

**Minutes from the Work Session
Harris Town Board
Wednesday, August 31, 2015 at 7:00pm**

A work session of the Harris Town Board was held on Monday, August 31, 2015 at Harris Town Hall, 21998 Airport Road Grand Rapids, MN. The work session was called to order at 7:00pm by Chairman Rosato. (This work session was open to the public, but was not televised nor recorded by ICTV.)

In attendance were Supervisors Rosato, Kortekaas, Kelley, Haubrich, and Ives, as well as Clerk Smith and Treasurer Adams. *Absent:* None

Also in attendance was Glen Hodgson – SEH Road Engineer for the township, and residents Linda Bender and Judy Myers.

The purpose of this meeting, as posted, was to:

- Discuss and map out a 5 - 10 year road plan for paved roads in Harris Township.
- Discuss the estimated costs of road repairs & improvements, and the related budgeting options (bonding, levy increases, special assessments, etc.).
- Possibly discuss new rating system for bituminous roads

Hodgson passed out 2 handouts for the board to review:

1. A timeline with costs, for proposed road projects – from 2016-2030
2. An updated preliminary 5-year project list, with 2020 and beyond projects added

Hodgson discussed “Part 2” of the second handout, the roads. In this section, Hodgson listed roads that, in his opinion as a road engineer, should be rehabilitated in the next 5 years (2016 to 2020) and the estimated project costs:

- **2016:** \$2,567,000
Sunny Beach Road (entire road: overlay Adair to Harris Town Rd; the rest reclaimed)
- **2017:** \$490,000
Birch and Isleview (both reclaimed)
- **2018:** \$989,000
Cemetery, Sunny Beach Addition, Romans Rd, Sunny Lane, Gary Drive and Field Crest (all reclaimed)
- **2019:** \$962,000
Alicia Spur, Little Crystal Lane, Tolerick Drive, Alicia Place, Mishawaka Shores, Pine Street, Norberg Drive and Woodbine Lane (all overlays)
- **2020:** \$306,000
Wesleyan Road and Aspen Drive (both overlays)

TOTAL (2016-2020): 5.5 million
2016-2017 only: 3 million

Funding options discussed were: Bonding, increasing the levy, assessing residents, or not doing the repairs.

Rosato commented that the 2016-2020 rehabilitation plan felt like a “Cadillac plan” but that he did not feel all the roads listed needed to be entirely reclaimed or overlaid. Some could be patched – especially the dead end roads. Hodgson agreed that Norberg could be pulled out, as it was saved with recent wide-crack filling. Ives shared he’d like to see Mishawaka Shores moved up in the priority, and felt strongly that Fieldcrest should be rehabilitated soon.

Overall, while the board was not in agreement with which road repairs were needed and when, **the board and Hodgson agreed that Sunny Beach Road, Birch Street and Islevie Road were a top priority.**

Bonding was discussed at length:

- Bonding for the full 5.5 million for all roads of the proposed 5 year plan, and bonding for 3 million for just Sunny Beach / Birch / Islevie were the two main amounts considered for bonding.
- Overall, the board determined they were *not* comfortable bonding for 5.5 million as the payback amount was just too much, and way above the current budget and levy. :
- The payback amount for a 3 million dollar amount was much more feasible. With a 15 years loan, their annual payment was estimated by Baird to be apx \$250,000/year. This would allow the township to make the bonding payment without *having* to raise the levy – as the current levy includes \$300,000/year for just major road construction in the Road & Bridge Fund, plus \$110,000 in the Capital Improvement road dedicated fund. These amounts would allow the township to payback of the loan *plus* have \$160,000 left for other road projects. However, to have more funds to do more road projects each year, the board agreed that the levy would likely need to be raised over time to get back to the \$300,000/year amount that they have now.

In addition, it was noted that there would be a balance of \$342,000 in the Capital Impv Fund-road dedicated fund at the end of 2015, which could be used if needed for road repair project.

Also, it was clarified that the major construction line item levy was \$300,000. This amount does *not* include gravel, patching, crack fill, etc. There are separate line items budgeted for those projects that are a part of total road fund levy, but not of the \$300,000 major construction line item amount.

