

Madam Chair Peggy Clayton
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Supervisor/VC Mike Schack 340-8852
Supervisor Ryan Davies 929-0610
Supervisor Dan Gilbert 259-4967
Supervisor Jim Kelley 327-0317
Treasurer Nancy Kopacek 398-3497
Clerk Kelly Derfler 244-1811

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Mission Statement:
The Harris Town Board strives to enhance the quality of life, protect the environment, and maintain economic stability for the residents of their community.

www.harristownshipmn.org

REGULAR BOARD MEETING December 13, 2023 at 7:30pm MINUTES

Present: Madam Chair Clayton, Vice Chair Schack, Supervisors Davis, Gilbert, and Kelley; Treasurer Kopacek, Clerk Derfler

Pledge to the Flag was conducted; followed by the reading of the township mission statement.

Approve the Minutes

Minutes of November 8, 2023, Regular Board Meeting

A motion was made by Supervisor Gilbert and seconded by Supervisor Davies to approve the minutes of the November 8, 2023 Regular Board Meeting. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

Minutes of December 7, 2023, Closed Work Session re: Performance of Employee Under Board Direction

A motion was made by Supervisor Schack and seconded by Supervisor Kelley to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2023 Closed Work Session re: Performance of Employee Under Board Direction. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

Minutes of December 7, 2023, Work Session re: Security

A motion was made by Supervisor Schack and seconded by Supervisor Gilbert to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2023 Work Session re: Security. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

Additions and Corrections

Chair Clayton proposed to remove items 10F (Sick and Safe Time Policy) and 10G (Employee Handbook Update) and table them to the January 10, 2024 Regular Board Meeting. She also proposed adding Sick and Safe Time Policy and Employee Handbook Update to a Work Session that is to be scheduled under New Business. Supervisor Kelley proposed adding Schedule a Work Session re: Insurance as item 10M under New Business. Supervisor Gilbert requested to add Beaver Control at Woodtick Landing as item 7B under Recreation.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Gilbert to approve the removing items 10F (Sick and Safe Time Policy) and 10G (Employee Handbook Update) and table them to the January 10, 2024 Regular Board Meeting, adding Sick and Safe Time Policy and Employee Handbook Update to Schedule Work Session under New Business, adding Schedule Work Session re: Insurance as item 10M under New Business, and adding Beaver Control at Woodtick Landing as item 7B under Recreation, and approve the Regular Agenda. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

Business from the Floor

ICTV/Beth G.

Beth George, from ICTV, approached the board to advise of a drop in franchise and PEG fees and how that can affect the programming of Harris Township Board Meetings. The Grand Rapids Area Cable Commission has addressed this issue with the four entities in a Joint Powers Agreement (the City of Grand Rapids, the City of LaPrairie, the City of Cohasset and Harris Township). The funding for the programming of meetings comes from franchise fees from Paul Bunyan and Mediacom (5% of television products goes to the Cable Commission, of which ICTV gets 95%) and PEG fees (per subscriber, \$1.25 goes to ICTV for capital improvements).

As streaming has become more popular, the funding from franchise fees and PEG fees has dropped, as there is no way to recoup money from streaming. The Cable Commission will be looking at new ways to fund the communications process through television and streaming. ICTV’s budget has dropped by \$4,000 in the last year and a half. They will be doing fundraising, grant searches, etc., to make up for the difference in their budget. They are looking to the entities now for help with solutions for the shortfalls expected in the future. Harris Township has contributed \$34,470.00 through franchise and PEG fees.

2024 Projects/Sarah C.

Sarah Carling, of CEDA, approached the board to discuss projects that the board has identified for 2024. Chair Clayton met with Sarah a few weeks prior to the meeting to discuss possible projects and dollar amounts. Sarah was able to review these projects and is compiling a master list from area communities to create a plan for exploring and strategically contracting available grants without competing with neighboring communities.

