2026 Sunrise Township Annual Meeting - DRAFT
Sunrise Township Hall, 12080 Sunrise Road, Harris, Minnesota 55032
Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Chair Carl Peter "Pete" Johnson called the 2026 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 Adam Grobove III
Supervisor Greg Strom
Supervisor Phillip Meers
Supervisor Mark Osland

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

Others Present

Tyler Richter
Peggy Pearson
Barbara Lundberg
Deah Szymanski
James McCarthy
Reed Miner
Dan Reuter
Manley Olson
Bryan Baillie
Eric Leivian

Rick Olseen
Lynn Wolleat
Jake Holzem
Charlotte Wilcox
Connie Grobove
Victoria Heydt
Dawn Cash
David Stertz
Brian Geisbauer
Janel Jacobson

Perry Lundberg
Tyler Richter
Bobbi Harrington

Carrie Vala
Jim Cash
Renee Gatzow
Dan Harrington
Will Swanson

Appointment of Moderator: Rick Olseen volunteered to be the 2026 Annual Meeting Moderator. Hearing no other nominations, motion by Phillip Meers, second by Greg Strom to accept Rick Olseen as moderator. Motion carried. Rick Olseen mentioned how many voters came out to vote and thanked the citizens for coming to the annual meeting.

Approve Agenda: Motion by James McCarthy, second by Dan Reuter to approve the 2026 Annual Meeting agenda with the addition of Sunrise Township proposed maintenance building after Possible Vacation of Downtown Sunrise Township Roads. Motion carried.

Meeting Minutes: Motion by David Stertz, second by Eric Leivian to approve the 2025 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Treasurer Report: Treasurer Karen Anderson went over Treasurer's report. Books are closed for 2025. Checking account balance for 2025 is $1,018,455.47. Treasurer's report was available at the Annual Meeting. Motion by Janel Jacobson, second by James McCarthy. Motion carried.

Proposed 2026 Levy:

- *Levy: 2027*: At the March 3, 2026 Budget meeting Mark Osland motioned, second by Greg Strom, to propose to the Citizens of Sunrise Township at the annual meeting for 0% increase for the 2027 levy. Setting the levy at $563,258.07 and the Budget at $831,950.00. Motion carried.
    - **Motion by James McCarthy, second by Lynn Wolleat to accept the 0% increase for the 2027 Levy**; Note: this includes the Separate Blacktop Levy that was previously approved by the Sunrise Township Citizens at the 2025 Annual Meeting.
        - Discussion by James McCarthy asked if maintenance is included in the separate blacktop levy. David Stertz is wondering what the decrease from last year's minutes were – Treasurer Karen Anderson said the percentage was a mistake which included the separate blacktop levy. **Motion carried.**
- *Separate Blacktop Levy: starting 2026 for 7 years*: At the March 3, 2026 Budget meeting Carl Peter "Pete" Johnson, second by Mark Osland to continue the separate blacktop levy of $100,000.00 each year starting 2026 and continuing through 2032 that the Citizens approved at the 2025 Annual Meeting. Motion carried.

Treasurer Karen Anderson explained: The levy is what will come out of property taxes. Treasurer Karen Anderson informed the Sunrise Township Citizens that Sunrise Township is setting up another CD for $200,000 to earn interest.

Set 2027 Budget: Sunrise Township Budget will be set at $831,950.00.

County Commissioner – Dan Dahlberg: Commissioner Dan Dahlberg reported Chisago County has an annual report on website. Road construction: Chisago County is trying to get the south and north approaches to HWY 8 prepared before the main HWY 8 project starts. Chisago County is expanding the Swedish Immigrant Trail: Public should be able to use the Swedish Immigrant Trail from Forest Lake and go all the way through Taylors Falls. CR 10 (Stark Road) Project: There were Indian Burial Mounds that delayed the project. Chisago County installed a wheelage tax that went from $10 to $20 which is dedicated to roads. Chisago County is looking at increasing sales tax from ½ cent to one cent tax. Adam Grobove III made a comment on how he appreciates how fiscally responsible the Chisago County Commissioners are.

2025 Annual Township Report: Annual Report available at meeting. Motion by Connie Grobove, (the 2025 Annual Township Report had a second, but did not get the citizen's name) to accept the 2025 Annual Report. Motion carried.

