

**Minutes from the Harris Town Board
Work Session
April 14, 2015 at 7:00pm**

A work session of the Harris Town Board was held on Tuesday, April 14, 2015 starting at 7:00pm at the Harris Town Hall for the following purposes:

- **7:00 p.m.** - The purpose of the first part of the work session is to evaluate Harris Township employees. This portion of the meeting will be **CLOSED to the public**, in accordance to Minn. Stat. § 13D.05 Subd. 3(a).
- **8:00 p.m.** - This part of the meeting will be **OPEN to the public** to review compensation of the township employees & officers, and discuss any recommended changes. Three road related items were also on the agenda: 1.) consider approval of the Itasca County snowplowing contract for 2015-2016 2.) Consider setting a date for the annual road review meeting, and determine how to do the annual road inspections this year and 3.) Discuss updates to the current culvert policy, resolution #2008-006

The following officers of the board were present: Supervisors Gary Rosato, Dennis Kortekaas, Jim Kelley and Burl Ives, as well as Clerk Michele Smith and Treasurer Becky Adams. *Absent:* none (Supervisor seat A has not yet been filled.)

Also in attendance during the open portion of the work session were: Glen Hodgson, road engineer from SEH and residents Cyndy Martin and Marge Kelley.

1. Pledge to the flag

2. Call the meeting to order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Rosato, and the township's mission statement was read.

3. Meeting closed to evaluate Harris Township employees: Dan Key, Derrick Marttila, and Bonnie Key.

Chairman Rosato closed the meeting to the public to evaluate the township employees, as allowed by Minn. Stat. § 13D.05 Subd. 3(a). The closed meeting was audio recorded as required by statute.

The closed meeting adjourned at 8:10pm, upon a motion by Supervisor Kelley and second by Supervisor Kortekaas.

4. Meeting reopened to the public. as posted, and summarize the conclusion of closed meeting

At 8:10 p.m., Supervisor Kortekaas made a motion to reopen the meeting and apologized to the public for it being ten minutes past the posted start time of this session. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Kelley and upon a vote, motion carried.

Supervisor Rosato summarized that during the closed session, there was a lot of good discussion and the board opted to recess the closed work session until April 22nd at 6:00pm to allow the employees a chance to review the updated employee evaluation forms. Employees will also be asked to 'review themselves' by completing the forms, and then giving back to Rosato prior to 4/22. Those forms will then be reviewed by the entire board when the **closed** work session resumes on April 22, at 6pm.

5. Review current compensation of township employees, and discuss any changes for May 2015-Apr 2016

- As a point of reference, see "Request for Board Action" from May 14, 2014, for *current* rates of pay for township employees. Consider any changes for the upcoming year, May 2015 – April 2016

A motion was made by Supervisor Kortekaas to table this item until the April 22nd P&D meeting, since the employee evaluations were not completed tonight as planned. Supervisor Ives seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote.

- Review "Employee Compensation Policy", last reviewed April 23, 2014
 - ◆ **Regular Full-Time Employees:** Maintenance Crew:

Currently, the policy states that the starting wage will be \$1.00 less per hour than the hourly rate of the current full-time employees. However, after a lengthy discussion, the board agreed that they'd prefer a starting hourly *range* – based on qualifications.

Supervisor Kortekaas made a motion to change the Employee Compensation Policy to state that the starting wage for a full-time maintenance crew member would be between \$12-\$15/hour based on experience. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Kelley and passed by a unanimous vote.

The board agreed that this rate would continue to be reviewed annually.

◆ **Regular Part-Time Employees: Town Hall Caretaker:**

Currently, the policy states that the starting hourly wage for cleaning will be \$1.00 less per hour than the previous Town Hall Caretaker's hourly rate. And that the showing appointment rate will be the same as that paid to the previous Town Hall Caretaker. However, the board preferred to have both the hourly and cleaning rates the same, and to also have stated as a starting *range*.

Supervisor Kortekaas made a motion to change the Employee Compensation Policy to state that the starting cleaning and showing hourly rates for a part-time town hall care taker would be between \$9-12/hour based on experience. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Ives and passed by a unanimous vote.

