

**MINUTES from the REGULAR Meeting  
Harris Township Board  
Wednesday, October 8, 2014 at 7:30pm**

The Regular Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, October 8, 2014. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm, at the Harris Town Hall, with the following officers present: Supervisors Gary Rosato, Larry Key, Dennis Kortekaas, Burl Ives, and Jim Kelley as well as Clerk Michele Smith and Treasurer Becky Adams. *Absent: none.*

Also in attendance were Glen Hodgson – SEH, and residents Dan Butterfield, Judy Myers, Marge Kelley, and Bonnie Key.

1. **Pledge to the flag**, followed by the reading of the township mission statement
2. **Approve the minutes** of the Regular Meeting on September 10, the Planning & Development Meeting on September 24, and the Sunny Beach Road Neighborhood Meeting Work Session on October 1, 2014.

***A motion was made by Supervisor Ives, seconded by Supervisor Kelley, to approve the minutes as presented for September 10, September 24, and October 1, 2014 meetings. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.***

### 3. Business from the floor

- Christopher Worth with “Connect Itasca”

Christopher Worth, who works in the Itasca County Information Systems department, and is also working with the “Connect Itasca” broadband initiative project, whose mission is “To provide broadband access to all Itasca County residents and businesses at speeds meeting or exceeding the state’s broadband goals of 10-20 mbps download”. There is a growing list of sponsor organizations, including IEDC, the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, and Blandin Foundation.

Worth explained that internet is seen as a needed *utility*, just like phone service and electricity, but that only 2/3 of citizens can currently get high speed internet. When shown on a map, this is about half the county; the majority of the eastern half of Itasca County is *uncovered*.

Connect Itasca’s first step is the implementation of a countywide broadband survey. By identifying where and what the needs are, they are hoping to attract private sector partners to invest in these areas. Worth shared paper copies of the surveys, as well as the link: <https://connectitascans.servicezones.net>. Both state and federal governments have upcoming funding opportunities that make gathering this type of data especially timely. The survey will give Itasca County a unique advantage in the targeting of unserved and underserved areas.

Worth came to tonight’s meeting to educate the board and audience, and hoped to have the board’s support by filling out the surveys, talking about it, and passing out literature when appropriate. The board thanked Worth for coming to tonight’s meeting.

### 4. Treasurer’s Report for September 1 – 30, 2014

Treasurer Adams recapped the treasurer’s report of September 2014 financial activity:

- Starting Sept 1 balance: \$ 1,442,556.11
- Receipts: \$ 22,188.75
- Disbursements \$ (72,961.21)
- Ending Sept 30 balance: \$ 1,391,783.65

***A motion was then made by Supervisor Key, seconded by Supervisor Ives, to approve the Treasurer’s October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014 report of September financials. Upon roll call, motion passed by a unanimous vote.***

### 5. Roads

- Glen Hodgson – Township Road Engineer from SEH
  - 2014 Paved Road Project update: All three roads, Harbor Heights, Lakeview Drive, and Underwood Road-east, have been reclaimed and look good. They should last a long time – likely more than 20 years. Hodgson will have a pay estimate at the next meeting.

- 2015 Paved Road project plans: At the October P&D meeting, Hodgson would like to discuss potential 2015 road projects and plans.

- Other road issues/concerns/updates

- Birch Street: A resident called Supervisor Ives about the condition of Birch Street. Ives went and looked at it and commented that he felt the road does have some issues that will need to be dealt with in the future.
- Forest View Trail: At a resident's request, Supervisor Ives and Key looked at Forest View Trail. Ives voiced concern as to how it was structured. It's truly just a trail - a gravel, dead-end road with 2 summer residents and 1 full time resident. The full-time resident had concerns over the gravel getting built up so much that his driveway is at a different height. As a result, his vehicle gets hung up on it. Supervisor Key offered to have the maintenance crew scrape off some of the gravel, but the resident (S. Johnson) felt that this wasn't needed. Key further suggested that the board skip adding more gravel to Forest View Trail when it comes up on the 5 year gravel rotation and instead, put it on the watch list. The board agreed.
- Issuing bonds to fund major road improvements (Becky Adams)

In response to the Sunny Beach Road work session, and the questions raised about issuing bond to finance the project if needed, Treasurer Adams emailed the MN Association of Townships (MAT) to get some basic information about the bonding process as she was not familiar with it. MAT attorney Kyle Hartnett shared a page of information from the MN State Auditor's Office on borrowing and debt for towns. It gave a general description of types of borrowing available to towns and discussed various restrictions on a town's authority to borrow.