Road Report: Annual Road report is included in the Annual Township Report.

Donation Requests:

2026 Donation requests have been received by Family Pathways, New Pathways (Shelter and Support), Chisago County Ag Society (County Fair), Chisago Age Well, Seven County Senior Federation, Chisago County Historical Society. Viking Vittles: Rick Olseen gave an overview of the benefits of the Viking Vittles program. Viking Vittles provides meals over weekends for over 280 kids during the school year. Additional requests can be received before donation dollars are distributed.

Motion James McCarthy, second Lynn Wolleat for $5,000 to be distributed at the discretion of the Town Board.

Discussion: Tyler Richter asked if this was an increase. Last year was $4,000. ***Tyler Richlter to have a friendly amendment to stay at $4,000. Both James McCarthy and Lynn Wolleat agreed to the friendly amendment to keep the donation amount at $4,000.00 due to the Town Board being good stewards of financial responsibility. Motion carried.***

Possible Vacation of Downtown Sunrise Roads: Charlotte Wilcox, Planning Commission Member. Sunrise Township Planning Commission studied roads in the platted City of Sunrise. These are old roads that were platted and a lot of them were not made into roads. After the Planning Commission presented several roads to the Town Board that should be vacated, the Town Board decided to present three roads to voters at the March 10, 2026 Annual Meeting to initiate the vacation process. The owners do not have to go through any process to vacate these roads if the Citizens agree to vacating the following roads:

- Water Street between Sunrise Road and Wilcox Road
- Oak Street between Sunrise Road and Minnesota Avenue
- Minnesota Avenue between Sunrise Road and the Sunrise River

The voters do not have the power to actually vacate the roads; it requires a statutory process. These three roads have never been built. Moderator Rick Olseen said he is going to ask for discussion before asking for a motion. Charlotte Wilcox stated the cost to vacate these roads would be minimal, basically, the cost would be the cost to file the documents. These are platted roads so the land owners who own property on either side of the roads – the owners do not own to the middle of the road. They are actually public roads. If we vacate these roads – these roads would be turned over to the land owners on both sides of the road. Patricia Peters owns the lots adjacent to the northwest corner of Water Street. The assumption would be that Chisago County would then award all of the north part to Patricia Peters.

Oak Street and Minnesota Avenue are all one land owner.

Charlotte Wilcox stated she was tasked by Town Board to look at vacating roads because there are clouds on titles. Deah Szymanski said it would make it easier to develop and said this would take away from public to access water.

Charlotte Wilcox stated Sunrise Township is barred from vacating any road that would landlock a parcel. Any landowner would need to agree to vacate if their parcel would be landlocked.

There would be no barriers to these three roads.

Charlotte Wilcox read a suggested prepared resolution to initiate vacating the roads.

David Stertz posed the question: Was the planning commission in full agreement on these three roads to be vacated. Charlotte Wilcox responded, yes, The Sunrise Planning Commission was unanimous on these three roads.

Motion by Tyler Richter, second by Eric Leivian to accept the resolution:

Discussion: Deah Szymanski wants to amend the motion to prohibit the future sale of the ballpark. Tyler Richter said that real estate is not germane to a resolution. Deah Szymansi asked if these are not roads – can we call them public land? Charlotte Wilcox said they are legally called abandoned roads. Once a road has been abandoned (by not being maintained for 25 years) – Sunrise Township is barred by state law forever maintaining that road unless the citizens at an annual meeting agree to maintain the road. Will Swanson asked if this will change the legal stance of the ballpark. Renee Gatzow asked what part of Water Street? Charlotte Wilcox informed the Citizens it is between Sunrise Road and Wilcox Road.

Tyler Richter stated the more of these roads that get vacated the better. Also, not to address the elephant in the room, but it is not the intention of a data center being built in the ballpark. Property owners are going to fight about the roads - property owners are going fight with Sunrise Township about them. Other points: 1. Developer will put money up in court to fight. 2. A property owner sees a right of way and put a driveway in – put a chain across the road – 3. A lot 33 or 66 feet wide – a lot separate property owners on either side. Property owner "A" starts doing something – property owner "B" says you cannot do that. What are we willing to do about fixing these defects. It never gets easier. Cleaner can start right now. Dan Harrington asked - can it be upgraded to make it of any use if you don't improve it.

