

TOWN OF SCHROEDER

Minutes for Regular Board Meeting on November 10, 2025

Present: Supervisors Bruce Martinson, Tina McKeever, & Cathy Johnson; Treasurer Gordon Engstrom, Clerk Amy Brugge, Fire Chief Cody DeWandeler (via Zoom), HRA Executive Director Jeff Brand, HRA President Bill Gabler, Commissioner Ginny Storlie, County Administrator Kristin Trebil-Halbersma, Interim Cook County PPHS Director Plamen Dimitrov, and residents of Schroeder.

T. McKeever motioned to approve the agenda. C. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

T. McKeever motioned to approve the minutes for the October 14, 2025 Regular Meeting with the one modification requested by C. Johnson to revise that she had “identified” a Red Cross representative at the Emergency Management meeting that would be a good contact instead of “connected with”. C. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Cook County HRA & Temperance Trails – Executive Director Jeff Brand & President Gabler discussed the challenges with the site and informed the board that the relationship with the developer has now ended. The discussion expanded to further describe the Residential Open Space Overlay (ROSO) District recently put forward by the Zoning & Planning Commission and also overviewed anticipated population dynamics in the years ahead. The board informed them of concerns about homes becoming vacation rentals and its effect on rising housing prices. The conversation also included review of the parcels owned by Schroeder Township that recently had wetland delineation studies completed and whether they could be eligible for development under the ROSO districts. President Gabler also discussed the need to look at grants for maintaining the current housing stock in the county, such as energy efficiency/improvement grants.

Commissioner Storlie – Commissioner Storlie introduced County Administrator Kristen Trebil-Halbersma and Interim PPHS Director Plamen Dimitrov to the board. Commissioner Storlie provided an overview of transitional changes over the past year in the County Administrator’s office. Together they provided an overview of the current challenges and the history of the budget overage that occurred with PPHS. Interim PPHS Director Plamen Dimitrov walked the board through how a budget overage was created related to client services and that there may be an option to recoup a portion of cost through probate. County Administrator Trebil-Halbersma explained that other counties are experiencing similar challenges with client placements due to limited availability of facilities in the state. Supervisor C. Johnson inquired how many times before had something like this happened with this level of funds being spent & Interim PPHS Director Dimitrov identified that this was the first time. Supervisor C. Johnson

inquired about the recent resignations within PHHS and County Administrator Trebil-Halbersma informed her that there were issues identified in the investigation that led to both resignations and terminations within the PHHS department. Supervisor C. Johnson inquired as to how the county is working to ensure that there are not issues across other departments and County Administrator Trebil-Halbersma noted that consultants had been brought on board to assist in rebuilding the PHHS team and indicated that recommendations for improvement would be brought to the PHHS board and the commissioners. The intent is to have a new full-time PHHS Director in place for the start of 2026.

Commissioner Storlie announced that the Truth in Taxation Meeting would be held at 6pm on Tuesday, December 2, 2025 at the courthouse. The levy has been set at a maximum of 7.57%. The County Board has asked departments to submit subsequent budgets with an additional 5% reduction. Commissioner Storlie also provided a handout to board members outlining the planned upgrades to the Tofte Transfer Station coming in 2026.

Supervisor C. Johnson inquired if the county's emergency plan guide will be completed by January. Commissioner Storlie was not sure, but hoped that it would. C. Johnson expressed her desire to have the plan presented at an open house in the west end of the county in the spring.

Treasurer's Report – Treasurer G. Engstrom presented the treasurer's report and provided an overview of the transition of investment account with Schwab, which is now linked to the township's bank account. The initial transfer of \$100,000 is complete and the second \$100,000 will transfer soon, which will allow him to begin purchasing investments on behalf of the township. Treasurer Engstrom identified that electronic transfers had begun for PERA payments and Clerk Brugge provided that in a disbursement report in addition to the claims report. Also reviewed was the duplicate PILT payment from Cook County. The township caught the error and did not deposit the check and instead returned it to the County Auditor's office.

Disbursements = \$89,105.59 Receipts = \$250.12 Total Financial Assets = \$434,875.64

T. McKeever motioned to accept the treasurer's report and approve claims presented of \$5,306.24 paid by checks #6148 - #6166. C. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

West End Lodging Tax – No numbers to report at this time

Treasurer Engstrom discussed that the CD at NSFCU will come due this month and proposed moving those funds to the Schwab account for investment.

C. Johnson motioned to approve the closure of NSFCU account and transfer it to Schwab. T. McKeever seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer Engstrom explained potential options to transition to Quickbooks instead of continuing to use CTAS from the MN State Auditor's office, and to have direct deposit for employees via Quickbooks Payroll option.

T. McKeever motioned to approve the transition to the Quickbooks Plus Plan and its Payroll Core Plan. C. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Fire Department – Fire Chief DeWandeler reported that there 3 calls; 2 vehicle accidents and 1 carbon monoxide call. Chief DeWandeler was trained on a new fire reporting system and will begin that new system with November’s calls. The IamResponding subscription is in the process of being renewed and the department has purchased a new tower light, 2 flood lights, batteries, and saw blades for cutting metal.

Road and Bridge – B. Martinson was able to close out the Skou Rd project in the FEMA website, but could not yet complete the closure of the Sugarloaf Rd project in the system due to technical issues and could not gain assistance due to the federal government shutdown. There was correspondence with the MAT attorney about potential options for road restrictions and the board will return to this topic next month.

Cemetery – B. Martinson check on the cemetery gate repair with contractor and was informed that there had not been progress at this point. The contractor assured Bruce it would be completed by April 2026. Reviewed cemetery plots for one family and confirmed their current purchased plots. B. Martinson winterized the water tank at the cemetery.

Recreation – Garbage at the park has been winterized and the port-a-potty has been removed.

Town Hall – Clerk Brugge provided an overview of recent septic system issues. The red alarm light will remain on until there is greater usage, as the sensors are detecting an empty system since the system was pumped in October.

Taconite Harbor Strategic Plan Update – Clerk Brugge attended the Taconite Harbor Strategic Advisory Group meeting on October 29, 2025 and provided an update regarding the intent of the group and the meeting schedule. All materials from the meetings will be posted on the Cook County’s EDA website. The next meeting will occur virtually on November 19, 2025 and will overview the physical state of the MN Power site.

Other Business:

Cook County Zoning & Planning – public hearing to potentially approve Schroeder Sub-Area Plan is scheduled for tomorrow. Clerk Brugge plans to attend in the event there are questions. Neva Maxwell had reported to B. Martinson that no public comments on the plan had been received thus far.

Correspondence

Sent – Letter to Cook County Commissioners on PHHS

Received – N/A

T. McKeever motioned to revise letter on PHHS issue and send as a letter to the editor to local newspapers. C. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments – N/A

Next Meeting: December 9, 2025

T. McKeever motioned to adjourned. C. Johnson seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 9:16pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Clerk Amy Brugge