Sarah would like the board to identify and prioritize projects for 2024, then schedule a work session for the end of January to discuss prioritizing the tasks of the projects and identify how they will be funded. The Board has already identified Casper Landing as a priority for 2024. Sarah recommended that the board prioritize between Wendigo Park and Crystal Park, as each will be costly. After discussion, the board made the decision to prioritize Wendigo Park for 2024. Supervisor Kelley will get the newest map of Casper Landing, prepared by SEH, to Sarah.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Davies to schedule a Work Session re: Casper Landing and Wendigo Park on January 29, 2024 at 3pm. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

**Consent Agenda
Zoning Land Use Permit
SSTS Permits**

A motion was made by Supervisor Schack and seconded by Supervisor Davies to approve the Consent Agenda as delineated above. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

Roads

Roads Update

Supervisor Kelley stated that the roads are clear of snow and that gravel roads are holding up.

Jess Harry Rd

Supervisor Kelley provided the board with a survey completed by SEH that shows the 1.4 miles of the shared portion of Jess Harry Rd between Blackberry Township and Harris Township. The survey shows Harris Township's ownership of 12,092 square feet and Blackberry Township's ownership of 10,069 square feet of this section of Jess Harry Rd. Historically, Blackberry Township has maintained this section of Jess Harry Rd, but is interested in having Harris Township share in the maintenance.

Blackberry Township will be discussing the SEH survey at their next board meeting, and then will discuss the possibility of a shared road agreement for the townships with Supervisor Kelley. Discussion followed. Supervisor Kelley suggested to table Jess Harry Rd to the January 10, 2024 Regular Board Meeting.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Schack to table Jess Harry Rd to the January 10, 2024 Regular Board Meeting. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

Bear Creek Rd

Supervisor Kelley shared information that was found when researching the maintenance responsibility of the end of Bear Creek Rd. Supervisor Kelley first provided the Road Certifications of Bear Creek Rd from the county dating back to 2015. The miles certified, and miles on contracted maintenance with Itasca County differed between miles certified and miles on contracted maintenance (1.72 miles certified starting in 2019 from new GPS reporting on dead end roads). The miles on contracted maintenance continued as reported 1.7 miles, rather than the updated 1.72. The end result is that the end of Bear Creek Rd did not change.

Supervisor Kelley found that Harris Township does have an easement at the end of Bear Creek Rd. He obtained a description of the easement from the Records Department and had the easement platted by surveyors. The easement provides the Township the option to extend the road in the future, if needed.

The original question, coming from the homeowner at the end of Bear Creek Rd, was asking why the 50-foot past the turn-around has not been plowed in the last 2-3 years. The snow-plow maintenance was confirmed to end in the same place it has been maintained to for as long as any documents or persons can remember. Supervisor Kelley contacted 3 prior District Foreman, an old grader operator, former Harris Township Board Supervisors, and a former Harris Township Maintenance Employee, going back at least 10-years in time. They all confirmed that snow-plow maintenance ended at the turn-around.

The current District Foreman from the County discussed problems with Supervisor Kelley that could occur if they were to plow beyond the turn-around with Supervisor Kelley, including leaving snow berms from the trucks that are only able to plow to the right side of the road and the narrow width of the easement with no turn-around. Discussion followed.

A motion was made by Chair Clayton and seconded by Supervisor Davies to send a letter to the constituent residing past the turn-around on Bear Creek Rd stating that the Board has resolved to leave the plow maintenance as-is, plowing only to the turn-around as has been done in the past years. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

2024 Road Projects

In closing 2023 Road Projects, Supervisor Kelley stated that there is an invoice expected for the sub-cutting on Mishawaka Shores and will be another invoice expected in the Spring for painting the lines on Mishawaka Shores.

For 2024 Road Projects, Sunny Beach Road Addition is scheduled for road construction. SEH would like to hold a pre-construction meeting for the residents on Sunny Beach Road Addition sometime after the first of the year. Sarah, from SEH, will have drawings prepared for the public. Discussion followed.

A motion was made by Chair Clayton and seconded by Supervisor Gilbert to move forward with SEH preparing the drawings for the Sunny Beach Road Addition Project and scheduling a pre-construction meeting for the residents of Sunny Beach Road Addition. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

SEH will send out letters informing the residents of Sunny Beach Road Addition of the pre-construction meeting. Chair Clayton will publish the meeting information on Facebook. Chair Clayton will also discuss the pre-construction meeting with the Township Attorney, if necessary, to ensure that the Township covers all the necessary requirements.

