

**New Hartford Township
MINUTES
for the ANNUAL Meeting
March 12, 2024, 8:15pm
New Hartford Town Hall**

Attendance

Supervisors: Joe Baumgartner, Larry Moldenhauer, Richard Johnson

Clerk: Andrea Erdmann

Dep. Clerk: Caroline van Schaik

Treasurer: Michael Moor

Election judges: Lisa Radtke and Jon Nicholson

Others present: *(in order of sign in plus a few who did not sign the sheet but were present)*

Neal Myers, Karl Nesler, Cindy Nesler, Linda Johnson, Joan Zenke, Jerry Zenke, Dale Husman, Dale Hansen, Dan Thesing, Ann O'Malley, Vicki Baumgartner, Harlon Sebo, John Maass, CJ Iremonger, Donna Heyer, Allen Klawiter, Kathy Klawiter, Ernest Erdmann, Audry Erdmann, creative signature, Cheryl Olson, Andy Pedretti, Macy Nowlan (sp?), Marcia Ward, Willie Erdmann, Isaac Kronebusch, Emma Iremonger, Ivan Kubista, Patty Bruger, Ed Walsh, Keith Olson

Meeting called to order by Clerk Andrea Erdmann at 8:21 p.m. followed by procedural rules and the Pledge of Allegiance.

County Commissioner Marcia Ward was elected to serve as meeting moderator on a motion by Ed Walsh, second by Dave Thesing. Approved.

Review of agenda by Marcia Ward.

Township staff introductions – Board chair Joe Baumgartner introduced township staff as well as residents who step up to clear brush etc., First Responders and Fire volunteers, and the many unsung workers who make the township work. Marcia Ward asked for First Responder/Fire volunteers to stand for applause and noted a legislative interest in changing training to address a dire shortage of volunteers statewide.

Approval of minutes for the Annual Meeting of Mar. 14, 2023 – Copies were available and reviewed; motion by Ed Walsh, second by Larry Moldenhauer to approve. Approved.

Board of Audit Report and Approval - Clerk Andrea Erdmann read the report and after discussion, there was a motion by Dale Husman, second by Isaac Kronebusch to approve as presented. Approved. Andrea explained that the Board of Audit meets annually to assure that clerk and treasurer books match and that because the township has both officers, an outside auditor is not required. Ed Walsh asked what

the county levy is; Marcia Ward said it will be higher this year to pay for the new jail but without that extra, it would reflect about a 4% increase over last year. Ed suggested the township consider “being a little more fiscally aggressive” with a higher levy increase than the 2% being proposed tonight.

Fire and Rescue Report – After a presentation and discussion, Isaac Kronebusch made what he termed “an advisory motion,” second by Ed Walsh, to raise the rate of training pay to \$20 per hour (from \$15) and to pay \$20 per hour for Fire volunteers. Approved.

Donna Heyer provided some statistics from 2023, including 71 calls with assists to Pickwick, Ridgeway, and La Crescent (4), 34 EMS calls, a false alarm, and 21 calls canceled en route. Dakota assisted Nodine 22 times. Volunteers clarified that the department does not charge the caller for a canceled call even when the call is not covered by insurance. Vicki Baumgartner said that in her 30 years as a volunteer, Band-Aids have been replaced by defibrillators, Narcan, and diabetic reaction and cardiac equipment for children and adults. She reminded the crowd of the cost of replacing expired drugs and supplies and said that the department’s 12 active members are now on call every day rather than having an on-call schedule because of the small crew. Ed Walsh asked if the township would consider paid positions. Vicki clarified that even if there were no First Responders, ambulances will respond.

