 2, 2025 TNT and Regular Council Meetings approved as presented Motion by Link, 2nd by Ruberg, Carried.

FINANCIALS: Receipts as of December 15, 2025 \$227,776.07, Expenses as of December 15, 2025 \$32,552.13
Estimated December Receipts \$302,810.00/Estimated December Expenses \$117,000.00
CD’s renewing at current advertised rates
o Miner explained the total levy amount from Fillmore County was \$227,243.82 but the MERC tax court deduction was \$1,484.11 making the total payment to CRV \$225,759.71

Motion to approve the financials are presented Motion by Ebner, 2nd by Hart. Carried.

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

New Permits:

#1730A-Ben Mohs-Play House- Oak View Loop

Permit Status/Projects in Process/Inquiries/Updates: Nothing to new to report

ROADS/WATER/SEWER:

- **Roads/Utilities Update:** Dessner reported:
 - o A call was received from a resident there was water running out of the pump house. The water was coming from an elbow that split in the pipe to the eye wash station, water was shut off to the eye wash station and STS Plumbing was called to repair
 - o The F550 was taken to Universal Truck in Centerville WI to have the headlight on the plow looked at. There was a connection that was not plugged all the way in which was easily fixed
 - o There is a problem with snow coming over the plow on the F550 onto the windshield making it difficult to see and also plugging the air intake requiring the filter to be changed at a cost of \$40.00 per filter. According to Universal Truck this is a known problem and the recommended installing a poly snow deflector kit which is a poly plate that goes over the top which is curved to keep the snow in front of you down and the rubber mat that is on the F550 plow now would be attached to the top of the poly plate to keep the snow even lower which should help with visibility and stop snow from going into the air intake plugging the filter . Dessner suggests giving this a try. Quote JM121625-01 for \$320.00 was reviewed

Motion made to approve Universal Truck Quote JM121625-01 in the amount of \$320.00 Motion by Link, 2nd by Ruberg, Carried.

- o The F550 sander is throwing the product onto the right side of the truck instead of the down the middle of the road. Universal Truck suggested tilting the spinner so it throws the product more to the center of the road
- o When the wing was put on the grader it was found the spindles that rotate the wing in and out were completely seized up and the slide cylinder was bent. They were able to get things freed up and have been using it to scrap the roads. Dessner was quoted a price of \$1,500.00 from RDO for a new cylinder but stated it is working fine and recommends waiting for now to replace it
- o The skid steer had no power and it was showing a SCR code. It was taken to Hammel Equipment and it was determined it had to do with the DEF system and the knock sensor is out. Cost to replace the knock sensor is \$658.00 plus labor. Dessner stated Chris Hammel told him there is nothing that could have prevented this sometimes the part just goes out

Motion made to approve the skid steer repair at a cost of \$658.00 plus labor Motion by Link, 2nd by Hart, Carried.

- **Freightliner Update:**

- Ebner reported Dave Syverson Truck Center determined the current problem with the Freightliner is a continuation of the problem that was fixed this past summer. Syverson fixed the rear differential this past summer but did not check the front differential or put it in four-wheel drive at any time. The front differential had a catastrophic failure at the same time the rear differential went out so when the switch was flipped the damage had already been done months ago and the problem showed up. When Ebner and Overland talked with Syverson they had Syverson take pictures of the damage. They were told there were only two of the needed parts available in the US and if they had to wait for more parts to become available it could take a long time to get, Ebner and Overland gave permission to order the parts right away. Syverson should have the part in four days, it will take a couple days to install and they are hoping CRV will have the truck back by Christmas. Syverson will deliver the truck back to CRV and review with CRV maintenance how to operate the truck. Dessner stated he has been in contact with Money Creek Township who has the same truck as CRV and plans to get together with them to see how they operate their truck. Syverson repair estimate \$10,296.47 includes the towing charge.
- Getting the truck back will mean we will not have to hire out to have rock spread on the roads. Using the grader to plow takes 12 hours on the main road with Pettit helping out with the side roads after he is done with his main roads. Ruberg stated there is additional cost because it takes more time to plow with the grader

Motion made to approve Syverson estimate in the amount of \$10,296.47

Motion by Link, 2nd by Ruberg, Carried.

