

**2020 Sunrise Township Annual Meeting  
Royal Wilcox Community Center  
Sunrise, Minnesota  
Tuesday, March 10, 2020**

Chairman Carl Peter “Pete” Johnson called the 2020 Sunrise Township Annual meeting to order at 8:15 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Board Members Present:**

Supervisor Carl Peter “Pete” Johnson  
Supervisor Gerald Bjork (absent)  
Supervisor Eric Leivian  
Supervisor Jeske Noordergraaf  
Supervisor Mark Osland

Clerk Wendy Kowalke  
Treasurer Karen Anderson (absent)  
Engineer: Cristina Mlejnek

**Others Present**

Charlotte Wilcox	Rick Olseen	Lee Larson
BJ Thorstenson	David Stertz	Ted Krause
Peggy Pearson	James McCarthy	Dennis Danich
Heather Jarvis	John Waldorf	Brian Geisbauer
Julia Gervais, Family Pathways		Tony Klanderud
Jamie Martinson	Dan helbeck	Michael Morgan
Katie Waldorf	Julia Gerais	Steve Christopherson

**Appointment of Moderator:** BJ Thorstenson nominated John Waldorf to be moderator. James McCarthy nominated Rick Olseen to be moderator. Hearing no other nominations - Nominations were closed. Rick Olseen gave a brief biography. John Waldorf also gave a brief biography. John is new to the community – from Elk River – bought Tony Kubat’s old place – from a political family. John Waldorf nomination by majority to be moderator.

**Approve Agenda:** Motion by James McCarthy, second by David Stertz to accept the 2020 annual agenda. Motion carried.

**Meeting Minutes:** Motion by James McCarthy, second by BJ Thorstenson to approve the 2019 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

**Treasurer Report:** Supervisor Eric Leivian gave the Treasurer’s report as Treasurer Anderson was not present. Books closed for 2019. Checking account balance for 2019 is \$360,665.36. Savings account balance is \$1,076,907.00 which is broken down into separate funds. Motion by David Stertz, second by BJ Thorstenson to accept the treasurer’s report. Motion carried.

**Proposed 2021 Levy:** Supervisor Eric Leivian went over the budget. The Sunrise Township Board set the 2021 proposed levy at the annual audit meeting held in February to bring to the Citizens of Sunrise Township at the annual meeting to have a zero (0%) increase for 2021 at \$528,995.05 and approved the continuance of the 2019 Blacktop fund levy for a period of 5

years of \$100,000.00 through 2024. Motion carried. (It was later discovered at a later date by Treasurer Anderson that for a 0% increase the levy would be \$542,219.93 (0% increase).

Motion by Carl Peter “Pete” Johnson, second by Steve Christopher to accept the proposed 2021 levy at a zero percent (0%) increase. Motion carried. Motion by Rick Olseen, second by BJ Thorstenson for the continuance of the 2019 Blacktop fund levy for a period of 5 years of \$100,000.00 each year through 2024. Motion carried with one opposed - James McCarthy.

**2019 Annual Township Report:** Annual Report available at meeting. Motion by David Stertz, second by Jamie Martinson to accept the Annual Township Report. Motion carried

**Road Report:** Annual road report is included in the Annual Township Report. Motion by BJ Thorstenson, second by Katie Waldorf to accept the road report. Motion carried.

**Commissioner Rick Greene Update (not present):** Moderator John Waldorf started reading Commissioner Rick Greene’s report. Motion by Charlotte Wilcox, second by Ted Krause to dispense reading of Commission report since it is available for the citizens review at the Annual Meeting. Motion carried.

**Donation Requests:**

Motion by Rick Olseen, second by James McCarthy, to distribute \$4,000 at the discretion of the Town Board at the April meeting. Motion carried.

*The following entities were represented at the Sunrise Township Annual Meeting:*

- Family Pathways (Allison) – Charitable Organization, (teen centers, 10 thrift stores, refuge network, senior program, youth center, food shelves, and thrift stores). Several families from Sunrise are being served.
- Almelund Fire:  
Anticipating dive team, need to continue to purchase small items to keep them operating,

**Zoning Process RE: Annexation:**

Charlotte Wilcox presented information about the future possibility of portions of Sunrise Township being annexed into the cities of Harris or North Branch. She emphasized that any such annexation is far from imminent but that it could conceivably be a threat years down the road should residential development in North Branch or Harris come out as far as the Township borders. She suggested that the Township should take preemptive steps now, if any are possible, to prevent Township lands from being annexed into neighboring cities against the wishes of the Township. This is called hostile annexation (as opposed to orderly annexation, when the Township and/or individual landowners desire the annexation).

