

**MINUTES from the REGULAR Meeting
Harris Township Board
Wednesday, December 11, 2013 at 7:30pm**

The Regular Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, December 11, 2013. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm, at the Harris Town Hall, with the following officers present: Supervisors Larry Key, Gary Rosato and Dennis Kortekaas, as well as Clerk Michele Smith and Treasurer Becky Adams.

Also in attendance: Resident Judy Myers.

1. Pledge to the flag, followed by the reading of the township mission statement

2. Approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on November 13, and the Planning & Development on November 20, 2013.

Motion by Supervisor Rosato, second by Supervisor Key, to approve the minutes as presented. Upon roll call, motion carried.

3. Business from the floor

- None

4. Treasurer's Report: For November 1– 30, 2013

- Treasurer recapped her December 2013 Treasurer Report as follows:
 - Nov 1, 2013 beginning balance: \$ 991,732.17
 - Receipts: \$ 8,550.18
 - Disbursements: \$ (63,256.18)
 - Nov 30, 2013 ending balance: \$ 937,026.17

Motion by Key, second by Rosato, to approve the December 11th Treasurer's report of November 2013 financials. Upon roll call, motion carried.

5. Roads

- Non standardized culvert

Supervisor Key shared a photo with the board of a non standard 8" culvert that looks like it will be installed at 29215 Sunny Beach Road. (The other non standard culvert Key mentioned at a previous meeting, was snow covered and so he was only able to get a photo of this one.) This small 8" culvert has not been installed yet.

The location of this address is near Hale Lake and the culvert could fail with a lot of rain or runoff, due to its small size. The township's culvert policy (Resolution #2008-006) states that any new access off a township road requires a culvert, unless deemed unnecessary by the board. And, the standard culvert size according to the policy is 15" or 12" in diameter with aprons. This larger culvert size is required as it is less likely to plug from ice, debris or beaver activity.

The board asked the Clerk to send a letter to the resident at said address, and explain that if there's any damage due to the failure of the undersized culvert, that the township would not be held responsible. A copy of the culvert policy should be included with the letter, and direction to contact Supervisor Key with any questions should be noted.

- Snow removal after recent storm:

Supervisor Key reported that he received several complaints after a recent snow storm regarding the lack of snowplowing township roads. For example, Sunny Beach Road was not plowed, and a lot of people got stuck. The snow on Sunny Beach Road is now packed – making the surface is terrible to drive on.

Supervisor Rosato explained to the public that our township has limited capabilities for plowing snow. Our maintenance crew only plows parking lots, recreation areas, the cemetery and boat landings – and a few short roads. The township contracts with the county to plow its roads – and they do not guarantee a bare road. As a result, it is up to the users of the roads to drive within its means.

Rosato went on to say that they as supervisors do appreciate resident calls, and they will contact the county foreman or engineer to request plowing as soon as possible. However, the last storm was 3 days long and the

county was plowing *during* the storm, even though technically their policy is not to plow until after the storm is done. Also, Rosato learned that the county plows in 3 phases:

1. First time, they clear a pathway on the road
2. Then they come back and widen the path, and also sand the road
3. Finally, the county plow comes back a third time to do clean up – as needed

If there's an emergency, residents are advised to call 911 – and a plow will be dispatched.

The plowing priority is county roads first, then contracted (township) roads – especially connector roads (which they may do at time of county roads) – and then driveways.

- Ruff Shores Road – sign missing

When a person redid their garage on Ruff Shores Road, the end-of-maintenance sign disappeared; the township maintenance crew will look for it in the spring – or install a new one.

6. Recreation

- Wendigo Rink

The ice on the Wendigo Rink has holes in it, and then got filled with the snow that blew in. Key reported that hopefully by the end of the week, there will be decent ice on at least one of the rinks. Key also noted that he's been in contact with Express Pros and they have rink attendants ready to go.