Other Business

1. 2023 Road Report (see page 2) – Clerk Andrea Erdmann read the Road Report (back of agenda). Joe Baumgartner confirmed that the already-seal coated portion of Lanes Valley Road is expected to remain in good shape for another two years. Ed Walsh commended the board for seal coating Lanes Valley Road as a matter of safety. Andrea said that rock for Lanes Valley Road in 2022 was \$3,600. Ivan Kubista noted that while the report said all roads got gravel, Rose Hill where he lives did not.
2. Approve annual recognition dinner for Nodine Fire and Rescue members and 1 guest - Ed Walsh made a motion, second by John Maass, to recommend reimbursement of \$40 per member and guest each for the annual recognition dinner. Approved. The current rate is \$25.
3. Communications – Andrea noted a sign up sheet for township emails. The web site is current, a post card was sent to everyone late in 2023, and clerks are at the town hall most Monday mornings. Isaac Kronebusch said emails about the proposed cell tower behind the school were biased. Joe Baumgartner said emails were for information. Ed Walsh said the information coming from the township was superior. Caroline van Schaik said information on public hearings was explicitly presented as an opportunity to speak for or against the issue.
4. MAT scholarship for high school juniors, details at www.mntownships.org/about/scholarship-program.
5. Change in township governance – Andrea Erdmann gave unofficial Township Election results because judges Lisa Radtke and Jon Nicholson were able to finish counting ballots while the meeting took place: Larry Moldenhauer won a second term with 57 votes, Option B to change to an appointed clerk failed 28 “yes” votes to 36 “no” votes, and write-in clerk candidate Kathy Klawiter was elected with 30 votes. There were

various write-in candidates for supervisor and clerk positions. Isaac Kronebusch asked if a deputy clerk can be elected – it is a clerk-designated position by state statute. Several people thanked outgoing clerk Andrea Erdmann, for, among other attributes, transitioning the township from paper to the electronic age.

6. Unofficial election results (*see 5. above*)
7. Department of Justice allegation update – Andrea Erdmann reported the visit from noon until about 5 p.m. today by the Department of Justice (DoJ, Minneapolis) to measure everything related to an alleged access violation during the November 2022 General Election. The attorney would not tell clerks what the next step is or when it might occur. Several people asked who made the complaint; Andrea Erdmann said the name has not been made public. Joan Zenke raised the issue of not being able to rent the hall, “our only community space.” Joe Baumgartner repeated the legal advice to not rent the hall while the investigation is ongoing. Lisa Radtke clarified that the recommendation was from the Minnesota Association of Townships, not from the DoJ. Marcia Ward called it “an unfortunate part of society” to go to the DoJ rather than to the board for resolution and recommended contacting Rep. Brad Finstad.

Proposed Budget for 2025 – Andrea Erdmann read the individual fund recommendations (correcting Road and Bridge to \$116,076.00), which reflect a 2% increase for 2025 over this year. Marcia Ward reminded everyone of the earlier recommendation to raise the levy higher. Isaac Kronebusch made a motion to accept the 2% proposal, second by Linda Johnson. Approved.

	<u>Proposed 2025</u>
General Fund	\$62,779.00
Road and Bridge	\$116,076.00
Fire and Rescue	\$36,720.00
Capital Expense	\$35,700.00
Total Levy	\$251,275.00

Gopher Bounty – After some jovial discussion about how to bring in gophers for bounty (front feet) and who needs gopher hunters, Ivan Kubista made a motion to pay \$3, second by Dale Husman. Approved.

Other public comments, concerns, compliments

- a. Joe Baumgartner said it was good to see so many people in attendance.
- b. Marcia Ward offered copies of the 2023 Winona County land and house sales report, pointed out high points in acreage and house sales, and said the full report is on the county web site.
- c. Marcia Ward asked about paying for a new law center versus renovating the existing one in Winona. She said the new jail has 16 inmates as of that afternoon, primarily for drinking, drugs, and related violence.
- d. Linda Johnson thanked Marcia Ward for her work for the county.
- e. Keith Olson asked about a rumor that landowners will be responsible for clearing their own trees. Joe Baumgartner said to come to Thursday’s regular monthly meeting where the issue will

be discussed. Keith noted that he cleans up his own fallen trees but expressed concern for people without the necessary equipment.

Propose next year's annual meeting date - Mar. 11, 2025, at 8:15 p.m. at the town hall, following the Township Election, 4-8 p.m. The weather date for the annual meeting will be Mar. 18, 2025, at 8:15 p.m. Motion by Dale Husman, second by Ivan Kubista as proposed. Approved.

Adjourn – 10 p.m. followed by goodies and many hands helping to put up tables and chairs.

Respectfully submitted,
Caroline van Schaik 3/12/2024

Approved by:

Marcia Ward, moderator

Witnessed:

Dep. Clerk Caroline van Schaik

Date: