

**MINUTES from the P&D Meeting  
Harris Township Board  
Wednesday, April 23, 2014 at 7:30pm**

The regularly scheduled P&D Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, April 23, 2014. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Chairman Kortekaas at the Harris Town Hall, with the following officers present: Supervisors Gary Rosato, Dennis Kortekaas, Larry Key, and Treasurer Becky Adams and Clerk Michele Smith. *Absent: none.*

Also in attendance: Glen Hodgson – Road Engineer from SEH, and residents Dan Butterfield, Judy Myers, and Cyndy Martin.

**1. Pledge to the flag**

**2. Business from the Floor**

- Judy Myers: What is the process to move the annual township election from March to November?

***Supervisor Key made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Kortekaas, to add this item to tonight's agenda, under "Old Business". Upon roll call, motion carried.***

**3. Roads**

- Discuss proposed 2014 Road Projects with Glen Hodgson – SEH Road Engineer:

- ***Gravel Road Project for 2014***

- Bear Creek Road is the only road on the gravel road project in 2014, due to its length. This is consistent with the 4-5 year rotation schedule for all township gravel roads.
- The estimated construction only cost, per Hodgson: \$42,750.

- ***Proposed Paved Road Projects for 2014*** (see attached memo from SEH)

The following roads were at the top of the town board's priority list for improvements in 2014. Hodgson noted that the costs are estimates, and for construction only. Another 20-25% should be *added* to the estimates (shown below), to cover engineering costs and contingencies:

- *East Underwood* – reclaim: \$138,600
- *West Underwood Road* – revert to gravel \$ 73,500 (neighborhood meeting recommended)
- *Lakeview Drive* – reclaim \$ 75,800 (neighborhood meeting recommended)
- *Harbor Heights* – overlay \$ 42,200 (to include turn around, used for years)

Hodgson commented that all of the above were good road projects to do – but the board will need to determine what is affordable.

The board confirmed that they would like to hold a neighborhood road meeting for West Underwood Road, to hear the residents opinions on reverting this dead-end section of the road back to gravel. They also wanted to hold a neighborhood road meeting for Lakeview Drive, as residents expressed a desire previously to have input on road improvements, in part due to drainage issues. Also, the board decided that Harbor Heights Road could be included with the Lakeview Drive meeting, given their close proximity to each other.

**A motion to schedule two neighborhood meetings on Wednesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at the Harris Town Hall was made by Supervisor Key; the times would be 7:00pm to 8:00pm to discuss Underwood Road and from 8:00pm to 9:00pm to discuss Lakeview Drive and Harbor Heights Road. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Kortekaas, and upon roll call, motion passed by a unanimous vote.**

Hodgson agreed to send out meeting notices to residents of the affected roads after he returns from vacation, next Wednesday April 30<sup>th</sup>.

- Discuss which meetings the board would like Glen Hodgson to attend during the spring & summer months

Beginning effectively, the board asked Hodgson to attend both Regular and Planning & Development meetings, unless notified otherwise.

- **Other Road issues/concerns/comments:**

- Fieldcrest Road

Supervisor Key reported that Fieldcrest fell apart this year. At the end of the road, the field let loose and the resulting runoff has caused a washout under the roadbed, and part of it caved in. There is also a culvert with a hole in it. Key had Casper Construction fill in the damaged road area with class V, as it was a safety concern, but the road will need some work this spring – either a patch or an overlay. And, the culvert will need to be replaced. It was noted that there is not much of a ditch in that area, due to the way the field drains. The board requested that Hodgson look at the damaged area of Fieldcrest. Supervisor Key agreed to meet him out there.

- Northwest Asphalt Maintenance proposal for rubberized crack fill

A proposal was shared by Supervisor Key from Northwest Asphalt & Maintenance. The proposal was for \$40,000 worth of rubberized crack fill material for township roads, as approved by the board previously.

The proposal noted that at a cost of \$1.39/lb, the order would be for 28,777 lbs of material. The process was outlined by Northwest Asphalt, noting they first router out the cracks, then blow them out with compressed air to clean, then heat lance to dry, and then fill with Crafcro rubberized sealant that meets ND DOT standards. They also put paper on hot rubber to protect until dry.

Key commented is hard to know ‘far’ this will go, or how many road they can repair, as it all depends on the number of cracks repaired on a road, as well as their size.

***Although the board had previously approved to order \$40,000 worth of crack-fill material, Supervisor Kortekaas made a motion to approve the official proposal from Northwest Asphalt Maintenance as presented, for 28,777 lbs of rubberized crack fill, installed, at a cost of \$1.39/lb. Supervisor Key seconded the motion, and upon roll call, motion carried by a unanimous vote.***

It was noted that the township will need a certificate of insurance from the company.

- Road inspection sheets

Glen Hodgson agreed to get the supervisors their road inspection sheets in the next couple weeks, for use during annual road inspections – to be done prior to the annual road meeting on May 28<sup>th</sup>.

#### 4. Recreation

- Nothing reported

#### 5. Town Hall Report – for March 5, 2014 to April 10, 2014

The board reviewed the report provided by the Town Hall Caretaker. There were no accidents or damages to report.