7. Correspondence

Board Action items:

- None

Noteworthy items:

- Collaborative Opportunities Team minutes – November 2013

Non-action items

- Copies of Itasca County approved sewer, land use, or building/property permits, and approved conditional use permit for Donald LaPlant / Casper Construction for borrow pit use
- Copy of the MN Association of Townships (MAT and MATIT) audit financial summary statements

8. Consent Agenda

- None – but consider allowing renewals for healthcare coverage, if the change in premium is 10% or less, and continued coverage with the same carrier is recommended by the Treasurer. (See Resolution #2013-004 – item # 6-2-b, and Resolution #98-3)

Treasurer Adams explained that the healthcare renewal date changed recently, so the township would see a reduction in premiums. Usually, the renewal would not have been until Nov 1st, 2014 but it was changed to January 1st 2014 so they township could take full advantage of new, lower rates starting in January 2014 – instead of waiting until November 2014 for the rates to take effect. As a result of the new renewal date, the board approved policy and rates needed to be in BCBS's hands by December 15th – which was really cutting it close with today's meeting on the 11th. In the future, the town board meeting date may fall after the policy approval due date – and so, it was requested that this item be considered for the consent agenda - if the change in premium is 10% or less, and continued coverage with the same carrier is recommended by the Treasurer.

The board approved the request as suggested, and the Clerk will revise the Consent Agenda policy resolution #98-3 accordingly, and bring back for board review and adoption at an upcoming meeting.

Regarding the renewal, the premium was decreased by 8.5%, and the benefits remained unchanged – though the out of pocket maximums did go up.

9. Old Business

- Update on rotary dial vs. touch tone phone line at Town Hall by Century Link

Upon investigating the 'clicking' sound when pushing the touch buttons on the town hall phone, it was determined that the cause was just a setting on the phone. It was adjusted, and the phone works fine now; there is no need to contact Century Link as originally discussed.

- Update on satellite internet – for town hall

Supervisor Rosato, at the request of the board, looked into satellite internet for the town hall as Paul Bunyan does not serve the area, Century Link does not service the area, and Mediacom will only connect residential parties - not businesses. He found a company listed on the Lake Country Power site, via Northland connect, called Exede. Clerk Smith printed off information from their website and brought it tonight for the board to review. The board will discuss at a meeting in January, after having some time to digest its contents.

In the mean time, Treasurer Adams agreed to look into the option and cost of having internet during town meetings using a 'hot spot' via an officer's cell phone. Supervisor Rosato will try and contact Mediacom again about hook up, and Clerk Smith will research the disadvantages of internet via satellite, such as the data limits, a 2 year required contract, and bad weather usually means bad internet service.

- Thank you card from Humane Society

A thank you card was received from the Star of the North Humane Society, who used the town hall and garage for their "neuter commuter" drop off and pick up site in 2013. They have their own office now so no longer need to use the town hall/garage – but thanked the board for allowing them to use the buildings; doing so allowed them to have 55 cats/dogs fixed per month.

- Thank you card from Kidder Stanley

A thank you card was received from Kidder Stanley, thanking the board for installing the "blind approach" sign on Sunny Beach Road

- The registered sex offender has moved out of Harris Township, per Supervisor Key.

10. New Business

- Consider approval of BCBS healthcare policy renewal, for maintenance crew

As previously discussed, the new healthcare premium was reduced by 8.5% based on the township's classification due to the new healthcare reform, with no reduction of benefits – though the out of pocket maximums did increase for both in and out of network benefits. A rate comparison and benefit summary was shared with the board by Treasurer Adams. The new rates would take effect with the new renewal date of January 1, 2014.

A motion was made by Supervisor Rosato, seconded by Supervisor Key, to approve the Blue Cross renewal healthcare policy as presented in the Wells Fargo summaries (see attached), with a annual premium for the two maintenance workers of \$11,5444.36/yr, effective 1-1-2014. Upon roll call, motion carried by a unanimous vote.

- Consider approval of the Express Professionals 2013-2014 Rate Agreement – for rink attendants

Clerk Smith shared the new Express Professionals rate agreement with the board for the 2013-2014 season, for rink attendants. The *bill* rate of \$11.84/hour was a slight increase over last season's agreement rate of \$11.60/hour. It was clarified that the rink attendants are paid \$8/hour – but the township pays the billed rate.

Motion by Supervisor Key to approve the Express Professionals 2013-2014 Rate Agreement as presented for the hiring of skating rink attendants for Wendigo and Crystal parks, at a billed rate of \$11.84/hour. The motion was seconded by Rosato and upon roll call, motion carried by a unanimous vote.

