

**MINUTES from the P&D Meeting
Harris Township Board
Wednesday, November 28, 2012 at 7:30pm**

The regularly scheduled P&D Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, November 28, 2012. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Chairman Key, at the Harris Town Hall, with the following officers present: Supervisors Gary Rosato, Dennis Kortekaas, Larry Key, and Clerk Michele Smith. *Absent: Treasurer Becky Adams.*

Also in attendance: Dan Butterfield and Judy Myers – township residents

Note: Julie Kennedy – SEH Road Engineer, was *unable* to attend tonight's meeting due to medical reasons. .

1. Pledge to the flag

2. Business from the Floor

- Judy Myers thanked the board for installing lights along the end of the Town Hall ramp up to the front door; she said that while they do help light up the uneven areas to prevent tripping, the type of solar lights used were not ideal. Supervisor Key acknowledged that the lights do not provide the amount of illumination he'd hoped for, but that the crack in the ramp was filled in to make them safer. He said the entire ramp will be replaced in the spring of 2013.

3. Roads

- Julie Kennedy – SEH Road Engineer / Project updates
 - Julie was unable to attend tonight's meeting.*
- Other road issues/concerns
 - Crack-filling has been completed on Southwood Road by Commercial Asphalt. This was the last of the 5 roads that Supervisor Key asked them to repair.
 - Wendigo Park Road has a big hole in the middle of the roadway, as if a portion had been chiseled out. Key wondered if it was on the section line. He will look into further.
 - Wendigo Park Road didn't get plowed or sanded during the recent snowfalls, and the intersection was very slippery. Many of the other township and county roads *were* plowed and sanded, but not Wendigo Park Road. Key will check into.
 - Shouldering on Mishawaka Road – Supervisor Key reported that he is still getting complaints about the poor condition of the shoulders along a section of Mishawaka Road (east/west) where the road bed was raised, and the class I packing hasn't worked well. The road bed is narrow and the ditch is deep. When people pull over along the side of the road, parts of the shoulder break off. He will continue to work with Julie Kennedy on possible solutions.

4. Recreation

- Consider approval of Express Employment Professionals rate agreement, for 2012-2013 rink attendants Rate to employee – increased to \$8/hour – slight increase and fee

The board reviewed the current agreement with Express Pros. Last year, the rink attendants were paid \$7.50/hour but that rate increased to \$8.00/hour during the board's review of employees compensation in April 2012. This new rate was reflected in the new agreement. Express Pros bill rate also went up, from \$10.76 in 2011 to \$11.60 – or \$0.84/hour. The board commented that using Express Pros for Rink Attendants still works well, and that all the services they provide (as listed on the agreement) are well worth the additional fees.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kortekaas to approve the 2012-2013 rate agreement to pay Express Employment Professionals at a billed rate of \$11.60/hour for hiring 4 rink attendants, who would be paid at \$8.00/hour. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Rosato, and upon roll called passed by a unanimous vote.

- Ice rinks:

Supervisor Key reported that the maintenance guys sprayed rinks on November 26th in an attempt to start flooding them during the cold weather. However, the thin layer of ice has already melted.

5. Town Hall Report

The board reviewed the monthly town hall report as submitted by the Town Hall Caretaker, for October 10, 2012 to November 8, 2012. There were 2 rent free usages of the garage by the Humane Society, and 14 rentals of the town hall. The dollar amount collected for the month was not noted.

The board noted the comment at the bottom of the report regarding an apology from the Star of the North Humane Society over some miscommunication on the use of the hall, and the frequency of the usage. A representative of the neuter/spay program said they'd like to come talk to the board about this matter.

6. Maintenance Report

The board reviewed the monthly maintenance report as submitted by the maintenance crew. There were no accidents or injuries reported, and no questions by the board.

7. Old Business

- Intergovernmental Collaboration Opportunities Team meeting update (Supervisor Rosato)

Supervisor Rosato commented that the Intergovernmental Collaboration Opportunities Team has been meeting for about a year now. One accomplishment of their work is the collaboration between the City of Grand Rapids and Arbo Township, where the city is hiring a full time Public Works maintenance worker and leasing them to Arbo – where the township's needs are the worker's primary responsibility.

Members of this team include representatives from LaPrairie, Arbo, Grand Rapids (Administrator Shawn Gillen has taken a leading role), Coleraine, LaPrairie, Marble, Calumet, Coleraine, and a representative from Business North. Julie Kennedy also attends these meetings as she's associated with many of the other government units. Mary Jo Wimmer facilitates the meetings, funded by the Blandin Foundation.

Something that the team is currently working on is a joint powers agreement, where services are shared between cities and townships. One such service is financial services, where the City of Grand Rapids has contracted with the City of Bovey and a couple other smaller cities and townships. By performing these services (for a fee), the smaller township or city has more time to focus on more important issues. Overall, the team is working to develop a menu of options that cities and townships may benefit from through collaboration. Rosato noted that Harris Township could be the one helping another – it's not just about the city helping townships.

Rosato shared that the City of Grand Rapids clearly stated that annexation of Harris Township is NOT their desire; they are just interested in sharing some of their services if needed.

The Intergovernmental Collaboration Opportunities Team currently are currently meeting monthly in the basement of the Grand Rapids State Bank downtown building. Supervisor Key may also start attending the meetings so Clerk Smith will post a quorum notice prior to the group's meetings.