- Being able to pay back the bond without having to raise the township levy – at least for a year – was desirable as residents are also being faced with a school board referendum, the Blandin conservation land issue, and an Enbridge tax.
- One option discussed to bring in some extra funds for roads was selling some of the township property near the cemetery. They have 11 acres for a cemetery expansion, but may only need 6 or 7.
- The “pros” for bonding to complete 2016 road projects included:
 - Money has never been cheaper than it is now; interest rates are low – 2.87 to 2.97% for a 15 year amortization.
 - Oil prices are currently low as well, which would save on the cost of bituminous.
 - A larger project would bring better competition (sharper pencils by contractors) and less mobilization costs.

A 5-Year Road Plan was also discussed at length:

- In order to bond, the board needs to have a strong 5 year road plan, which is reviewed at a public hearing
- If a 3 million dollar bond is decided upon, the board will need to review the roads in Section 2 of Hodgson’s proposed road plan and determine which roads they can agree need to be rehabilitated over the next five years, and in what priority. They should consider if any roads can be bumped out of the rotation or just patched.
- A 5-year road plan would not be carved in stone; it would be reviewed and adjusted each year – just as the County reviews their 5 year road plan annually.

- Hodgson suggested the following schedule that he would refine with specific road names and estimates, for board review at an upcoming meeting:
 - 2016: Sunny Beach Road, Birch Street, Isleview (bonding for \$3 million would cover the cost)
 - 2017: Roads repairs, for up to \$350K (the current levy and capital impv fund would cover costs)
 - 2018: Roads repairs, for apx \$350K (the levy would cover these costs)
 - 2019 Roads repairs, for apx \$350K (the levy would cover these costs)
 - 2020: Roads repairs, for apx \$350K (the levy would cover these costs)
 (Roads would roll down as needed, to 2021 and beyond)

The board liked this idea. Hodgson will try to have something for the board to review at the next meeting on September 9th. He'd then recommend the board consider making a motion to adopt/approve the 5-year plan and begin the bonding process. The proposal would also include having SEH do the necessary surveying – as Hodgson would like to do this season before snow is on the ground.

Road rating and repair evaluation report

- Supervisors Kelley and Rosato went through the township road files and found when paving or rehabilitation was last done on the following roads:
 - Birch Street: 1982 took over road from private development; paved 1996
 - Gary Drive: pre-1988
 - Isleview: 1996 (1984)
 - Fieldcrest: 1999
 - Sunny Beach (Adair to Harris): 2001; other sections not known but early 1990's per a resident's memory.
 - Underwood Rd (west): 2015
 - Tolerick Road: 1999
 - Mishawaka Shores: 2002
 - Pine Street: 1996
 - Norberg Drive: 2001
 - Woodbine: 2004
 - Pine Landing: 1982
 - LaPlant Landing: Not known
 - Woodland Park Rd: 2007
 - Wesleyan: 1998
 - Aspen Drive: 2002
 - Verde Lane: 2004
 - Chippewa: 2007
 - Winnebago: 2007
 - Winston-Taylor: 2001
 - Jess Harry Corner: 1984
 - East Harris Rd: Not known
 - Keyview: 2012
 - Little Crystal Lane: Per Linda Bender, who was in attendance, this road had not been repaired in over 30 years. They built their home in 1986, and it was paved already. There are many reoccurring pot holes, despite the maintenance crew's efforts to fix. There are 12 houses on this dead end road. Two school buses go down the road daily now, as well as a weekly garbage truck. A turnaround was added for the snowplow and busses.
 - All other roads: Not known
- The newest preliminary 5-year project report from Hodgson was reviewed; it was noted that the column for traffic count was hidden, as well as how the road was rated last time, and a summary of the 'review' factors.

Ives expressed that he would find it helpful to know how many homes are on each road, to assess usage. And he'd like to know traffic counts on roads listed for 2018 and 2019 rehabilitation.

Next steps:

- Hodgson will bring a revised 5 year road plan and time line for consideration at the next board meeting
- He will also share the full 2014 Road Evaluation Data spreadsheet, with all the information columns showing, for board review and consideration

Supervisor Kortekaas made a motion to adjourn tonight's work session at 9:56pm. Upon a second by Supervisor Kelley, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith – Harris Township Clerk