Some major items that Adams noted were that 1.) bonding would likely need to go to a vote of the residents via a ballot question, 2.) the total amount of debt issued by the town cannot exceed 3 percent of the market value of all the property in the town, which for the assessment year 2014, was \$374,820,900 3.) bonding had to go out for competitive bids, and 4.) the township would need to consult with an attorney during the bond issuing process.

Interest rates right now, per Adams are low – around 3%.

The board recapped that if all 5.7 miles of Sunny Beach Road were to be repaired at one time, bonding would be needed to finance the project. The middle segment needs a reclaim, and the other two segments could get by with just an overlay.

Supervisor Ives suggested that the board could also consider issuing enough bonds to fix several roads that are in high need – and not just Sunny Beach Road. Other roads to consider were Fieldcrest and Birch Street.

The board also discussed that they would need to decide how much road work they wanted to do, and how much to 'bite off' financially. They would also need to know what is needed on Sunny Beach Road, including any drainage repairs, raising the road bed in low areas, etc. Hodgson agreed to bring estimates to the October P&D meeting on 10/22/14.

Another piece of information the board said they'd need to know when considering issuing bonds would be how much the payback amount would be, for the amount bonded (borrowed). They would need to make sure they can afford to still meet all the other township needs.

Overall, the board liked the idea of bonding – but they had a lot of questions. Supervisor Rosato agreed to ask other townships their experiences with issuing bonds at the Itasca County Township Association Meeting, as well as ask the district representative for his thoughts.

- Letter from Itasca County – Certification of Town Road Mileage to MnDOT

A letter was received from Itasca County Highway Engineers office, asking the board to verify which roads had been maintained and open to the traveling public for at least eight months of the year. The annual allotment of the town road gas tax is based on the mile submitted on this report. The list of roads via "Attachment A" of the 2013-2014 snow plow contract with Itasca County was shared and the board, and the county asked if there were any *additional* roads that the township plows. Supervisor Key commented that Ruff Shores Road (0.15 miles) and Casper Landing (.20 miles) were plowed by the

maintenance crew – and not the county. The clerk agreed to add these to the list, and respond back to the county with this information prior to the October 22 deadline.

## 6. Recreation

- None

## 7. Correspondence

- Board Action items:
  - Local Board of Appeal and Equalization Trained Board Member Certification request letter  
Clerk Smith confirmed that Supervisor Rosato's certification for the Local Board of Appeal expired in July 2015, and that Supervisor Key's certification expired in July 2017. No other supervisors were certified.
- Noteworthy items:
  - Copy of letter from Attorney Shaw regarding the encroachment of town hall driveway and parking lot
  - Copy of letter from Attorney Shaw regarding the resident complaint about Breezy Lane grading.

## 8. Consent Agenda

- Consider approval of cemetery sites purchased by Ed and Sue Casper: Sec 3, Block 12, Lot 2, Sites 1 & 2  
***A motion was made by Supervisor Kortekaas, and seconded by Supervisor Ives, to approve the item on the consent agenda as shown above. Motion passed by a unanimous vote.***

## 9. Old Business

- Resident request for abandonment of Pokegama Lake public access - see letter from Attorney Shaw

At the September P&D meeting on 9/24, a resident (E. Casper) asked about a public access parcel that's adjoining his property, but that is not being used as a public landing or any other purpose. He asked if the board would consider abandoning it, so he could use it to meet set back requirements for building a storage building.

Supervisor Key met with the township attorney to discuss, and overall, it was Shaw's opinion that the town does *not* have the legal authority to vacate this public landing area, or any public area within a plat where it's not considered a road. However, if a member of the public desires this area be vacated, they can bring the matter to the Itasca County District Court.

Key noted that they did find the deed for the eastern portion of this public access property in question, and that it had been vacated in 1970 through the courts, via a quit claim deed. Thus, Casper would also need to petition the court to have the remaining portion vacated.