- **Snow Plowing/Rocking Agreement:**

- O’Koren drew up an on-call agreement between CRV and Dan Sveen, Sveen Excavating LLC to rock and plow CRV rural roads until the Freightliner is back in service. Dessner would contact Sveen if his services are needed, Sveen would help after his clients were taken care of. The cost is \$210.00 per hour which starts when he leaves his shop, Dessner stated his understanding is Sveen gets paid for one way so when he is done with helping CRV his time would stop. O’Koren suggested the agreement should be clarified to state his time would end when he has completed the Service for CRV, this revision will be made before the agreement is signed. Dessner stated Sveen is familiar with the area and know CRV roads. Sveen will use product from the CRV rock shed. Dessner would use the grader to plow and Sveen would come behind and spread rock where needed. Pettit suggested Sveen could also plow if Dessner has not finished all the roads with the grader.

Motion made to approve the temporary snow plowing/rocking agreement with Sveen Excavating LLC with the clarification

time stops when he has finished CRV Services

Motion by Ebner, 2nd by Hart. Carried.

OTHER:

- **Jayne Longmire & Laura Qualey-CEDA:**

- Longmire presented her 2026 CEDA proposal. The proposal includes goals based on what she has been working, some initiatives that are being investigated and what she feels would be obtainable with at two day a month CEDA contract.
- Housing-Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)-Longmire stated when the potential to use the RLF fund for some options to use towards infrastructure that would lead to more housing is something CRV is not interested in moving forward with right now.
- Longmire stated the last RLF loan was in 2015. She suggested taking the 2012 RLF guidelines and 10-page application and simplifying them to make them more appealing for business owners. Longmire stated the current guidelines and application has a lot of jargon that is hard to understand. This would be a way to breathe new life into and promote the RLF. The money in the RLF would not go away but it would be better if it were revolving and bringing in some interest. She could get working on revamping them now
- Housing-She would like to find land for housing so she could connect the landowners with developers to create housing in CRV. The Comp Plan shows there is a need for high density housing like townhomes and patio homes and need to take into account aging population. CRV has a 51% population of 50 years old and up which she feels will impact everyone in the next 10 years
- Collaboration-She would like to see collaboration between CRV, Rushford and if needed Peterson to collaborate on some new initiatives. The biggest desire seems to be how to work together with shared services like water, sewer and potentially police services. Longmire stated hopefully within the next few months with the new Rushford Council and new city leadership this may be something that CEDA can work on
- Business Development-CRV does not have a business district or people looking for commercial spots to build, Longmire feels it would be beneficial to perform a market study. Longmire and Laura Qualey strongly suggested someone from CRV attend the data center meeting being held in Spring Grove on Thursday night. It will be a non-bias presentation given by multiple people and companies of what the southern region on Minnesota is looking at right now for data centers. It is a very divisive topic but the discussion on their need and why they need to be built is not going to go away. Usage of AI, the cloud, cell phones and all the way up to electronic medicals records make data centers necessary. This is a something CRV needs to be prepared to have a discussion about even if it’s just providing information about what a data center does. The new data centers are highly efficient with a range of

different jobs and will bring tax base into communities. There are huge questions regarding water and electric usage so this meeting will be a good way to learn what data centers are and how they can benefit communities. Qualey stated data centers are coming to this area, Harmony is looking into it right now. Qualey stated we can't pretend they don't exist and are encroaching on our area. We want to protect our area but that doesn't mean any landowner wouldn't be entertained by getting offered \$70,000-\$100,000 an acre for their property. Data centers come in all sizes, the main thing they are looking for are transmission lines. CRV does not have the infrastructure to bring in a large commercial industrial user but some data centers don't need water depending on the system they are using. They feel CRV could be a good place for a data center and CEDA could keep CRV informed and provide information on some of the possibilities available. Longmire stated it is important not to listen to only the negative statements but is important to take a step back and look at the whole picture and learn from both sides and have open up minds for the entire cause and reason behind it.