SEH 2024

SEH is working on the 2024 contract between Harris Township and SEH for engineering services. They would like to know what tasks will be included in the 2024 contract. The board suggested tasks for Casper Landing, Sunny Beach Road Addition Project, Cemetery, Wendigo Park, and Miscellaneous. Sarah Carling also suggested adding Grants for 2025 to the tasks. Supervisor Kelley will get the list of tasks to SEH for the 2024 Engineering Services Contract.

Recreation

Rinks

Supervisor Kelley stated that interviews with rink attendants are complete. There were four great applicants hired. The weather has not been cold enough to open rinks yet. Rinks will open as soon as the weather allows.

Beaver Control at Woodtick Landing

Supervisor Gilbert stated that there has been activity from beaver and/or muskrat at the Woodtick Boat Landing. He will monitor the situation.

Supervisor Gilbert also stated that the channel at Woodtick Boat Landing has debris that is blocking the channel that could be cleared with the low water conditions recently. Discussion followed.

Correspondence

Itasca County Township Association Minutes of November 13, 2023

Informational.

Itasca County Zoning Fees Increase

Informational.

Old Business

RAMS December 14, 2023 Annual Dinner and Elections

Chair Clayton stated that Supervisor Davies was nominated by the Harris Township Board to be on the ballot for the RAMS Board of Directors. Supervisor Davies is one of 12 members on the ballot for the RAMS Board of Directors, with 11 open seats. Supervisor Davies will be in attendance for the RAMS Annual Dinner and Elections on December 14, 2023. Supervisor Gilbert will be attending as well, with Chair Clayton attending if he cannot make it.

A motion was made by Chair Clayton and seconded by Supervisor Kelley to approve the attendance of Supervisor Davies and Supervisor Gilbert at the RAMS Annual Dinner and Elections on December 14, 2023 at 5:30pm. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

New Business

Resolution 2023-022 re: Approving State of Minnesota Joint Powers Agreement

Chair Clayton stated that in order to obtain an ORI (Originating Agency Identification), the board must pass this Resolution approving State of Minnesota Joint Powers Agreement with the Township of Harris on behalf of its Prosecuting Attorney. After this Resolution and Subscriber Agreement are approved, it will move forward to the BCA, and then will move to the FBI, who will assign the ORI for the Township. Once the ORI number is assigned, that number will be sent to Court Administration to be uploaded to the system(s), and then be sent back to the BCA. The BCA will provide signed copies and the ORI number back to the Township. The agreements are for a five-year period, and will then be automatically renewed.

Chair Clayton read Resolution 2023-022 in its entirety.

Madam Chair Clayton called for a Roll Call:

Supervisor Kelley:	Yes
Supervisor Gilbert:	Yes
Supervisor Davies:	Yes
Supervisor Schack:	Yes
Madam Chair Clayton:	Yes

A motion was made by Supervisor Schack and seconded by Supervisor Davies to approve Resolution 2023-022 re: Approving State of Minnesota Joint Powers Agreement and to approve the State of Minnesota Joint Powers Agreement. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

Court Data Services Subscriber Agreement to CJDN Subscriber Agreement

Chair Clayton stated that the Court Data Services Subscriber Agreement to CJDN Subscriber Agreement is also a necessary step to obtain an ORI for Township Collections.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Gilbert to approve the Court Data Services Subscriber Agreement to CJDN Subscriber Agreement. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

2024 Itasca County Township Association Meetings

Chair Clayton stated that the Itasca County Township Association meetings are attended monthly by the Board.

A motion was made by Supervisor Gilbert and seconded by Supervisor Davies to approve the Harris Township Board Supervisors to attend the 2024 monthly meetings for the Itasca County Township Association. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried. The 2024 Itasca County Township Association Meeting Schedule will be posted by the clerk.

Resolution 2023-025 re: Winter Burials

Chair Clayton read Resolution 2023-025 in its entirety.