#### 6. Maintenance Report – for April 2014

The board reviewed the monthly report as supplied by the township maintenance crew. Supervisor Rosato confirmed that there were no garbage cans at the public accesses. There were no other comments, nor concerns.

#### 7. Old Business

- What is the process to move the annual township election from March to November? (Asked by Judy Myers)

Clerk Smith read a brief article from the Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT) information library regarding moving to November election, written by attorney Troy Gilchrist:

## 4.2 ELECTION DATE AND LENGTH OF TERMS

Townships may hold their general elections in either March or November. The second Tuesday in March has been the traditional township annual meeting and Election Day. Statutes permit townships to move their elections to the first Tuesday in November, every other year, even or odd, with four or six-year overlapping terms. A town that has adopted the November date for the town elections using four-year terms may also adopt a resolution establishing six-year terms for supervisors. Changeover to the uniform Election Day may be proposed by the board or by a resolution submitted at the annual meeting. The ordinance or resolution must include a plan for lengthening or shortening the terms and staggering the terms, and it must be passed by the voters at the next town general election.

Meyers expressed she would like to see the annual township election moved to November to increase voter turnout, as it would then be held in conjunction with state and federal elections. The turnout for the March township elections has historically been very low given the number of registered voters in Harris Township, while the turnout for state and federal general elections is much higher.

The board stated they were *not* in favor of moving the township election to November, as it is part of grass roots government and Township Day – the second Tuesday of March – and goes along with the annual town meeting, also held the second Tuesday of March. In addition, those coming to vote in March are truly coming to vote for officers of the town – as they are the only names on the ballot.

To address Meyers question about how the *public* can have a question to move to a November township election placed on the town ballot, Clerk Smith explained the following as outlined by MAT:

**Town Elector Initiated:** *The town electors may initiate the question of moving to a November election by passing a resolution at the annual town meeting. (The next annual meeting is in March 2015)*

*If the resolution is passed, the town board is required to develop a resolution or ordinance proposing the change and containing the plan to shorten or lengthen the terms to make the transition.*

*The question to move the election is then submitted to the voters on the ballot at the next town general election (This would be in March 2016).*

Smith added that if the question to move to November election passes in March 2016, she was not sure if the first Township November election would be Nov 2016, or not until Nov 2018 – but felt it would be the latter.

Meyers asked that the clerk send this information to herself via email. Dan Butterfield also asked for a copy. Clerk Smith agreed to forward the information.

- Update on additional microphones for the town board

With the addition of 2 new supervisors coming on board, Clerk Smith had been researching the cost and availability of 2 additional microphones used by ICTV during the recording of the Regular Meetings. However, she found they were not readily available and that the cost could be \$350 each – plus an additional mixer may be needed.

The board commented that since the township has 6 desktop microphones currently, each of the 5 supervisors could have one and the clerk and treasurer could share. And, the SEH road engineer could use the hand held microphone. Therefore, there shouldn't be a need to purchases additional microphones at this time as the board will make do with what they currently have.

- Report out from the Collaborative Opportunities Meeting on April 22<sup>nd</sup> (if attended)

No one from the board was able to attend this meeting.

- Clarifications from the April 16<sup>th</sup> work session, regarding employee and board compensation:

- Review “Employee Compensation Policy”; any changes?

Clerk Smith explained that this policy, as a part of the Employee Handbook, indicates the wages for the townships temporary employees, including the rink attendants, summer maintenance interns, moderator of the annual meeting, and election judges.

The policy currently states:

◆ <b>Temporary Employees:</b>	<b>Wage as of May 2013</b> (to be reviewed annually)
• Skating Rink Attendant:	Wage will be \$8.00 per hour
• Summer Intern / Maintenance Crew:	Wage will be \$11.00 per hour
• Moderator of Annual Town Meeting:	Wage will be a flat meeting rate of \$60.00
• Election Judges:	Wage will be \$10.00 per hour For training time and hours worked on Election Day. - and - Mileage will be paid at a rate <b>equal to</b> the IRS Federal mileage reimbursement rate for election training and work related travel mileage

The board discussed that the minimum wage would be going up, but the exact details were not known for the township as a small group employer. For large group employers, the increase was thought to be going up at a slow and steady pace to \$9.50/hour by 2015. Clerk Smith reminded the board that this policy just needs to be reviewed once a year, but can be changed at any time.

- Regarding the Rink Attendants rate, Treasurer Adams agreed to work with the temporary employment agency when it comes time, regarding any change to minimum wage vs. the \$8/hour rate paid by the township.
- Regarding the summer intern and moderator rate, the board agreed with no change.
- Regarding the election judge pay, Clerk Smith commented that this rate was recently increased to the current \$10 to be in line with what Itasca County pays their judges. She will check with them and report back to the board if any change is recommended.

- Clarification of Town Hall Caretaker’s current and recommended rates

Clerk Smith commented that when typing up minutes from the April 16<sup>th</sup> work session from the audio recording (as she was unable to attend), it sounded like the board was under the impression that the town hall caretaker’s current cleaning rate was \$14.50/hour when in fact it is currently \$14.75/hour. Smith wanted to bring this to the board’s attention in case it would affect their recommended cleaning rate increase to \$15.00/hour.

