

**Minutes from the Harris Town Board**  
**Work Session – Employee Handbook and Job Description Review**  
**June 18, 2014 at 7:30pm**

A work session of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, June 18, 2014 starting at 7:30pm at the Harris Town Hall for the following purpose as posted:

- **The purpose of this work session is to review the current township employee handbook, last updated in 2011, and discuss if any changes or clarifications are needed. Current job descriptions will also be reviewed.**

The following officers of the board were present: Supervisors Larry Key, Gary Rosato, Dennis Kortekaas, Burl Ives, & Jim Kelley and Clerk Michele Smith. *Absent: Treasurer Becky Adams Supervisor.*

Also in attendance was resident Judy Myers.

Chairman Rosato called the work session to order at 7:30pm, followed by the pledge to the flag and reading of the township mission statement.

**Review Employee Handbook**, last updated May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011

The board each had a current copy of the Employee Handbook, last updated May 2011. Each page was read in silence, and any questions or concerns addressed on a page-by-page basis. The clerk made notes in her copy of what was agreed upon to be revised or updated. Items noted included:

- Pg 3: EE relations: At the end of the last sentence, referring to employees expressing concerns in writing to the Board of Supervisors, add “*or Human Resources (HR) representative of the town board*”. There were several areas throughout the employee handbook in which the above language was requested by Supervisor Ives. And while it made sense to the board, Clerk Smith requested permission to first check with the MN Association of Township attorney if an HR ‘designation’ is appropriate for a town board given they do not have administrative staff like cities and counties. The board also discussed that perhaps any HR items could be contracted out as needed – perhaps with the City of Grand Rapids via the “Collaboration Opportunities Team” agreement.
- Pg 3: Hiring of Relatives: This item was discussed at length, as Ives commented that this was one of the most talked about issues in the eyes of the public, given how many relatives are on Harris Township’s payroll.

Supervisor Rosato gave a brief history of how the current family members came to be employed by the township:

- When 2 maintenance workers were suddenly and tragically killed on the job, and good replacements were needed quickly, Supervisor Key’s son stepped up to help out and became one of the township’s best workers. He’s now been with the township for 10 years.
- And when the prior town hall taker quit with little notice – and no one would apply for the job - Bonnie Key stepped up and agreed to do the job ‘for a while’ to help out the township. 11 years later, she is still a highly valued employee of the township.

Rosato added that in 2007, at Supervisor Key’s suggestion, the board agreed to put the nepotism policy back in the employee handbook – with current employees being exempt.

Ives agreed that the current employees appear to be doing a great job, and clarified that his intent was not to remove any current employees, but that he still had concern of how nepotism looks to the public - especially with regards to supervision of a relative, and the fact that we are a government – which impacts taxpayer dollars.

Key requested that the Maintenance Supervisor be contacted regarding any maintenance report issues or questions, and for any work requests, as it confuses the crew if they have all supervisors contacting them instead of just one point of contact.

Chairman Rosato summarized that the supervision issues could be addressed at a different meeting, but that tonight's meeting was to review the employee handbook and the related "hiring of relatives" policy currently in place so that it doesn't happen again.

- Pg 4: Employment Applications – The current policy does not state who applications should be given to; it was agreed to add that application forms should be given to the Township Clerk.
- Pg 5: Hours of Work: Add that the two 15 minute breaks (a.m. and p.m.) are "paid" for full time employees. Also, add that part-time and temporary employees also get paid breaks, if so many hours are worked (if an employee is scheduled to work 4 hours, a 15 minute paid break can be taken). Clerk Smith will look into appropriate language to use for this addition.
- Pg 6: Call Outs: Omit "pager" language, as the maintenance crew no longer carries pagers (just phones). And, change the due date of the written report of their monthly activities to the Monday before the P&D meeting (not the Regular meeting).
- Pg 8: Privacy of Employee Records: #3 – Employment Reference Checks: Change response by payroll person to be via *phone* or in writing (not just in writing). And Clerk Smith will check with Treasurer Adams (who does payroll) to verify the authorization process currently in the policy, including if inquiries can also be via phone, fax, email or letter.
- Pg 11: Sexual Harassment or other Unlawful Harassment: Clerk Smith will check with MAT to see if there is updated language for this area of the handbook, especially regarding an employee contacting the township's legal representative – which seems to be a conflict of interest.
- Pg 13: Vacation: Add language to indicate employees can use their vacation time in one hourly increments (as opposed to having to take a full day). And, add language to indicate that any unused vacation time will be lost (no carry over). Clerk Smith will look for appropriate language.
- Pg 14: Sick Leave: The board discussed that vacation time can also used for sick time, as there is no paid sick days for full time employees. They also discussed a "PTO" (paid time off) policy to cover all time off, but the board opted to leave the benefit as is.
- Pg 14: Bereavement: This policy was reviewed and found to be adequate, with no changes needed.
- Pg 15-16: Drug Free Workplace and notification of conviction: Change the number of days notice to the Board of Supervisors for conviction of violating any criminal drug statute related to conduct occurring while on duty, from 5 days to 3 days after conviction. Also, Clerk Smith will look for updated language for the area that discusses those with drug or alcohol related problems while on the job should seek professional assistance (perhaps use 'mandated' wording rather than 'encouraged'?). And, change "Itasca Medical Center" to 'Grand Itasca'.
- Pg 17: Personal Appearance: Supervisor Ives asked if the maintenance crew had shirts with the township logo on them, so the public could identify them as employees. When he learned they did *not*, he strongly recommended that the township provide the crew with several tee-shirts and a reflective 3 season jacket– with Harris Township logo and name on it – for safety, and for identifiably while working in the public eye – on roads, at the parks, cemetery, public landings, etc. Ives agreed to look into options and costs, and bring back to the board.
- Page 18: Family Medical Leave: Clerk Smith will ask Treasurer Adams if the FMLA is current as stated in the handbook.

#### **4. Review current job descriptions for:**

- Maintenance crew worker
- Town Hall Caretaker
- Summer intern – maintenance

Rosato shared that he drafted the current job descriptions for the maintenance crew and town hall caretaker back in 1988, over 25 years ago. The descriptions list out each job responsibility and major duty as a line

item– and has the evaluation for each duty built right in. However, both descriptions are in need up being updated - both in format and content. Supervisor Rosato agreed to make those updates.

***A motion was made by Supervisor Ives to table the job description reviews until they are updated by Rosato, during the July P&D meeting. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Kortekaas, and passed by a unanimous vote.***

## **5. Adjourn**

***A motion was made by Supervisor Kortekaas, seconded by Supervisor Rosato to adjourn tonight's work session at 9:37pm. Motion carried.***

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith, Clerk of Harris Township