- Longmire stated CEDA is happy to work with CRV in any capacity to bring economic development to CRV

- **Ben Bernard-Rushford-Peterson Schools:**

- Bernard stated his intent is not to sway anyone one way or the other but to provide factual information about the building bond so everyone knows what it is they are voting on
- Approximately two years ago Bernard learned the funds used to build the school were still available. The State of Minnesota would pay 51% for new buildings and deferred maintenance.
- Right now there is approximately three million dollars needed to fix current deficiencies with lighting that parts are not available for to repair, security system in eight years old and sewer. All of these things will need to be addressed regardless if the bond passes or not. It can be done all at once or spread out over the next 5-10 years
- Additional needs the bond would cover include a childcare space, another gym and more classroom space. All classrooms are currently full, sixth grade open enrollment was just closed and there is a waiting list for those who want to open enroll into Rushford-Peterson Schools
- Bernard would like to see the school used as a financial driver for the communities by having free advertisements available during extracurricular events for businesses to offer specials during the events hopefully drawing people from the school events into the businesses
- If looking into the future and these projects are something that would probably be done Bernard stated now is the time to do them when the school can get it done for 50% off. These funds will be available until 2034
- Bernard stated there are a bunch of information sessions scheduled and he would be happy to attend any other groups to get the information out.
- The Rushford-Peterson School website has a lot of information and ways for people to put in their information to see what the cost would be to them if the bond were to pass. Example: \$250,000.00 home would see an increase of \$132.00 per year or \$11.00 per month
- Overland asked what type of classrooms are needed. Bernard stated for upper elementary and high school. The school acquired a federal grant to purchase more hands on equipment and bought a 18x24 laser that will cut basically anything organic. It is in the library right now because there is no place to put it. It cannot go into the woodshop because it is not clean enough for technology like the laser
- Hart asked what the cost would be for farms. Bernard explained the school gets the ag to school credit so for farmland 70% is paid for by the State and the farmer is only taxed for the house, garage and 1 acre. Link asked if recreational land would be taxed different, Bernard stated it is in a different tax rate but did not know what it is
- Pettit stated he is glad to hear open enrollment is closed because the math does not make sense to him. If the State is pays \$300.00 for a kid who open enrolls but it still costs \$1,000.00 to educate the kid, Pettit does not see how that is good, he sees a deficit that the district taking the kid has to make up that deficit. Pettit stated a positive is there is another person to share experiences with our kids or we could have a bigger school so we could play bigger basketball or something but he does not understand the math. Bernard explained the school gets the same amount of money regardless if they are open enrolled or a resident from the State and most of the funding comes from the State funding not from local. Pettit stated when you talk about the taxes on a \$250,000.00 house the open enrolled kids parents are not kicking in for that and R-P residents have to make up the difference for the deficit so he does not understand how open enrollment can be a good thing. The other thing that bothers Pettit about open enrollment is he sees vans and buses running all over the place picking up kids which is not free. Pettit feels open enrolled students are taking away financially from R-P kids now that the school has to build on. It is a math problem for Pettit and he cannot justify it and feels it would be better if there was not open enrollment. Pettit stated the school can say no to allowing open enrollment. Bernard stated there is a board policy on open enrollment which allows 24 students up to grade 6 and 30 students for grades 6-12. Bernard stated the vans are filled and the amount of state aid the school would get one student would break even for the van and driver but this would not be the case for a bus. Hart asked if R-P schools can ask open enrolled students to pay the school, this would not be allowed because they are already paying taxes to the school district they live in. Overland stated the all the money goes into the same pot so in a way R-P is still getting that money. Bernard stated R-P gets \$10,000.00 for every kid.