Madam Chair Clayton called for a Roll Call:

- Supervisor Kelley: Yes
- Supervisor Gilbert: Yes
- Supervisor Davies: Yes
- Supervisor Schack: Yes
- Madam Chair Clayton: Yes

A motion was made by Supervisor Schack and seconded by Supervisor Davies to approve Resolution 2023-025 re: Winter Burials. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

Resolution 2023-026 re: Adopting a Sick and Safe Time Policy

Chair Clayton shared that in 2023 the Minnesota legislature enacted a new sick and safe time law which is effective on January 1, 2024. The earned sick and safe time leave is designed for temporary leave. This law does apply to townships, even if they only have one employee. The new law states that for every 30 hours worked, the employee will earn 1 hour of sick and safe leave, up to 48 hours earned per year. The Resolution, if approved, would denote Harris Township’s enactment of ESST (Earned Sick and Safe Time), effective January 1, 2024.

Chair Clayton read Resolution 2023-026 in its entirety.

Madam Chair Clayton called for a Roll Call:

- Supervisor Kelley: Yes
- Supervisor Gilbert: Yes
- Supervisor Davies: Yes
- Supervisor Schack: Yes
- Madam Chair Clayton: Yes

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Gilbert to approve Resolution 2023-026 re: Adopting a Sick and Safe Time Policy. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

Schedule Budget Sessions and Board of Audit Meetings

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Schack to schedule Budget Meetings at the Town Hall as follows: January 22, 2024 at 5pm, January 23, 2024 at 5pm, January 29, 2024 at 5pm, and January 31, 2024 at 5pm and a Budget Meeting and the Board of Audit on February 1, 2024 at 5pm. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

Schedule Closed Work Session re: Security, and a Work Session re: Sick and Safe Time Policy and Employee Handbook

A motion was made by Supervisor Gilbert and seconded by Supervisor Schack to schedule a Closed Work Session re: Security on December 18, 2023 at 5pm and a Work Session re: Sick and Safe Time Policy and Employee Handbook on December 18, 2023 immediately following the Closed Work Session re: Security. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

Schedule Closed Work Session re: Employee Appraisals, and a Work Session re: 2024 Admin Policy, Reorganization, and 5-Year Plan

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Davies to schedule a Closed Work Session re: Employee Appraisals on January 4, 2024 starting at 3pm and a Work Session re: Admin Policy, Reorganization, and 5-Year Plan on January 4, 2024 immediately following the Closed Work Session re: Employee Appraisals. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

Schedule Work Session re: Insurance

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Davies to schedule a Work Session re: Insurance on January 11, 2024 at 2pm. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Report for November 2023

Treasurer Kopacek presented the Treasurer's Report/Cash Control Statement, Outstanding Checks and Deposits Report, and Schedule 1a (statement of receipts, accrued, interest, disbursements, and balances). The beginning balance in General Fund for 2022 and 2023 has been increased by \$148.14 due to a voided Verizon Wireless disbursement EFT1282105 from December of 2021.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Davies to approve the Treasurer's Report for November 2023 in the amount of \$2,203,909.58. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

Payment of Claims

Treasurer Kopacek presented the Claims List for approval.

A motion was made by Supervisor Davies and seconded by Supervisor Schack to approve the claims list #21238 through #21264, EFT 12122301 through EFT 12122309 in the amount of \$85,086.03. Ayes-5; Nays-0. Motion carried.

Public Input

There was no public input.

UPCOMING Events/Meetings

January 4, 2024	Closed Work Session re: Employee Appraisals	3:00 pm Town Hall
January 4, 2024	Work Session re: Reorganization Admin Policy, 5-Year Plan	Immediately Following Closed Work Session re: Employee Appraisals
January 8, 2024	Itasca County Township Association Meeting	7:00 pm Courthouse Jail Tour
January 10, 2024	Regular Meeting	7:30 pm Town Hall
January 11, 2024	Work Session re: Insurance	2:00 pm Town Hall
January 22, 2024	Work Session re: Budget	5:00 pm Town Hall
January 23, 2024	Work Session re: Budget	5:00 pm Town Hall
January 24, 2024	P&D Meeting	7:30 pm Town Hall
January 29, 2024	Work Session re: Casper Landing, Wendigo Park	3:00 pm Town Hall
January 29, 2024	Work Session re: Budget	5:00 pm Town Hall
January 31, 2024	Work Session re: Budget	5:00 pm Town Hall
February 1, 2024	Work Session re: Budget and Board of Audit	5:00 pm Town Hall

Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the board, a motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Schack at 8:54 pm.

Prepared by:


Kelly Derfler, Clerk

Signed by:


Peggy Clayton, Madam Chair