The board agreed that this rate would continue to be reviewed annually.

◆ **Temporary Employees rates of pay were also reviewed:**

- Skating Rink Attendant: Wage will be \$8.00 per hour
- Summer Intern / Maintenance Crew: Wage will be \$11.00 per hour
- Moderator of Annual Town Meeting: Wage will be a flat meeting rate of \$60.00
- Election Judges: Wage will be \$10.00 per hour for training time and hours worked on election day, plus mileage will be paid at a rate **equal to** the IRS Federal mileage reimbursement rate for election training and work related travel mileage.

After considering each of the temporary employee rates above, and the current minimum wage requirements for a small employer in Minnesota, a motion was made by Supervisor Kelley to leave these rates unchanged for the upcoming year . Upon a second my Supervisor Ives, the motion passed by a unanimous vote.

The board agreed that these rates would continue to be reviewed annually, but could be discussed for change at any time.

6. Review responsibilities and compensation of Supervisors, Treasurer, and Clerk

- As a point of reference, see Resolution #2014-006 for officers *current* compensation passed in May 2014. Consider any changes for the upcoming year, May 2015 – April 2016

After checking in with the Clerk and Treasurer on the satisfaction of their compensation, Supervisor Rosato made a motion to leave all officers monthly wages unchanged, with Supervisors earning \$400/month – except the Chair who earns \$450/month, the Treasurer earning \$600/month and the Clerk earning \$800/month. He added that the hourly rate for allocated labor be adjusted to match the maintenance crew's hourly rate, if it is increased. This has been done for many years considering that those supervising the crew should make at least the same amount as they do. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Kortekaas, and passed by a unanimous vote.

- Other items discussed, some of which are mentioned in the compensation resolution:
 - Mileage: When to claim was discussed as stated in the policy. The board liked how it was worded.

- Claim forms: Treasurer Adams reminded the board that they need to have claim forms to her the Monday before the Regular Meeting, to allow enough time to prepare the bill list and checks. Sending via email or text is fine as she's often on the road, but then bring the original signed copy to the meeting.

- When is a supervisor paid hourly vs. the monthly wages?

Treasurer Adams and Clerk Smith encouraged the board to discuss and decide which of their duties are covered by their monthly wage, and when an hourly rate should be claimed. It's important to have continuity among all board members, especially with another new supervisor coming on. For example, is windshield time paid when traveling out of town, plus mileage?

Hourly rate: Can the hourly rate be charged for meetings at court house? The board seemed to be in agreement that if an officer is representing Harris Township, they can charge hourly. This documents attendance as well. The Intergovernmental Collaboration meeting had been noted as a "no compensation" meeting, but not sure that this should be stated as such. Meetings with maintenance crew were also discussed – should Rosato be charging for the hour a week where he meets with the crew?

Monthly wage: The board seemed to agree that this is for being on call 24/7 for a variety of responsibilities. Clerk Smith shared a list of duties and responsibilities with the Supervisors, titled "Township Supervisor Job Description". A copy will be attached to these minutes for future reference.

Treasurer Adams agreed to work on a policy for supervisors hourly and monthly as compensation, as recommended by clerk and treasurer.

- Cemetery responsibilities

Clerk Smith asked if one of the supervisors would be taking over former Supervisor Key's cemetery responsibilities. These included being her back up for cemetery site sales when on vacation or ill, being a go-to person for questions or issues with the cemetery or cemetery policy. There was no consensus by the board. Chairman agreed to check with the maintenance crew to see if they would be willing and able to cover for Smith for an upcoming 10 day vacation at the end of April as they would be the most knowledgeable with regards to cemetery site information (what's available for sale, where sites are, etc.).

- Supervising as a board, not as an individual Supervisor

Treasurer Adams, as HR representative, shared a memo with the board which summarized concerns she received in writing from the town hall caretaker on March 11, 2015, just before Supervisor Key resigned. *(A copy of the memo will be attached to these minutes.)* Adams brought to the board tonight after consulting with MN Association of Townships attorney Kyle Hartnett on what to do with the information she'd received. She was told that because it was about officers of the board, it needed to be discussed at a public meeting. Hartnett did caution that the board cannot talk about the employees during the discussion – which can only be done at a closed meeting - but rather the board can discuss from a supervisor's perspective.

