

**Minutes from the
Annual Harris Town Meeting
March 8, 2011
8:15pm
(DRAFT)**

1. Call Annual Meeting to Order

The annual Harris Town meeting was called to order by Clerk Michele Smith at 8:15pm on March 8, 2011 at the Harris Town Hall. Approximately 18 residents were in attendance, including all board members (Michele Smith, Gary Rosato, Larry Key, Dennis Kortekaas, and John Jokela); a copy of the sign-in sheet of attendees will be attached to these minutes.. Also in attendance were ICTV, Brian Carlson from the Itasca Fair Board, Lilah Crowe from the Itasca County Historical Society, and Jennifer Utecht, regarding the Pokegama Lake walkway.

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 Mike Hendricks; no other nominations were received.

Upon roll call, the electorate voted unanimously to approve Rusty Eichorn as the Moderator of the Annual Harris Town Meeting. There was no one opposed.

4. Approve minutes of the annual meeting held March 9, 2010

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.

A motion was made by Larry Key, seconded by Dan Butterfield, to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2010 Annual Town Meeting as written. Upon roll call, motion carried.

5. Receive and approve the Treasurer's Annual Financial report for 2010

The Treasurer's Annual Financial Report for 2010 was distributed by the Treasurer for everyone's review. Treasurer Jokela recapped the beginning and ending balances shown in the report, funds, transfers in/out and balances.

There was one question from the audience, asking if Harris Township receives 100% of their approved levy. Jokela explained that due to foreclosures, and some people not paying their property taxes, the township actually only gets about 90% of the approved levy. This means that the township does not get approximately \$80,000 of the levy requested. There were no other questions or comments from the floor.

Treasurer Jokela announced to the constituents that he had accepted a job outside of the state, and will be moving to Portland, Oregon at the end of March. He thanked the board for the opportunity to serve as Treasurer of Harris Township for the past 2 years. The Board thanked John for his great service.

Dan Butterfield made a motion, seconded by Larry Key, to approve the Treasurer's Annual 2010 Financial Report as presented. Upon roll call, motion carried.

6. Review Levy Comparison for years 2007 through 2012

A levy comparison, split by fund, from 2007 actual to 2012 proposed, was provided for everyone's review in the annual packet. Chairman Eichorn recapped that the total proposed budget for 2012 was \$845,000. This was the same amount that was adopted in 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011.

7. Consider Approval of the 2012 Operating Levies

There were two options listed under item 7, to either a.) Approve the proposed operating levy for 2011 in total, or to b.) Approve operating levies by fund.

Gary Rosato made a motion to approve the 2012 operating levy in total, in the amount of \$845,000, as shown by fund in detail on pages 14 – 24 of the 2010 Annual Town Meeting Report. The motion was seconded by Mike Hendricks and upon roll call, motion carried by a unanimous vote.

8. 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. In brief, it 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 Co. Historical Society and Agricultural Fair Board, both of which are specifically allowed by Minnesota statutes.

9. 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 2012, which totaled **\$3,282** annually based on Harris Township's 2010 census figure. This is the same amount per capital that has been requested and awarded the past several years, though in total it decreased due to a decrease in the Harris Township population (the 2000 census was 3,328; the 2012 census was 3,282).

Lilah Crowe was in attendance and gave a presentation to the people. She shared the status of Old Central School, where they are located, and how the rent there is increasing. Also, she commented that visitation in research center has increased due to interest in genealogy, and that ansestory.com has joined them.

A motion was made by Larry Key, seconded by Shirley Wicklund, to approve a \$1.00 per capital special levy for the Itasca County Historical Society, collectible in 2012, which represents an annual amount of \$3,282.00 based on the 2012 census. Upon a vote, the motion for a special levy passed unanimously.

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

Brian Carlson, a Fair Board member, 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 2012. Brian explained that the funds would be used for operational support of the Itasca County Fair, and not capital improvement projects.

Brian shared some of the fair board's past accomplishments, including that they took out the old 4H food booth and replaced it with a new one closer to the Trail Head building, that they put metal roofs on older buildings, and that new lighting was installed at the race track, which increased the amount of racing by four times. They also moved the beer gardens to more visible location on the fair grounds, to try and increase usage.

Mr. Carlson noted the Fair Board's website, included on their letter (in the annual report on page 27) was: www.itascacountyfair.org. He commented that all fair entry registrations will be done online for exhibiting in 2011.

A final comment by Mr. Carlson was that, to the best of his knowledge, there would be no road going through the fairground's midway area, as once proposed.

Dennis Kortekaas made a motion, seconded by Larry Key, to approve a 2012 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.

- Support within Reach (formerly IAASA): No \$ amount requested
A letter was received requesting a donation, with no amount specified. No one was in attendance at the annual meeting to make a presentation on this request.
There was no action from the floor, and therefore no action was taken on the request.
- Home Visitor Program - \$500 requested
A letter was received requesting a donation of \$500. No one was in attendance at the annual meeting to make a presentation on this request.
There was no action from the floor, and therefore no action was taken on the request.
- First Call - \$0.50 to \$1.00 per resident requested
A letter was received requesting a donation of between \$0.50 and \$1.00 per Harris Township Resident.
No one was in attendance at the annual meeting to make a presentation. There was no action from the floor, and therefore no action was taken on the request.

10. Old business

- None

11. New business

- Jennifer Utecht – Maintenance of the Pokegama Lake Causeway Walkway
Jennifer Utecht came to tonight's meeting to share her concerns as a township resident who has adopted the gardens and walkway under the Pokegama Lake bridge. She's been working with MnDot and the Itasca County Trails Task Force on restoring this area, getting help with pulling out old, dying plants, and replacing them. She has lots of volunteers lined up, but is asking for help from the Harris Town Board, regarding use of their equipment ("Skidsteer"/"Bobcat") to distribute the woodchips that have been donated.
Jennifer was asked how often she thought they'd need use of the equipment, and the number of hours, to determine the maintenance crew's time and fuel costs. Jennifer was not sure on the number of hours, but thought one or two days use, once a year to start, but then maybe every two years, to keep woodchips in place.
Supervisor Rosato shared that Jennifer came to the board, requesting help in some way as the walkway is in our township, a jewel of the entrance to the lake, and is one of the main photos on the township's website. However, because the request would use township funds – people's tax money – the board felt this needed to come before the residents of the town, at the annual meeting, for their input. .
One resident commended Jennifer and volunteers for working to restore the walkway garden condition, and continued upkeep, but was nervous that the board may end up taking care of it down the road – and they would not have the time to do that. He suggested parameters for any help that the board would provide on this project.
Another resident suggested approving 1-2 days of equipment usage, during a weekend, which is when volunteers would most likely be available. However, due to the overtime it would cost for a weekend, someone else suggested that Jennifer may prefer to ask for a monetary amount, to rent equipment and hire a driver.

Someone else suggested that Jennifer may want to contact a contractor (Hawkinson / Casper) for a quote, and that perhaps a driver might be willing to donate his/her time.

Other resident comments included that the people should let the board decide on the dollar amount to provide, given their familiarity with the budget and what the town could afford to donate. Another said she wants to help with this project, as it's an eyesore now.

Mike Hendricks made a motion to approve that the Harris Town Board work with Jennifer Utecht on landscaping needs of the Pokegama Lake walkway gardens, within reason. Shirley Wicklund seconded the motion. Discussion: No time limit or dollar amount was specified, and was done so intentionally. Treasurer Jokela estimated that it would cost approximately \$100/hour for the township to operate their equipment. Seeing no further discussion, moderator Eichorn called the question, and upon roll call, the motion carried by a unanimous vote.

- 2010 Accomplishments were reviewed by Eichorn, and he commended the board and residents on everything that was done in Harris Township this past year.

12. Set time for next Annual Meeting, in year 2011

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

Mike Hendricks made a motion, seconded by Dan Butterfield, to set the time for the 2012 Annual Harris Town Meeting for 8:15pm with the Board of Canvass meeting 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, Moderator Eichorn adjourned the Annual Meeting at 9:02 pm.

In summary, the following levies were approved for 2012:

General Fund Operations	\$100,000
Historical Society (\$1/pp of 2010 census)	\$ 3,282
Itasca Co. Agricultural Assoc. (Fair Board)	\$ 1,000
Road and Bridge Fund	\$ 430,000
Equipment Fund	\$ -0-
Cemetery Fund	\$ -0-
Recreation Fund	\$ 50,000
Building & Grounds Fund	\$ 40,000
Fire Fund	\$ 75,000
Capital Improvement Fund	\$150,000
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	\$849,282

Respectfully submitted,

Michele R. Smith, Clerk of Harris Twp