

**New Hartford Township  
MINUTES  
for the Monthly Meeting  
November 9, 2023, 7:00 pm  
New Hartford Town Hall**

**Attendance**

Supervisors: Joe Baumgartner, Larry Moldenhauer, Richard Johnson

Clerk: Andrea Erdmann

Dep. clerk: Caroline van Schaik

Treasurer: Michael Moor

Maintenance: absent

Fire Chief: absent

Guests: Paul Thicke

Meeting called to order by Chairman Joe Baumgartner at 7:03 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Oct. 12, 2023 regular meeting minutes - Motion by Joe Baumgartner, second by Larry Moldenhauer; all approved.

**Public Comment**

Statement from Ed Walsh – Ed emailed this comment and asked that it be read into the minutes:

“I wish to extend my sincere thanks and congratulations to Andrea Erdman, our township clerk.

Due to her impressive and professionally tenacious efforts, at its last meeting, the Winona county board denied the request of the cell company applicant to construct a cell tower behind the church/school in Nodine. Caroline was also a significant advocate and assistant to Andrea.

Andrea’s efforts illustrate how grass roots democracy is still one of the most ideal ways to achieve political results. Congratulations to Andrea Erdman and I encourage her to share her experiences on this issue with the entire township board and residents.”

Joe noted another “good” from the issue was that it brought forward the need for timely resident input/discussion to aid supervisors in making decisions.

Andrea Erdmann and Caroline van Schaik noted to the board that they pursued the cell tower issue as residents of New Hartford Township, not as township staff. Neither received wages, mileage, or compensation from the township in any form, nor did they use the township email or any other township resource except as directly related to township communication, meeting agendas, and minutes.

**Fire Department Report**

- a. Joe Baumgartner said that the Pickwick department was willing to administer the Nodine crew if a merger between Nodine and Pickwick fire departments occurred due to falling volunteer numbers.

**Road Reports**

- a. Equipment use to avoid split trees – There was discussion on the use of the mower to slash trees that pose a barrier to township road maintenance. Joe Baumgartner said the township will return later to clean up splintered trunks.
- b. Who to call with road maintenance matters – The board reiterated the message to call any of them. Contacts are on the web site, <https://townshipnewhartford.org/>
- c. Permit to replace culvert on Lanes Valley Rd. update by Richard Johnson – The

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has not responded to calls from Richard and Joe.

- d. Gopher State On Call update by Andrea Erdmann – The application was submitted.
- e. Other - none

### **Old Business**

- a. Cell tower update – The Conditional Use Permit for a cell tower behind the church was denied by the Winona County Board of Supervisors during its regular meeting on Oct. 24, 2023. In revoking several of the county Planning staff recommendations, the county board found the application out of compliance with county zoning regulations.
- b. October minutes corrected – Deputy clerk Caroline van Schaik corrected the October minutes to reflect the unintentional omission of the monthly balance in the Treasurer's report.
- c. Grading contracts to Dresbach, Richmond, bill to Richmond – Clerk Andrea Erdmann reported that contracts had been received, and confirmed that Dakota Township paid for five loads of sand this past spring.
- d. On-line meeting option update – After discussion, the board decided to keep the option for out-of-town applicants but to encourage residents to attend meetings in person.
- e. Protocol for Township Acknowledgement Form requests and other issues to allow for resident input update – The board confirmed its interest in enhanced resident input. The clerks will keep this item for further research.
- f. Approve Claims including outstanding bills from MiEnergy, Excel, Cornerstone - Motion to pay the bills including those pending for MiEnergy, Excel, Cornerstone, and Kwik Trip, by Larry Moldenhauer, second by Richard Johnson; all approved.

### **New Business**

#### **1. Clerk's Report**

- a. Dept. of Justice allegation – Someone has complained about the township hall being out of compliance as a polling site and the Department of Justice (DOJ) has followed up with a letter. Joe Baumgartner will contact the DOJ.
- b. Public hearing on Jeff Jerue septic variance – Information only that the hearing is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 16, 2023, at 1 p.m. in the county Board of Commissioners' Room.
- c. Kwik Trip fuel/oil-only cards in fire trucks – The cards are activated and in the trucks.
- d. Fire Dept. outstanding receipt from Office Depot \$379.03 – The receipt has been delivered to the clerk.
- e. Earned sick and safe time – The accounting software will be updated to reflect this new state mandate that affects township non-contract employees.
- f. Minnesota Association of Townships 2023 Educational Conference and Annual Meeting Dec. 7-9, 2023, St. Cloud – Information only related to the fee deadline and hotel options.
- g. Draft agenda – Information only that starting with this meeting, clerks are emailing a preliminary agenda to residents with their monthly meeting reminder. Board members will receive the draft several days prior to the general email; the agenda is subjective to change up to and within the meeting itself.
- h. Election updates – Deputy clerk Caroline van Schaik reviewed terms for switching to a township mail-only election, the four elections to take place next year, open township seats, and the state statute on how to change an elected clerk position to an appointed one. The board decided to keep the township election as it is now (in March, with in-person and mail options). It acknowledged the clerk and one supervisor seats that will be up for election next March and discussed the possibility of asking residents to consider changing to an

appointed clerk position. Clerks will put this last issue on the December agenda: the ballot question would have to be approved by a board resolution and sent to the county in December to meet March township ballot printing deadlines.

- i. Draft postcard – A motion to pay for printing and postage of an informational postcard as drafted by the clerks as soon as possible was made by Joe Baumgartner, second by Richard Johnson; all approved.
- j. Other – none

2. Treasurer’s Report

- a. Starting balance tonight: \$257,698.53
- b. Spent tonight: \$6,169.39
- c. Balance tonight: \$251,529.14
- d. This month last year: Nov. 10, 2022 \$227,331.18
- e. Short-term CD for seal coat dollars follow up – After discussion, a motion was made by Joe Baumgartner to invest \$100,000 in a six-month CD at ESB Bank in La Crescent, effective as soon as arrangements can be made. Second by Larry Moldenhauer; all approved.
- f. Other – Michael Moor reminded the board that most of the difference between this year’s balance and this time last year is explained by a \$20,000 bridge payment made last year.
- g. Other – none

3. Other - none

Motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:20 p.m. by Joe Baumgartner, second by Richard Johnson; all approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Caroline van Schaik 12/14/2023

Approved by:

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Chairman Joe Baumgartner

Witnessed:

Date

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Dep. Clerk Caroline van Schaik

Date