After reviewing the memo, Adams encouraged the board to:

- Operate as a board - not as individuals. If there are items recommended by a supervisor that they'd like the maintenance crew to do, the board should discuss and decide which items should be done and in what order.
- Decide which of the Supervisors will communicate to township employees. Currently, employees often feel like they have 5 separate supervisors, and are unsure who to listen to. They need one boss – the board – not 5 supervisors, each telling them what to do. However, who will be the voice of the board?
- Good communication between board members and with employees is important. Any time there's change, it causes angst and anxiety among employees regarding what's expected of them. The current employees have expressed that they are unclear about what the board wants from them.

- Decide how and when to supervise the employees. Will it be based on a weekly ‘punch lists’ or seasonal to do lists? Or work orders? Will someone meet with the maintenance crew daily or weekly?

The board thanked Adams for bringing these issues to the board. While Supervisor Ives commented that he did not think anything done was out of line, the board overall looked at it as a good learning experience.

It was decided by the board that Supervisor Rosato would be the person who would communicate with the maintenance crew members and town hall caretaker on behalf of the board regarding work direction.

7. Roads

- Consider approval of the Itasca County snowplowing contract for 2015-2016 contract at the rate of \$700/mile
Supervisor Kortekaas made a motion to approve the Itasca County Snowplowing contract for the 2015-2016 season. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Ives. Discussion: The Township pays \$700 per road mile, per year – regardless of the number of times plowed. Some years, this is a bargain, and other years, it’s not. Cost will be \$22,715 for the coming winter (32.45 miles x \$700/mile). With no further discussion, the motion passed by a unanimous vote.

- Consider setting a date for the annual road review meeting, and determine how to do the annual road inspections this year.

The board discussed that road inspections will not dictate what road projects will be done in 2015 or 2016, and therefore, they had some time to do the road inspections and hold the annual road review meeting. The clerk noted that the road meeting had traditionally been held in April or May, perhaps to know which roads needed repair after the winter/spring thaw, and to allow township residents a chance to express concerns for their roads prior to the construction season. The board recognized that roads would need to be inspected to determine which roads need crack filling. However, that process would not occur prior to June or July.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley to table this item until the May 27th P&D meeting. Supervisor Kortekaas seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote.

- Discuss updates to the current culvert policy, resolution #2008-006

The board reviewed the current culvert policy, and the comments made at previous meetings regarding updates needed to the policy. Those included:

- Do we want to continue giving free culverts? Cost is approximately \$500 for a culvert and aprons.
- Second driveway culverts: Current policy indicates that only one free one is provided, thereby making the landowner responsible for any additional culverts. This may result in a substandard culvert being installed, or no culvert at all.
- Galvanized vs. plastic culverts? Current policy allows for either metal or plastic. Plastic needs to be installed properly, and may not be as durable.
- Does the township even need to be in the culvert business? After review of a document from the MN Association of Townships, it appeared that the law requiring townships to issue culverts was changed and now it’s optional. The county can do this if the township prefers.
- There is now a county process in place, whereby those applying for building permit and/or driveway approach permit, the county advises them to contact a specific township supervisor to inquire about the township’s culvert policy.

The board agreed that the following items are needed to update the current culvert policy:

- Anyone applying for building permit through Itasca County will be required to contact the township about their culvert policy.
- The free culvert will be metal (only)
- Correct culvert length to feet (not inches mark “)

A motion was then made by Supervisor Rosato to update the culvert policy by resolution as noted above. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Kelley and passed by a unanimous vote.

Clerk Smith agreed to update the policy accordingly and bring back a new resolution to the board for review at the P&D meeting on April 22, 2015

The board, at the Clerks request, also agreed that Supervisor Dennis Kortekaas' name and contact information could be given to Itasca County as the person to get a hold of whenever a building permit is issued, to discuss the township's culvert policy. (Currently, they have former Supervisor Larry Key's name/number – who has since resigned.)

8. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn tonight's work session was made by Supervisor Kelley at 10:50pm. Upon a second by Chair Rosato, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith - Clerk