**The board agreed that this information did *not* affect their motion made 4/16/14 to recommended the town hall caretaker’s rates be increased to \$15.00/hour for cleaning and \$14.50/per showing – a \$0.25 increase to both current rates.**

- Review of town officers compensation (note second page of Resolution #2013-005)

Clerk Smith asked the board review page 2 of resolution #2013-005, and consider if any changes were desired, as a part of the annual compensation review. The items on page 2 were as follows:

- Annual Town Meeting

The Town Board requires that the Treasurer be at the Annual Meeting, and therefore is entitled to be paid the per diem meeting rate for attending this meeting.

- Newsletter and Website Updates  
The Town Board approved (April 2008) that hours worked to prepare the newsletter and to maintain/update the website could be claimed as allocated labor. (This is currently done by the Clerk)
- Mileage Reimbursement:  
When it is necessary for Town Officers to use private automobiles to perform their duties on behalf of the town, Town Officers shall be eligible to have their mileage reimbursed for the miles traveled at a rate equal to (2012) the Federal standard mileage reimbursement rate in effect at the time of travel. Town Officers are not eligible for mileage reimbursement for attending regular or special board meetings, hearing or annual or special town meetings held within the Town. The reimbursement is on an “as needed” basis, to be determined by the Officer, and would include, but is not limited to, the township annual road inspections, out-of-town meetings, education as approved by the Board, and resident calls for inspections.
- Detailed Claims:  
No Officer shall receive compensation or be reimbursed for expenses incurred unless and until they submit a written claim report to the Board, detailing the activities supporting the claim for compensation and the specific basis for all expense reimbursement requests. Claims for compensation or requests for reimbursement of expenses shall be made on Board approved forms at the next following Regular board meeting.  
Reimbursement requests for purchases must be supported by original receipts, or, if not available, other supporting documentation found sufficient by the Board.
- Life Insurance  
A group life insurance policy through the Minnesota Benefit Association, in an amount to be determined by the Town Board, will be provided for each Town Supervisor, Clerk and Treasurer (Deputies are not covered). Currently, the Life Insurance for officers is a \$20,000 Term Life Policy.
- Retirement  
The Public Employees Retirement Association of Minnesota (PERA) plan is used for each Town Supervisor, Clerk and Treasurer (Deputies are not included)

**The board agreed no changes were needed** to these compensation items.

- New riding lawnmower  
Supervisor Key let the board know that the new John Deere lawnmower is in at Pokegama Lawn & Sports: In order to get the government discount rate, they need a purchase order from the township. Treasurer Adams and Clerk Smith agreed to work together to provide this information to Key.
- Tax on township trucks:  
There was a question for Treasurer Adams regarding the tabs for the township trailers and pickup. She stated that she needs to find out if the township is tax exempt on *regular* truck – or if the exemption only applies to the township *pickup* trucks. She’ll check with MAT and report back to the board.
- Portable John – request to see proposal  
Supervisor Kortekaas stated that Portable John has asked to see a copy of the Northland Portables proposal, which won the 2014-2015 township award. Clerk Smith agreed to provide that information, as it is public information.

## 8. New Business

- Review “Letter of Engagement” from auditor Wipfli, LLP and consider approval of details and of the rate for 2013 audit preparation.

Treasurer Adams explained that the letter lays out what the auditor will do for the township during the audit of 2013 financials and administrative procedures at a rate not to exceed \$6,000. If approved, the board was asked to sign the original, and return to the auditor. Adams recommended the board's approval.

***A motion was made by Supervisor Key to approve letter of engagement by Wipfli as submitted, for a rate of up to \$6,000, and have the chairman sign off accordingly. Upon a second by Supervisor Kortekaas, the motion carried by a unanimous vote.***

## 9. Public Input

- **Dan Butterfield**

-During the road project discussion, Hodgson noted that there would be added costs for engineering and contingencies, in the amount of 20-25%. Butterfield asked for clarification of what that meant / what that would be for.

Hodgson explained that the cost supplied was what is what paid to the contractor. Contingencies are issues or additional needs that come up during construction that we don't know of right now. For that portion, he estimated maybe 10% of the construction cost. The engineering costs are what SEH pays him for preparing bids, documents, overseeing construction as well as preparing the road plans, including the grade, ditching work, plan drawing, etc. However, Hodgson commented that he put more time put into last year's projects when they were being built, than when drawing up the plans. And when he's on the job, he expects to be paid. The estimate for engineering costs was 10-15% of the construction cost.

The board added that they are not engineers; they are there to run the town business and so need the expertise of a road engineer.

-Butterfield also followed up on a previous request for job descriptions for the township maintenance & town hall caretaker positions as well as for the supervisors, clerk and treasurer.

Clerk Smith explained that the township does not have job descriptions for the town office positions as they are dictated by state statute. She agreed to work on getting him job descriptions for the township employee positions.

## 10. Adjourn

***Motion to adjourn was made at 9:06pm by Supervisor Kortekaas, and seconded by Supervisor Key. Meeting adjourned.***

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith – Harris Township Clerk