Bernard stated last year 115 open enrolled to R-P and 75 open enrolled out of R-P so there was a net input. If this was the other way around it would not be good

• **2026 CEDA Contract:**

- Overland understands this is a tough one for everyone and if things had continued as they had in the past it would be harder for him to ask for another contract but he is excited about Longmire's viewpoints in how to get more housing and business for CRV and she is not focused on trails as much as in the past and she is open to whatever CRV wants
- Hart questioned if we are wanting more now than we have in the past, Overland stated he feels the they are starting to realize more now what they want compared to the past. Overland feels in the past they were hoping someone would tell the them what was needed and now he feels the they are starting to see some different ideas themselves
- Hart stated he feels the needs now are the same as they were ten years ago. Hart stated he is not sure if they will take what Longmire tells them and do it. Link agreed, does CRV want tiny homes and these other things. Overland stated those are the things other CEDA cities are doing so Longmire is trying to give ideas because they were not coming up with a whole lot of ideas and were depending on Longmire and they will need to give direction. Link stated he has not heard of anyone wanting tiny homes so would CRV want to pay a lot of money to push tiny homes. Overland stated that is an option but he feels she is looking at studies that have been done for this area and is looking more at starter homes, townhomes, retirement housing and affordable housing
- Ebner stated he would have agreed with Hart six to eight months ago but he feels Longmire has researched CRV and having her help with the collaboration between CRV and Rushford would be a good way to open the door. Hart asked why CRV could not open that door ourselves, why would having Longmire do it make it better. Overland stated that has been tried multiple times in the last ten years and we get told there is nothing to talk about. Hart asked how one person could make that much of a difference, Overland stated sometimes the middle person does make a difference, when Ron Ziegler was the middle person Overland felt a lot of good conversations took place. Ebner suggested giving Longmire the chance to do the legwork and talk to the other cities and then bring it back, no one else will have the time or want to do the legwork. Ebner feels she would be a good third person that could come in and bring the cities back to one table and get some dialogue started
- Overland stated CRV can get out of the contract with a 30-day written notice. Hart asked why CEDA could not be hired as needed, Overland stated they can be but it's a much higher fee. Ruberg asked if there could be a part-time contract, Overland stated that is what we have now, CRV is 2 days per month at 8 hours per day. Overland stated CRV used to hire CEDA on a as needed basis but that was very costly and cheaper to hire yearly
- Pettit asked if Rushford or Peterson have a person like Longmire. Overland stated at the current time, no. Hart asked if the three cities could share a CEDA contract? Overland stated each city would have to have their own contract.
- Hart stated he is not in favor of renewing the contract because we have not used them in the past other than to get the merry-go-round but agrees Longmire is more aggressive and wants to work for us. Overland stated we got the merry-go-round and the Comp Plan done which would have cost CRV a lot more if CEDA had not done it. Link stated he was hoping once the Comp Plan was done CRV could save some money but he does see there is a benefit and she is good
- Overland stated he would like to give her a chance for at least six months. Ruberg questioned if CRV is getting their monies worth, it's frustrating to keep throwing money out here we don't have, there really is not money to develop anything, it would be different if CRV had the money and land to develop. Overland would like to use her to write some grants like for a \$30,000.00 generator. Ruberg likes the idea of redoing the RFL guidelines and application making it more practical to apply for the loan. Overland stated there is over \$200,000.00 sitting in the RLF we can't use because we don't know what to do with it and none of the Council has time to go out and try to get anyone to use it. Hart questioned if LMC can tell CRV what they can and cannot do, Overland answered not really. Hart asked where Longmire would get her ideas from, Overland stated there are 56 other communities CEDA works with. Ruberg stated he is in the middle, from what Longmire presented tonight he can see the benefits but in the past questions if CRV has gotten their monies worth especially now when there is \$10,000.00 in repairs for the Freightliner that was not budgeted for and questioned where that money will come from, it can't keep being thrown it into taxes for everybody else to pay
- Hart suggested a compromise and approve the contract after the first quarter evaluate it to see if CRV is ahead and if not ahead after the first quarter do battle again. Overland questioned what he meant by ahead, Hart stated ahead meaning we are making progress on what we are paying money for
- Hart did not realize there were all these building possibilities. Hart and Link agreed the pallet factory site would be a good idea and Hart likes the call centers idea. Overland stated Planning and Zoning are hearing about a lot of interesting things that might be possible in the future but it cannot be shared at this time
- Hart stated the \$16,000.00 CEDA contract has been budgeted in 2026 for but the \$10,000.00 Freightliner repairs are not budgeted. Overland said there is money set aside each year for repairs and things like that

Motion made to approve the 2026 contract at \$16,400.00 and re-evaluate after the first quarter

Motion by Hart, 2nd by Link, Carried.

