



MINUTES

from
March 12, 2013
Annual Meeting
Harris Town Hall
8:15pm

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

1. Call Annual Meeting to Order

The annual Harris Town meeting was called to order by Clerk Michele Smith at 8:15pm on March 12, 2013 at the Harris Town Hall. Approximately 22 residents were in attendance, including all board members (Michele Smith, Gary Rosato, Larry Key, Dennis Kortekaas, and Becky Adams); a copy of the sign-in sheet of attendees will be attached to these minutes. Also in attendance were ICTV, and Brian Carlson from the Itasca Fair Board.

2. Pledge to the flag

Everyone in attendance joined the Clerk in the pledge to the flag.

3. Election of a moderator

Clerk Smith called for nominations of a moderator for tonight's meeting. Rusty Eichorn was nominated by Larry Key, and Mike Ives was nominated by Dennis Kortekaas.

Upon a roll call of those in favor of each nomination, it was determined by the Clerk that the electorate voted by a show of hands to approve Rusty Eichorn as the Moderator of the Annual Harris Town Meeting.

4. Approve minutes of the annual meeting held March 13, 2012

The minutes were provided for everyone's review in the annual report packet handed out at tonight's meeting. Chairman Eichorn dispensed the reading of the minutes. There were no questions or comments from the residents in attendance.

A motion was made by Leann Stoll, seconded by Judy Myers, to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2012 Annual Town Meeting as written. Upon roll call, motion carried.

5. Receive and approve the Treasurer's Annual Financial report for 2012

The Treasurer's Annual Financial Report for 2012 was included in the annual report, on page 11. The report recapped the beginning and ending township fund balances of 2012 and the revenue/disbursement transactions by fund.

There were no questions or comments from the floor.

Dan Butterfield made a motion, seconded by Jim Wicklund, to approve the Treasurer's Annual 2012 Financial Report as presented. Upon roll call, motion carried.

6. Review Road Report

A written road report was included in the annual meeting agenda packet, and included Road & Bridge fund levy information from 2012, road work completed in 2012 with associated expenses, and proposed road work and estimated costs for years 2013 and 2014.

The Clerk explained that this was a new report, as required by MN statute 164.03 subd. 4., and was included to provide information for discussion only; there was no need to formally approve said report.

There was some discussion by audience members, noting that the Road & Bridge Levy for 2012 was \$430,000, yet only \$388,000 was collected – due to residents not paying their property taxes in a timely manner.

Another member asked what the annexation possibility was for those roads noted in the report that were proposed for improvement. The board responded that, based on meetings they've had with the City of Grand Rapids staff, there is no intention nor desire to annex any part of Harris Township. However, the board reminded the audience that annexation can be requested by the landowner via petition – such as a developer with a bordering property, who wants city services.

With no other comments or discussion, the moderator moved on with the agenda.

7. Review Levy Comparison for years 2009 through 2014

A levy comparison, by fund, from 2009 actual to 2014 proposed, was provided for everyone's review in the annual packet. Chairman Eichorn recapped that the total proposed levy for 2014 was \$865,000. This was an increase of \$20,000 from prior years, as the same levy amount had been adopted in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013. Only one fund levy amount changed for 2014, and that was the General Fund, which increased by \$20,000.

8. Consider Approval of the 2013 Operating Levies

There were two options listed under item 8, to either a.) Approve the proposed operating levy for 2011 in total, or to b.) Approve operating levies by fund.

Mike Ives made a motion to approve the 2014 proposed operating levy in total, in the amount of \$865,000, as shown by fund in detail on pages 17 – 26 of the Annual Town Meeting Report. The motion was seconded by Mike Hendricks, and upon roll call, motion carried by a unanimous vote.

9. Review Resolution #2008-004 Donation or Contribution Request Policy

Chairman Eichorn referenced the Resolution #2008-004, noting it was passed by the Harris Town Board on May 14, 2008. He read the resolution aloud, which stated that the Harris Town Board determined it was not appropriate to donate public township funds to private or non-profit organizations, as it's difficult to ascertain the direct benefit to the township. As a result, it was resolved that all future requests for donations or contributions made at annual meetings would be denied by the Board, with the exception of donating *by levy* to the Itasca County Historical Society and Agricultural Fair Board, both of which are specifically allowed by Minnesota statutes. There were no questions or comment from the audience.

10. Consider each request for a donation/contribution or an additional levy

- **Itasca County Historical Society**

A letter was received from Lilah Crowe, Executive Director of the Historical Society, asking for special **levy** of \$1.00 per capital for 2014, which totaled **\$3,253** annually, based on Harris Township's 2010 census figure. This is the same amount per capita that has been requested and awarded the past several years,

Lilah Crowe was *not* attendance to present on the special levy request, but several residents commented on the high value of the Historical Society.

A motion was made by Burl Ives, seconded by Larry Key, to approve a \$1.00 per capital special levy for the Itasca County Historical Society, collectible in 2014, which represents an annual amount of \$3,253.00 based on the 2010 census. Upon a vote, the motion for a special levy passed unanimously.

- *Itasca County Agricultural Society (aka Fair Board)*

Brian Carlson, a Fair Board representative, gave a presentation in support of the letter received by Clerk Smith, which asked for a **\$1,000.00** donation via a special levy for 2014. Brian explained that the funds would be used for operational support of the Itasca County Fair, and not for capital improvement projects.

Brian talked about the clean up that was necessary from the July 2012 wind storms, including downed trees and damage to their new fence around the fair grounds. He also talked about a special educational event that held for high school students and elementary kids involving a water study done at the lake, and a weather forecaster from WDIO television who spoke about storm predictions, how important water is to us. Carlson commented that there were no capital improvement projects planned for 2013, due to the expenses used from that fund for fence and other damage repair from the storms.