The clerk was asked to forward a copy of the letter from Shaw to Mr. Casper.

## 10. New Business

- Review resolutions to determine if still valid, or if in need up updating or rescinding: #2002-4 Establish Raspberry Lane, #2003-1 Participate in MATIT, #2003-4 Support Public Safety Radio Group, and #2003-5 Hazard Mitigation Planning Process

In reviewing the old resolutions, all were found to still be valid. And it was noted that "Raspberry Lane" as noted in 2002-4, was changed to River View Drive and River Ridge Road.

## 11. Approve payment of bills for October 2014

Supervisor Ives asked about the payment to Earl Anderson for signs. Treasurer Adams clarified that this was payment to a sign company for a variety of road signs; it was just for the signs - not installation. And that Earl Anderson was the company's name – and not a person.

***Motion by Supervisor Kortekaas, second by Ives, to pay the bills as per the attached document titled "October 2014 Bill Listing to Board" in the amount of \$41,130.68. Upon roll call, motion passed by a unanimous vote.***

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

- Dan Butterfield commented that bonding by the township concerns him, as he felt this is a key reason the city of Grand Rapids is so far in debt. He'd like to know how much would be bonded and for how long, and hopes it would not become a quick fix year after year.
- Judy Myers spoke in favor of bonding, and felt it is worthwhile. Also, she commented that if the township has to work on Sunny Beach Road for three years, it would inconvenience the roads residents for three years.

**13. Adjourn**

***With no other business to come before the board, a motion was made by Supervisor Key, seconded by Kortekaas, to adjourn tonight's meeting at 8:32m. Motion carried.***

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith, Harris Township Clerk

October 2014 Bill Listing to Board

	Description	Amount
Larry Key	Mtgs, wages, labor, less withholding plus expenses	865.40
Gary Rosato	Mtgs, wages, labor, less withholding	490.56
Dennis Kortekaas	Mtgs, wages, labor, less withholding	478.72
Michael (Burl) Ives	Mtgs, wages, labor, less withholding	543.34
Jim Kelley	Mtgs, wages, labor, less withholding	506.63
Michele Smith	Mtgs, wages, labor, less withholding plus expenses	993.26
Becky Adams	Mtgs, wages, labor, less withholding plus expenses	643.15
Bonnie Key	Cleaning labor, showing, less withholding	357.31
Dan Key	Labor less withholdings	2131.12
Derrick Marttila	Labor less withholdings	2228.12
PERA	ONLINE pmt:: Payroll withholding	1399.85
Anderson, Earl F	Signs, posts, tubing	2112.10
Blue Cross Blue Shield	10/1-11/1 payment	1001.03
Braun Intertec	soil testing, consultant services	1201.00
Century Link	ONLINE pmt:: Oct phone service	326.71
Davis Oil	Sept Invoices	676.61
Ferrellgas	service center propane	370.31
Grand Rapids Public Utilities	Utilities; lights and town hall	211.23
Hawkinson Construction	bituminous patch on field crest road	7,286.00
Hawkinson Sand and Gravel	class 1 gravel	1,146.81
Home Depot	ONLINE pmt:: keys and quickset lock	52.02
Itasca County Recorder	record deeds	184.00
Lake Country Power	ONLINE pmt:: energy bill - service center, wendigo, crystal, cemetery	397.19
MATIT	commercial package: yearly insurance premium	6,765.00
Minute Man Press	copies for meetings	45.31
Northland Portables	portables for wendigo, crystal, cemetery, landings	656.00
Range Water	cooler rental Sept 5 gal in store	27.25
S E H	Engineering Services - misc. services	3,247.00
Schwartz and Sons	Grader work on various roads - September	1,310.00
Shaw and Shaw	copies of township documents, call from Key, dictate to Lotti	84.00
Stokes Printing	copier ink and desk pads	34.09
Terex	element, filter	49.45
Verizon	cell phones and WIFI through 10/12/14	196.05
Waste Management	3 yd rel on call	126.97
Commissioner of Revenue	Payroll withholding :: electronic payment	493.00
EFTPS	Payroll withholding :: electronic payment	2,489.09
Wells Fargo Bank	checking account fee	5.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 41,130.68</b>