

**MINUTES from the P&D Meeting
Harris Township Board
Wednesday, February 25th, 2015 at 7:30pm**

The regularly scheduled Planning & Development Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, February 25, 2015. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Chairman Rosato at the Harris Town Hall, with the following officers present: Supervisors Gary Rosato, Larry Key, Dennis Kortekaas, Jim Kelley, and Burl Ives, as well as Clerk Michele Smith and Treasurer Becky Adams. *Absent:* none.

Also in attendance: Residents Dan Butterfield, Marge Kelley and Cyndy Martin and Mike and Karen (parents of a rink attendant for the township)

1. Pledge to the flag

2. Business from the Floor

- None

3. Roads

- Letter from Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) regarding wetland replacement application on Underwood Road-west.
 - Clerk smith reported that Glen Hodgson, road engineer from SEH, emailed her to say that he was not concerned about this letter regarding the wetland replacement application. In checking with their wetlands people, Hodgson found that the letter received from Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District is not anything unusual. It was received because the SWCD staff needs to do a field review of the site before approving. Since the wetlands are now snow-covered, they will need to wait until "green-up" to do that review. Hodgson did not anticipate any problems once spring comes, and suggested that he and the board continue to move forward with the ditching and overlay project as discussed.
- Review annual snowplowing contract from Itasca County, for May 1, 2015 through April 30, 2016. Snow plowing rate of \$700/mile, up from \$660/mile. (Signed contract not due until 4/16/15)
 - Clerk Smith commented that she wanted to share the full road contract from Itasca County with the board so that they have a chance to review prior to approval. In addition, she wanted them to be aware of the rate increase for snowplowing, from \$660/mile to \$700/mile. No action was requested tonight, but she will put it on the agenda for the April Regular meeting for consideration.
 - Supervisor Ives noted that on Attachment A of the contract, which lists all the township road names and related mileage, Sunset Drive did not have a "number" as all the other roads did. The board agreed this should be brought to the county's attention, and have a number assigned.
- *Other road issues / concerns*
 - None

4. Recreation

- Rink attendant complaint (Crystal Park)
 - Supervisor Ives explained that he'd received a phone call from a resident who lives in the Crystal Park area. The resident was upset about the rink being snow covered and that the attendant had not shoveled as he was instead inside the warming shack playing video games. The resident said this happened three times in three weeks. A picture of the attendant and the computer was shared by the resident with Ives – and was shown to the board (only). Supervisor Kelley added that he'd received an almost identical complaint regarding the Wendigo Park ice rink and attendant.

The responsibilities of rink attendants were discussed by the board. They are provided by Express Professionals to all applicants, and a copy kept at each warming house. Supervisor Key, who supervises the rink attendants, explained that he requires attendants to clear off snow on the rinks only up to the boards, to avoid potential back injuries; the maintenance crew then will snow blow the snow along the boards out of the rink. Key added that with the 3" snow fall we had recently, that he did not expect the attendants to shovel the entire rink – just half. And, he added that he does allow the attendants – once done with their duties – to do homework, or video games, as it can be quite boring when no one shows up at the rinks.

Overall, Key felt the current rink attendants are doing a good job and commented that the maintenance crew was in support of them as well. Key reported that he did talk to the two attendants who watch the Crystal rink, but wasn't aware of the Wendigo rink complaint until tonight. He will also talk to those attendants.

The parents of one of the Crystal rinks was in the audience; they felt their son was doing a good job, and that rinks had been shoveled whenever they'd stop there to bring him lunch.

With no other discussion, Chairman Rosato summarized that Supervisor Key has addressed the issue and that it hopefully is now resolved. If not, a closed session to discuss this as a personnel matter could be held.

- Creative Services via Mike Hendricks contract

Supervisor Kortekaas asked the board about Mike Hendricks contract via Creative Services – as he was not at the meeting when the contract was discussed but not approved. Kortekaas would like to bring this back to the table for consideration so that Hendricks could finish the current project of the Wendigo Park game court restoration. Chairman Rosato recapped that at the January P&D meeting, a motion had been made to table the consideration of Hendrick's Creative Services contract until after the budget meetings. That motion failed due to a tie vote, and thus the lack of a majority vote. A subsequent motion to approve the contract also failed, due to a tie, and lack of a majority vote.

Supervisor Kortekaas then made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Key, to contract with Creative Services/Mike Hendricks for 2015. Discussion:

Supervisor Ives explained that he was not in favor of hiring a consultant for recreation projects, and felt that residents would prefer to see the township's money spent on roads rather than a basketball court. And, while he agreed Hendricks does a great job, that the town board and maintenance crew could handle any necessary recreation needs. If not, a consultant could be hired on a project by project basis, eliminating the need for an annual contract.

The board discussed that Hendricks contract is for an hourly rate, with no minimum and no a flat rate for the year. Costs were reviewed for his prior years: 2013 contract total was \$1,600. 2014 contract total was \$3,200 due to extra time on the tennis courts, the Wendigo Picnic Park improvement options and shoreline research.