- Consider approval of the "Harris Township 2014 Meeting Schedule" for publication

After reviewing the 2014 meeting schedule as prepared by the clerk, a motion to approve for publication in the Grand Rapids Herald Review was made by Supervisor Rosato and seconded by Supervisor Key. Upon roll call, the motion was passed.

- The filing period for township offices (1 supervisor for a 3 year term, and 1 clerk for a 2 year term) will be December 31, 2013 to January 14, 2014; cost is \$2. Interested residents should contact the clerk for an appointment.

This was just a reminder by the clerk; there was no action necessary by the board.

- Waste management – look at other options?

Treasurer Adams reminded the board that the Waste Management contract comes up for renewal in January 2014. The board had shown interest in reviewing a quote for garbage removal services from Local Boy, when their current contract with Waste Management was up. Adams will check on the need for a 90 day cancellation notice, as noted on the Waste Management form, and get a quote from Local Boy.

11. Approve payment of bills: for December 2013

Treasurer Adams noted that the bill list for December included the final payment to Itasca County for the 2013 road projects; the township paid 95% up front, so this was balance due. Also, included were the workers compensation premium, and the township website hosting renewal fee to Avnet.

Motion by Supervisor Key, second by Rosato, to pay the bills per the attached document titled “December 2013 Bill Listing to Board” in the amount of \$35,175.27. Upon roll call, motion passed by a unanimous vote.

12. Public Input (*please limit comments to 5 minutes*)

Judy Myers asked about the proposed Mishawaka landing project, and how many parking sites would be gained by removing the dirt and trees in the center area. The board responded that they were not sure yet but estimated they would gain at least 3 parking sites – plus extra space to maneuver around.

13. Adjourn

With no other business to come before the board, a motion was made by Key, seconded by Rosato, to adjourn tonight’s meeting at 8:13pm. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith, Harris Township Clerk

December 2013 Bill Listing to Board		Description	Amount
Larry Key	Mtgs, wages, labor, less withholding plus expenses		862.09
Gary Rosato	Mtgs, wages, labor, less withholding		519.04
Dennis Kortekaas	Mtgs, wages, labor, less withholding		602.71
Michele Smith	Mtgs, wages, labor, less withholding plus expenses		1,091.43
Becky Adams	Mtgs, wages, labor, less withholding plus expenses		195.52
Bonnie Key	Cleaning labor, showing, less withholding		464.73
Dan Key	Labor less withholdings		2034.68
Derrick Marttila	Labor less withholdings		2131.68
PERA	ONLINE pmt:: Payroll withholding		1264.88
Andersen, Earl F.	9" name plates - street, snowmobile sign		315.61
Avenet	Annual Service Package - website		500.00
Burggrafs	invoice 222729		103.18
Century Link	November phone service		295.00
Davis Oil	Nov invoices - fuel		110.11
Ferrellgas	gas for hall, garage, service center, grave heater		358.43
Grand Rapids Public Utilities	Utilities; lights and town hall		169.45
Home Depot	ONLINE:: concrete		141.24
Itasca Cty Highway Dept	final costs - overlay projects: stony point, westwood, southwood, robinson		11,871.06
Itasca Cty Recorder	record deed - fideldy,karnes		92.00
L and M	November invoices		7.58
Lake Country Power	ONLINE pmt:: energy bill - service center, wendigo, crystal, cemetery		413.05
MATIT	workers compensation premium 1/2014-1/2015		5,513.00
Minute Man Press	copies for meetings		55.14
Portable John	crystal, wendigo, cemetery portables		1,710.00
Range Water	cooler rental dec plus cooler in store 5 gal		27.25
S E H	Engineering services: board prep, 2014 road planning, site inspections, ruff shores		1,032.50
Treasure Bay Printing	name plate: hodgson		28.85
Verizon	cell phones through 12/12/13		162.54
Waste Management	3 yd rel on call		16.63
Commissioner of Revenue	Payroll withholding :: electronic payment		563.00
EFTPS	Payroll withholding :: electronic payment		2,517.89
Wells Fargo Bank	checking account fee		5.00
Total			\$ 35,175.27

Approval to pay :: December 11, 2013, Checks numbered 16205 through 162

Larry Key

Gary Rosato

Dennis Kortekaas