

**New Hartford Township
MINUTES
for the Monthly Meeting
February 8, 2024, 7:00 pm
New Hartford Town Hall**

Attendance

Supervisors: Larry Moldenhauer, Richard Johnson, Joe Baumgartner

Clerk: Andrea Erdmann

Dep. clerk: Caroline van Schaik

Treasurer: Michael Moor

Maintenance: Willie Erdmann

Fire Chief: absent

Guests: Ernie Erdmann, Linda Johnson, Kathy Klawiter, Ann O'Malley, John Maass, Ed Walsh, Joan Zenke

Meeting called to order by Chairman Joe Baumgartner at 7:05 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Jan. 11, 2024 regular meeting minutes - Motion by Joe Baumgartner, second by Larry Moldenhauer; all approved.

Public Comment –

- a. Joan Zenke asked why the town hall is not available for rental. Joe Baumgartner explained that the township was advised to pause rental until a Department of Justice investigation into an alleged voter accessibility complaint is resolved.
- b. Ed Walsh asked about coordinating seal coat of Lanes Valley Road with Dresbach. Joe Baumgartner said an estimate of \$130,000 for seal coating the entire road, with Dresbach doing the top, will probably total about \$140,000 once rock/grading road preparation is included.
- c. Kathy Klawiter said she was considering the clerk position; there was discussion of what the position requires now. Kathy also asked about a pothole at the end of her road: Joe Baumgartner said he will repair it.

Fire Department Report - Willie Erdmann reported that Gerris Heyer is retiring at the end of March.

Road Reports

- a. Skid steer rental lease, insurance follow up by Andrea Erdmann – Andrea reported that lease and insurance agreements were signed and active.
- b. Permit to replace culvert on Lanes Valley Rd. update - Joe Baumgartner said repeated calls to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) continue to go unreturned and that the job may have to be delayed. A DNR permit is required because of a trout stream.
- c. Gopher State One Call by Andrea Erdmann - Andrea said the account is activated.
- d. Seal coat update by Joe Baumgartner – see public comments
- e. Other – Joe Baumgartner noted that truck was again stuck on Dakota Hill due to erroneous mapping programs and suggested a sign be installed. He also said that Forster Hill needs to be closed next Monday and Tuesday due to tree work. Clerks will send an email.

Old Business

- a. Update on new state leave allowances – Andrea Erdmann reported that she had figured out the new Earned Sick and Safe Time but not the Paid Leave allowance. The latter goes into effect this July.
- b. Township hall door awning update – The awning is installed. There was discussion about how best to bird-nest-proof the ledge.
- c. Department of Justice allegation - There is nothing new to report on an investigation into an alleged violation of accessibility on election day. Clerks reminded everyone that curbside voting is always available for anyone to vote from their car and that the township chooses to pay for ample judges to offer any aid that is legal to facilitate voting by registered township residents.
- d. Approve Claims – Motion to pay the bills including pending invoices from MiEnergy, Kwik Trip, and Excel Energy by Joe Baumgartner, second by Richard Johnson; all approved.
- e. Other – Jon Maass asked about the updated cell tower near Lisa Orchards, which is for police and related communication. Jow Baumgartner reported on a new law that dictates that if a township puts gravel on a road for six years the road is considered the township responsibility. He also said that a township plow driver turning around in a driveway does not oblige the township to maintain that turnaround.

New Business

1. MN Trespass Rule - postponed
2. MN Cannabis Retail Rules – Caroline van Schaik reported that the township cannot prevent cannabis businesses although it can pass a moratorium until January 2025. It also can choose to register such enterprises, which would require a system of compliance against under-age sales and product content as well as registration fees and penalties. At the moment, these are the tasks of the county. Licensing rules are expected later this year for 16 different categories of business. There is a 1000-foot buffer around schools and a 500-foot buffer for daycares and parks. The state has not yet clarified the relation to county zoning regulations. Further, while there remain many questions, it is considered unlikely that amendments to last year's bill will be forthcoming in the 2025 legislative session.
3. Clerk's Report
 - a. Board of Audit Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024 at 2 p.m.
 - b. Elections preparation, Option B review - Andrea noted the Mar. 5 Presidential Nominating Primary 7 a.m.-8 p.m.; Mar. 9, Absentee Township Election voting 10-noon; Mar. 12 Township Election, 4-8 p.m.; ballots ordered, judges scheduled and getting trained; voting machines updated and certified last month by a 3rd party contracted w the county; new signs; and Option B review.
 - c. Annual Meeting – A draft agenda was presented.
 - d. Reorganization Meeting – Clerks had thought the annual reorganization meeting could take place Mar. 14, 2024 following the Township election on Mar. 12, 2024 but this is not so. There is a required election outcome contest period. So the annual reorganization meeting will take place Ap. 11, 2024 during the regular monthly meeting.
 - e. District 1 bi-monthly meeting - The meeting will take place Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024, at 7 p.m. at the Wilson Township.
 - f. MAT Spring training Mar. 18, 2024, Winona – The annual officers training will take place at the Riverport Events Center, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. with registration on site only,

\$75 each.

- g. 1099s, year-end reports - Tax forms have been sent and reports are almost done.
 - h. Other – A staff person accidentally used the township credit card for personal use but has reimbursed the township, to no harm.
4. Treasurer’s Report
- a. Starting balance tonight: \$319,201.98
 - b. Spent tonight: \$19,671.97
 - c. Balance tonight: \$299,530.01
 - d. This month last year: Feb. 9, 2023 - \$281,158.36
5. Other – Joe Baumgartner raised the pending ballot question called Option B that asks residents if they want to change to an appointed (hired) clerk. The position now is an elected 2-year term. He said the demands of the clerk have become a time-consuming part time job that requires different skills than it used to. Ernest Erdmann said the clerk position should be paid what that position is worth. Joe said the Firefighters Relief Association paid an accountant \$138 per hour. Option B is on the Mar. 12, 2024 Township Election ballot; if it passes, the clerk election outcome is negated. No one is listed as a clerk candidate but a write-in is possible.

Motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:09 p.m. by Richard Johnson, second by Larry Moldenhauer; all approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Caroline van Schaik 3/14/2024

Approved by:

Chairman Joe Baumgartner

Witnessed:

Date

Dep. Clerk Caroline van Schaik

Date