Wilcox first explained that, under state law, a city may annex land in a neighboring township as long as the land abuts a city boundary. A judge must approve the annexation, but it can happen even if the township or individual landowners do not approve. The city may only annex a maximum of 120 acres per landowner in any year. The entire western border of Sunrise

Township abuts two cities—eight miles abutting North Branch and seven miles abutting Harris, all of it zoned agricultural.

She then went on to discuss three possible ways that the Township could avoid hostile annexations in the future:

1. If the Minnesota Legislature would change the law to prevent cities from annexing township lands without the consent of the landowners or the township. The Minnesota Association of Townships has been lobbying for this for decades but has had no success. A lawyer at MAT told Wilcox that the chances of this ever passing are slim because cities have more population than townships and thus have more representation in the Legislature.
2. By getting a court ruling to overturn an annexation. If a hostile annexation were to actually take place, the Township could sue the city in court to fight the annexation. However, such lawsuits are hardly ever successful, largely due to the fact that state law is so clear in giving cities broad authority to annex.
3. By creating an Agricultural Preserve District, since state law prohibits most hostile annexations of land in an ag preserve. The Chisago County Zoning Ordinance does provide for such districts, although the current county zoning map does not show any that have actually been created. Under the County ordinance, an Agricultural Preserve District must have a minimum of 200 acres with a maximum density of one single-family dwelling per 40 acres. Land may be subdivided smaller than this and building permits could be obtained as long as the 1-in-40 housing density is not exceeded and the agricultural use is maintained. Under state law, any land placed in an Agricultural Preserve District cannot be removed from it for at least eight years.

Given the above parameters, discussion ensued regarding whether the Township would even have enough qualifying land to create an Agricultural Preserve District. It appears that some of the border with Harris could have qualifying parcels, as would the very northern part of the boundary with North Branch, but it would be difficult to find contiguous 200 acres along the southern part of our border with North Branch with only one house per 40. The exception to that is the solar gardens in the south end of the township, but it is unclear, and perhaps unlikely, whether they would meet the requirement of agricultural production.

James McCarthy asked Charlotte to attend the County Planning Commission meeting, as they are starting to rewrite the agricultural zone.

**Gopher Bounty:** Motion by Rick Olseen, second by James McCarthy to set gopher bounty at \$2.00 per pair. Motion carried.

**Gravel Update:** Gravel pit on River Road is now closed. There are 2 potential mining sites in Sunrise Township that are going to be tested.

**Olson Road:** Olson Road will be paved in 2020 by Knife River .

**Ferry Road:** Acquired Grant to help pay for paving Ferry Road. Ferry Road will be paved in 2020.

**Tiller Corporation Update:** Supervisor Carl Peter “Pete” Johnson and Jeske Noordergraaf met with Tiller. According to Chisago County Tiller can continue mining out of the current River Road pit, but in order to expand their operation to the new pit off of River Road their new CUP has to come to an agreement with Sunrise Township for River Road. Sunrise Township is holding firm on having the portion of River Road paved to their pit. Sunrise has not heard from Tiller.

**Blue Address Signs:** Blue signs will be ordered twice a year. An order for blue signs will be placed in order to have the signs available for installation by spring. Any signs that are destroyed will need to be replaced at the property owner’s expense by calling Sunrise Township. Signs are \$125.00 per sign.

**Community Night Out:** Tuesday, August 4, 2020.

**2021 Annual Meeting:** Motion by Rick Olseen, second by Katie Waldorf Tues., March 9, 2021 at 8:15. Motion carried.

**Other Business:** Sunrise Township will be performing an outside audit of its books in 2020. An outside audit will cost approximately \$5,500.00 to \$8,000.00.

**Sunrise Township March 10, 2020 Election Results:** Clerk Kowalke read the Election Results.

*A Total of 39 votes cast  
(Total number of on register of electors 1,303)*

***Supervisor A – Three (3) Year Term***  
*Eric Leivian.....39*

***Supervisor B – Three (3) Year Term***  
*Carl Peter “Pete” Johnson....39*

***Clerk – Two (2) Year Term***  
*Wendy Kowalke.....38*  
*Undervotes.....1*

Motion by Rick Olseen, second by Lee Larson to accept the Township Election Results as read. A Canvass Board will be held on Thursday, March 12, 2020 to certify the election results. Motion carried.

**Public Comments:** North Branch Chamber – Julia Gervais, Director – Would love to come to Sunrise Township’s Community Night Out. Can put events on North Branch Chamber calendar. Can help with business connections – want to be more involved in the community.

Motion by Rick Olseen, second Lee Larson to adjourn at 9:26 p.m.

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Attest: Wendy Kowalke, Clerk

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Moderator