Discussion from the audience:

- A resident asked if the \$1,000 from Harris Township would be used to maintain the public building that contained the bathrooms. Carlson said no, as that was paid for by the county.
- Another resident asked what would happen to the township levy donation if there were no fairgrounds by 2014. Carlson explained that the Agricultural Association planned to still be around, but that they are only leasing the grounds from the County (for \$1), and so it may be a question to ask the county board about. Rusty Eichorn, moderator and County Commissioner, commented that he did not anticipate the fairgrounds going away, and appreciated the great partnership in having the Agricultural Association manage the fairgrounds.
- A resident asked Carlson if there was ever any money left over from donations. Carlson answered that no, there was not.
- There were other comments and questions from the audience regarding issues at the fairgrounds, but the moderator determined them to be a county issue rather than a township issue, and suggested that residents contact him, or anyone else on the county board, to discuss these issues outside the township annual meeting.

Dan Butterfield made a motion, seconded by Larry Key, to approve a 2014 special levy for the Agricultural Association (Fair Board) in the amount of \$1,000.00. Upon a vote by the people, the motion carried unanimously

- The following nonprofit agencies submitted letters of request for a township donation, as show in the back of the annual report. However, no one was in attendance to make a presentation for any of the agencies, nor was there any action from the floor when reviewed one by one. Therefore, no action was taken on the requests for donations from the following:
 - Support within Reach
 - Home Visitor Program

11. Old business

There was no old business from the residents in attendance, but Eichorn reviewed Harris Township's *2012 Accomplishments* as listed in the Annual Meeting Report packet; he commended the board and residents on everything that was done in Harris Township the past year.

12. New business

- ***Walking Trails***

A resident of Woodland Park Road spoke about three walking trail maps that were discussed at the February 27, 2013 Planning & Development meeting of the Harris Town Board. The maps showed three possible options to connect the Pokegama Lake causeway bridge walkway, to a proposed walking trail along Mishawaka Road, in hopes of connecting to the newly constructed trail by the City of Grand Rapids. The resident had concerns about a walking trail safely crossing Highway 169 to Woodland Park Road. She also had concerns about spending money on a trail system instead of township roads, and would prefer the board stop and desist on moving forward until trail costs are known, and resident interest confirmed.

A resident of Mishawaka Road voiced concerns of the swampland and runoff in the township's Mishawaka Road right-of-way, where the proposed trail would trail would go. She also felt that community input should be obtained before any planning is done on the trail system.

Another resident reminded the audience that a trail connecting the causeway walkway and a county or city trail was discussed at several township comprehensive planning meetings during 2012, and that these meetings were well advertised. He noted that exploring options and costs was beneficial, and having interns do the work for a minimal price was a beneficial.

Another resident liked the idea of determining options and associated costs, and pros/cons of each, *before* having a public input session as that is a big part of what everyone will want to know.

The members of the Harris Town Board responded that a proposed trail is in the very infant stages of a feasibility study only, and that no decisions have been made regarding implementation of a trail. The Feb 27th P&D meeting was the first they saw the proposed options as presented by the township engineering interns from ICC. The board desired a feasibility study be done by the interns as a part of the board's due diligence for the recreation trails requests as noted on page 6 of the Harris Township comprehensive plan.

Moderator Eichorn stated that because the proposed walking trail system is only an idea at this point, no action can be taken on it tonight's meeting. He suggested that further discussions on the project be continued at future town board planning and development meetings in order to flesh out the pros and cons, and funding opportunities. .

- ***Petition for a 5 member board in Harris Township***

A resident advised the audience that a petition was recently conducted within the township to have a question put on the next township election ballot, for a 5-person board. The petition stated that those who signed "believe that the size of the township warrants a 5 member board; more people on the board will allow for more input and wiser, more knowledgeable decisions." The petition was certified by the county and presented to the town board, who acknowledged they are thus required to place the petitioned for question on the ballot for March 2014 election.

- ***Notice of Township Elections and the Annual Town Meeting***

Based on comments from the audience members that they are often unaware of when the township elections and annual meetings are held, moderator Eichorn clarified that notice is posted at the town hall, published in the Grand Rapids Herald Review newspaper, and is on the township's website home page. Both the township election and annual town meeting are always held the second Tuesday of March, on Minnesota's official 'Township Day'.

13. Set time for next Annual Meeting, in year 2012

Chairman Eichorn noted that the Minnesota State Statues dictate that the Annual Town Meeting be held the second Tuesday in March, but that the *time and place* must be set by the people.

Dan Butterfield made a motion, seconded by Mark Adams to set the time for the 2014 Annual Harris Town Meeting for 8:15pm at the Harris Town Hall, with the Board of Canvass meeting to held immediately following the Annual Meeting. Upon roll call, the motion carried.

13. Adjourn

With no other business, questions, or concerns voiced by the people of Harris Township, Mike Ives made a motion, seconded by Dan Butterfield, to adjourn the Annual Meeting of Harris Township at approximately 9:00pm. The meeting was adjourned.

In summary, the following levies were approved for 2014:

General Fund Operations	\$120,000
Historical Society (\$1/pp of 2010 census)	\$ 3,253
Itasca Co. Agricultural Assoc. (Fair Board)	\$ 1,000
Road and Bridge Fund	\$430,000
Equipment Fund	\$ -0-
Cemetery Fund	\$ -0-
Recreation Fund	\$ 40,000
Building & Grounds Fund	\$ 50,000
Fire Fund	\$ 85,000
Capital Improvement Fund	\$140,000
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	\$869,253

Note: The Board of Canvass Meeting was held right after adjournment of tonight's Annual Meeting, where election results were announced. (See those minutes for results.)

Respectfully submitted,

Michele R. Smith, Clerk of Harris Twp