Rosato and Key commented that they were in favor of having Hendricks on contract in case the board needed professional and technical advice as there would be no cost to the township unless the board authorized him to work on a specific project. Kortekaas agreed and added that consultants – like Hendricks – may not be willing to do small consulting jobs without an annual contract. And that since Hendricks had already had plans for the Wendigo game court, and had researched contractors and received estimates, he'd like to see at least this project completed by Hendricks in 2015.

Supervisor Key added that while roads may be the priority of some residents, there are many that do not live on a township road (they live on a county or state highway) – and may prefer that money be put into recreation, the town hall, or the cemetery rather than roads.

When discussion ended, a roll call vote was called. Those who voted in favor of contracting with Creative Services for 2015 were supervisors Key, Kortekaas, and Rosato. Those opposed were Supervisors Ives and Kelley. Motion passed.

5. Town Hall Report dated February 9, 2015

- The board reviewed the report as submitted by the town hall care taker. There were 30 hours of cleaning, and 13 resident rentals plus 1 by the Flyway club. Money collected was \$475; there were no deposits retained. The report also included a recap of items requested verbally by the town hall caretaker at an earlier budget work session, of town hall repairs, replacements and improvements.

6. Maintenance Report for January 2015

- In reviewing the new report format, Supervisor Ives commented that when he totaled the hours by area for both guys, he did not come up with a figure that made sense to him. Clerk Smith wondered if maybe had to do with the time frame covered in their report; was it for the actual calendar month of January (1st – 31st) or was it for the number of hours reported in their last pay period, which could be 4 or 5 weeks? The answer was not known.

7. Old Business

- Discuss updating current culvert policy, Resolution #2008-006; consider tabling until after MAT short course session on "Culvert Installation & Maintenance" to be held on April 2nd at the Sawmill Inn.

Clerk Smith recapped that the culvert policy resolution was reviewed by the board at the February 11th Regular meeting, and they agreed that the policy should be reviewed at a future meeting and updated. Smith added that the board had also recommended it be updated back in 2016, but it fell off their radar. To avoid this, she recommended the board choose a specific meeting to review the policy – preferably after the upcoming MN Association of Township short course session where culverts would be discussed. Smith also suggested that the board consider inviting Glen Hodgson, road engineer from SEH.

A motion was then made by Supervisor Key to put "Discuss and update township culvert policy (resolution #2008-006)" on the agenda for the April 8th Regular Meeting. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Kelley and passed by a unanimous vote.

The board also agreed that Glen Hodgson should be invited to this meeting; Clerk Smith stated she would contact him.

- Paul Bunyan Communications - build out update (see emails and map)

Clerk Smith had contacted Paul Bunyan (PBC) to request an update of build out done in Harris Township in 2014. She was told that a small stretch down highway 169 was completed in 2014 as planned, but that the area south of that to the Pokegama Lake causeway had *not* been completed. For 2015, Brian Bissonette, Marketing Supervisor for PBC said that expansion plans would not be finalized until April or May – but that Harris Township remains on their list for consideration.

Smith will report more after hearing back on 2015 plans by PBC

- Northwest Gas Joint Powers Board – meeting update and financials (see email)

In follow up to 2014 inquiries, Clerk Smith contacted Mike Gorman of Northwest Gas to ask if a 2014 Joint Powers Board meeting had taken place, which had been in the scheduling process many months prior. Gorham's email said that they did not have any meeting in 2014. However, he had Northwest Gas 2014 financials just about finished and is planning to initiate the meeting process in the next few weeks. In that meeting, he plans to review the Northwest Gas's financial performance since inception, present his view of where future rates should be, and submit them for approval by the Joint Powers Board as well as have a general information sharing on their future plans for system expansion. He agreed to contact the clerk when the meeting date is determined – hopefully within a month or so.

Clerk Smith will advise the board when she hears back from Gorham.

- Request to invite Wildwood Town Board to March 18th work session to discuss motorized trail

Clerk Smith received a call from Megan Christianson from Visit Grand Rapids regarding the upcoming March 18th Harris Town Board work session that was set up in response to her presentation at the January 28th P&D meeting. She and Len Harding from the Rapids Riders ATV club came to the Harris Town Board to request

they consider holding a work session to review maps and discuss potential motorized trail locations that would connect the City of Grand Rapids trail to that near 9 mile. After the group's meeting with Wildwood Township last week, Christianson explained that the Wildwood Town Board would like to be a part of the Harris Township work session, so the two boards could discuss options together.

In the spirit of collaboration, Chairman Rosato spoke in favor of inviting the Wildwood Town Board to the upcoming trails work session.

A motion was made by Supervisor Ives, seconded by Supervisor Kortekaas, to invite the Wildwood Town Board to the Harris Town Board trails work session on Wednesday, April 18th at 7pm, at the town hall. Motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Clerk Smith agreed to contact the Clerk of Wildwood Township to extend the board's invitation.