- Hart would like CEDA updates on the agenda once a month

- **2026 Employee COLA/Step:**

- 2026 budget was for a 3% COLA and step. The step structure presented shows what each employees salary would be with a 3% COLA and no step which would be Dessner \$30.94, Miner \$31.56, Graham \$30.37, Johnson \$25.43
- Overland suggested a 3% COLA and wait on the step because the maintenance guys have been with the city for such a short time. Ebner asked how soon a step can be given, Overland stated some places do it on the employees anniversary or the beginning of the year depending on how the City does it. Miner stated she is not aware of a timeline but that it should not be tied to licensing or certifications.
- Hart stated according to the step structure if Dessner were to get a step with the 3% COLA he would be at \$31.56, he started at \$30.04/step 6, if Dessner gets a 3% COLA and no step he would be at \$30.94
- Hart agrees with Overland and is in favor of a 3% COLA and no step at this time and suggested it could be re-evaluated again in about six months which would be around their one year anniversary date

Motion made to approve 3% COLA without a step

Motion by Hart, 2nd by Link, Carried.

- **Gundersen Health Services 2026 Master Agreement:**

- Going forward contracts will be Evergreen which means they will not need to be signed yearly as long as nothing within the agreements changes including the pricing

Motion made to approve 2026 Master Agreement as presented

Motion by Hart, 2nd by Link, Carried.

- **Gundersen Health Services 2026 Occupational Health Service Agreement:**

- This agreement is for new employee physicals/drug testing, random drug testing, post-accident drug testing, etc.

Motion made to approve the 2026 Occupational Health Agreement as presented

Motion by Hart, 2nd by Link, Carried.

- **Gundersen Health Services 2026 Hearing Conservation Agreement:**

- This agreement is for yearly hearing testing for the maintenance department

Motion made to approve 2026 Hearing Conservation Agreement

Motion by Hart, 2nd by Link, Carried.

- **Resolution 2025-12-16 Adopting Final 2026 Levy:**

- Miner stated right now the budget increase is 5.77%.
- Link stated it was decided to keep the CEDA contract in the budget for now, the generator was taken out and it was discussed to put a little less in the bridge and equipment CD investments even being a little ahead but in his opinion this could be tough to do especially after getting the \$11,000.00 Freightliner repair bill it would be tough to not keep putting that in just for some of those things alone. Overland stated there is \$86,000.00 in the budget for investment CDs \$25,000.00 for roads and \$61,000.00 for bridge and equipment. Graham asked if we run short will \$10,000.00 be cut out for future maintenance on vehicles, Overland said that is right, that is why there was a cushion there. Link asked what was done last year, \$25,000.00 was budgeted for a roads CD. Link stated we are way ahead of that which is what it should be but how far ahead is what he is thinking about because a lot of the other stuff has been chiseled away at
- Ebner stated he is comfortable with a 5.77% increase and feels there is enough cushion built in. It started at 14.5% and is down to 5.77%. After looking at what some of the other Towns and Townships have done he feels CRV is good

Motion made to approve Resolution 2025-12-16 Adopting the Final 2026 Levy at \$605,455.00/5.77%

Motion by Hart, 2nd by Link, Carried.

OTHER UPDATES / MEETINGS:

- January 6, 2026-Tuesday-**No** CRV Council Meeting
- February 3, 2026-Tuesday-**No** CRV Council Meeting-Caucus Night

Next Meetings: Council: January 20, 2026 Annual Meeting and February 17, 2026 @ 7:00 pm at CRV Hall Office

Zoning: January 20, 2026 @ 5:30 pm at CRV Hall Office

Motion made to Adjourn Regular Council Meeting at 8:19 pm by Ruberg, 2nd by Hart.