Their next meeting is Dec 18th from noon to 1:30pm at GRSB downtown building.

- Star of the North Humane Society – use of the town hall garage / town hall

The board discussed options of what to do about the Star of the North Humane Society's desire to use the town hall, rent free, for their neuter/spay program. The board recalled that when the use was proposed to them, use of the garage only was approved – for no charge – and that a town hall key was given to the group in case the use of a bathroom was needed. However, due some miscommunication, the hall has been used routinely by the group while clients dropped off animals, to do paperwork. The Humane Society hasn't had any success in relocating, and has asked the caretaker for permission to use just the garage until they can find something else.

The board agreed they'd like to try and make this work, as they felt the spay/neuter program was a great benefit to Harris Township and Itasca County residents; however, there were still some concerns. If the garage is used, the need for a bathroom was understood. However, if the hall was used and another person rented the hall for that same day, the double booking could result in problems if the hall was occupied by both parties at the same time. A solution was suggested, to put a portable bathroom out by garage. The cost for such would be \$70/mo for regular size and \$95/mo for handicapped bathroom.

Supervisor Kortekaas made a motion to allow the Star of the North Humane Society use of the town hall garage (only) at no cost, for 6 months, and to add portable bathroom near the garage so that the town hall would not be used for any reason. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Rosato and upon roll call, passed by a unanimous vote.

The board will review this matter again around the first of June 2013. Supervisor Kortekaas will order a portable bathroom to be delivered as soon as possible.

- Cemetery Policy – cremation urn vaults

Supervisor Key explained that the current cemetery policy needs to be opened up and revised due to funeral homes now offering urn vaults for use with cremation ground burials.

A cremation urn vault is a lined and sealed outer receptacle that houses the cremation urn, protecting it from the weight of the earth and cemetery maintenance equipment that will pass over it. Lined urn vaults provide protection from subsoil elements while preventing the ground from settling, thus maintaining the beauty of the grounds. Some cemeteries require the use of the urn vaults.

Recently, an urn vault was brought to the cemetery for burial above an existing casket. During conversations with the out of town funeral chapel, the clerk was told the urn was a little taller than normal, but a vault was not mentioned. However, due to the height of the vault, it was too tall to be buried above a casket vault. The urn vault would have required a 3 foot deep opening, but there is not enough space above a casket vault to allow this – as 18" of earth is needed above a burial. As a result, the family chose to bury the cremains and return the vault.

Key noted that the township's current cemetery policy regulations regarding bodies per grave, state that up to 4 cremation urns may be placed over an existing buried casket vault. However, this assumes that no urn vaults are used. However, if an urn vault is used, they cannot be placed over an existing casket vault and so the policy should be changed to clarify this.

In addition, the board discussed that the current fee schedule for a cremation opening is \$50, for a burial Monday – Friday, when there's no frost in the ground. The board agreed that this fee is not high enough to cover the opening needed for an urn vault due to its size and the precise measurements that need to be dug. Overall, it's a lot more work than opening the ground for just an urn. An increase from \$50 to \$125 was suggested.

The board discussed if it would be an option to bury the *casket* vaults any deeper, to create more space above them, but Key explained that to do so, we'd need a new backhoe. He also noted that there needs to be 18" of earth on top of a vault.

Clerk Smith offered to work on revising the cemetery policy and fee policy to clarify that:

- 4 cremation urns could only be placed above an existing vault, if no urn vault was used
- If an urn vault is used, it cannot be placed over an existing vault
- Harris Cemetery does *not* require the use of urn vaults (only casket vaults)
- Fees for cremation urn vaults would be \$125 M-F, when no frost is in the ground. A revised rate for summer weekends and winter burials will need to be determined as it was not discussed.

Smith will try to have something for the board to review at the December Regular Meeting on 12-12-12.

- Nuvo crack filler

Supervisor Key shared a handout with the board about the crack-filing product used by county (Nuvo); he also reported that the product requires that the tar pot have an “agitator” to mix it up. Since the township’s tar pot does *not* have such, we would have to rent the county’s tar pot when they are not using it.

Key could not find if Nuvo is ‘slippery’ when dry, as questioned by Supervisor Rosato. If it’s rubberized, that is what can be slippery, per Rosato. He agreed to call the number supplied by Key, regarding the Nuvo product made by Maxwell Products, in Utah.

The board discussed that our maintenance crew stopped doing crack filling of township roads when they were no longer able to get the product to do the repairs. It was at that time that the township started contracting with Commercial Asphalt for crack-filling. However, they were not able to get to all the roads the board wanted, in a timely manner. Being able to buy the product from the county, and rent their equipment, may be a better option. The budget for “crack-fill” could be used to purchase the product and rent the tarpot with agitator.

- Upper Mississippi Headwaters Task Force

The Upper Mississippi Headwater Task Force meets on Friday, Nov 30th from 9am to noon at the Blandin Foundation, and the Army Corps of Engineers will be there – including Colonel Price.

The check previously approved by the board to help pay for lunch buffet at the event should be made payable to Pizza Works, upon receipt of an invoice.

Supervisor Rosato will attend but neither Key nor Kortekaas will be able to be there.

8. New Business

- None

9. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Supervisor Rosato at 9:20pm with a second by Supervisor Key; the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith, Clerk of Harris Township