- Newsletter update

The newsletter prepared by the resident volunteers (Cyndy Martin and Judy Myers) was finalized over the weekend, and was sent to Rapids Printing – as recommended by Myers. Clerk Smith also sent them the updated and modified address database file from SEH. The newsletter is currently being printed and Smith was told it would be ready to mail by Monday, March 2nd.

However, Smith added that she'd found out at 3:00pm today that postage for the newsletters must be paid *up front*. The postage due was \$449.22, to be made payable to Postmaster. Smith requested the board approve that a check be issued for the postage so that she could drop it off at Rapids Printing later this week, in hopes that the newsletter would be in residents' hands prior to the annual meeting coming up on March 10th.

A motion was then made by Supervisor Kelley, seconded by Supervisor Ives, to approve that a check be cut tonight for \$449.22, payable to Postmaster, for the newsletter postage so that it could be mailed out by Rapids Printing in time to reach residents before the annual meeting. Motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Treasurer Adams clarified that she did not have the checkbook with her *tonight*, but that she could get a check to the clerk the next day (Thursday 2/26). Chairman Rosato agreed to meet with the clerk and sign the check that day as well. Smith agreed to drop of the check either Thursday or Friday at Rapids Printing.

The board asked about cost for putting out the newsletter. Smith said she had a quote from Rapids Printing for 1,500 newsletters - to be printed, folded, tabbed, and addressed using our Excel file - for \$628. This was a discounted rate, based on issuing the newsletter quarterly, as suggested by the volunteers. The postage rate for bulk mailing was apx \$0.29 -\$0.30 each. So, the total cost of preparation and postage would be approximately \$1,100/quarter. That equates to almost \$4,500/year.

Chairman Rosato thanked the volunteers for their time and effort on the newsletter. He asked if, after doing this first one, if they still planned to put them out quarterly. Martin said that maybe twice a year would be enough, as it was a lot of work. Myers thought quarterly may still be a good idea, but that getting articles by a hard deadline would be key.

8. New Business

- Notice of Board of Appeal & Equalization received, to be held Thursday, April 23th, at 9:00am
(Town hall has been reserved, and notice will be published as the date gets closer.)

The board was told to put Thursday April 23rd at 9:00am on their calendars for the annual local Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting, held with representatives from the Itasca County assessor's office. Smith noted that she would publish the meeting, as required by state statute, in the Herald Review at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

- Consider approval of the draft proposed budget and levy pages for the township's Annual Report

Clerk Smith shared copies of the most current proposed budget and related budgets spreadsheets by fund, as updated after the board's last budget work session discussions held on February 17th. Smith wanted to make sure that she had captured the board's recommendations correctly prior to including them in the annual town report.

The overall levy for 2016 was proposed at \$930,000 – the same as the 2015 levy. The breakout of the levy by fund was: General=\$140,000, Road & Bridge=\$490,000, Equipment=\$0, Cemetery=\$0, Recreation=\$25,000, Buildings & Grounds=\$60,000, Fire=\$75,000, and Capital Improvement=\$140,000.

A motion was made by Supervisor Ives, seconded by Supervisor Kortekaas, to approve the 2016 proposed levy and associated budget worksheets as presented for inclusion in the annual report. Upon roll call, those who voted in favor of the motion were Supervisors Ives, Kelley, Kortekaas, and Rosato. Those opposed were Supervisor Key. Motion passed.

- Authorization of Town Treasurer Adams for Wells Fargo account

Treasurer Adams explained that the town currently has their checking account with Wells Fargo; they also have a credit card through Wells Fargo as well, for use by the maintenance crew for online purchases. Currently, there is a \$25 automatic deduction from the checking account to pay the credit card account, as the bill is generally not received in time for board approval during the Regular meeting. Adams said she would prefer to be able to pay the bill in full online, but that she can't as she currently is not an authorized signer for that account. Thus, she requested that the board approve her as a signer for the Wells Fargo account.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley, seconded by Supervisor Ives, to add Treasurer Becky Adams as an authorized payer of the Wells Fargo account. Motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Adams had a form that would establish her as a signer; it was completed and signed by Chairman Rosato and attested by Clerk Smith.

Supervisor Ives asked if any other banks had ever been considered for the town depository - especially one that was more of a 'local community bank' than is Wells Fargo. The board did not recall that this had ever been done. Clerk Smith reminded the board that they designate a bank as the town depository during the March re-organization meetings, and so that would be a good time to change banks if so desired. Or, she suggested that the board could table the bank designation at the reorganization meeting, and check into other banking options.

9. Public Input

- None

10. Adjourn

With no other business to come before the board, a motion was by made by Supervisor Ives at 8:41pm to adjourn tonight's P&D meeting. Upon a second from Supervisor Kortekaas, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith – Harris Town Clerk