Tyler Richter – called the motion. Motion carried. Deah Szymanski asked how can he call the motion. It was explained because it is Tyler Richter's motion.

Sunrise Township
Chisago County, Minnesota

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN BOARD TO INITIATE THE VACATION OF TOWN ROADS

WHEREAS, the issue of vacating the following described abandoned roads was raised and discussed at the annual town meeting or special town meeting of the electors of Sunrise Township, Chisago County, Minnesota, on March 10, 2026;

1.Water Street between Sunrise Road and Wilcox Road
2.Oak Street between Sunrise Road and Minnesota Avenue
3.Minnesota Avenue between Sunrise Road and the Sunrise River

WHEREAS, Minn. Stat. § 164.06, subd. 1, allows a town board to initiate the town road establishment, vacation, or alteration procedure contained in Minn. Stat. § 164.07 upon receiving authorization of the town electors;

WHEREAS, the town electors determined it is in the best interests of the town to authorize the town board to initiate the road procedure in Minn. Stat. § 164.07 without having to obtain the petition described in Minn. Stat. § 164.07, subd. 1;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the electors of Sunrise Township, Chisago County, Minnesota, hereby authorize the town board to initiate the road vacation procedure in Minn. Stat. § 164.07 regarding the above referenced abandoned roads.Adopted this 10th day of March, 2026.

Motion by Deah Szymanski, to prohibit the sale of the ballpark in perpetuity

- Discussion took place before second:
- Renee Gatzow asked the question what does "In perpetuity mean"? it would remain in Sunrise Township ownership in perpetuity / forever.

Point of order called by Charlotte Wilcox because discussion took place before a second to the motion

- Then, Renee Gatzow seconded the motion

Discussion:

David Stertz Objected - not following agenda: no rationale, perpetuity, out of order – stick to the agenda that is approved –

Rick Olseen called for HOLD of motion and placed under Other Business.

Proposed Maintenance Building: James McCarthy said he heard that Sunrise Town Board is looking at building a new maintenance building. **Motion by James McCarthy, second by Deah Szymanski to not build a new maintenance building without an approval from the citizens at a future annual meeting.**

Discussion by Eric Leivian offered a friendly amendment of unless there is force majeure - meaning "a greater force." Lynn Wolleat stated there is no bathroom / sewer in the current building. It was also brought up that there are several pieces of equipment that currently do not fit in the building. There is only one door on the building. Mark Osland said that Sunrise Township would like to have a business in the current building to increase Sunrise Township's tax base. Treasurer Anderson informed the citizens that there is a line-item fund set up which is currently at $50,000 for a new maintenance building. The Town Board is very conservative on spending and try to build funds up so as not to raise taxes for projects.

Tyler Richter is not in favor of this motion. It makes more sense to get everything on one campus – starting a fund and having a plan in place is productive. Tyler Richter believes this would be non-productive to take the maintenance building off the table.
Bobbi Harrington is wondering if there is an agreement with neighbors to be considerate.
Greg Strom stated the maintenance building is part of the current CUP for Sunrise Township.

Adam Grobove III said he is understanding of the noise concern.
Old Town Hall (Royal Wilcox Community Center) – had bathrooms and water. The sewer was removed, which was not a legal sewer system, when the building was removed and transferred to the Almelund Threshing Grounds.
Deah Syzmanski commented we as citizens should be able to debate these decisions. If we turn these decisions over to the Town Board, where would we have the say.
Tyler Richter commented on several pieces of property that the Township owns that are not being used and could be sold to create tax revenue.

MOTION CARRIED. - majority

Gopher Bounty: Motion by Lynn Wolleat, second by Manley Olson to set gopher bounty at $4.00 per pair for pocket gophers. Motion carried. Gophers are to reside in Sunrise Township.

New Town Hall (12080 Sunrise Road (CR 9), Harris, MN: Troy Montague is in the process of mounting a booster for wifi signal. Bobbi Harrington, Head Election Judge, reminded the Sunrise Board that Chisago County provides a hotspot device to be able to upload absentee ballot information for elections – so being able to upload is very important for elections. August 11, 2026 is the next election to held at the Town Hall.

Dan Harrington mentioned that he does not see a smoke or CO detector in the building. This is not needed if the capacity is less than 100 people. Clerk Kowalke will place this item on the March, 2026 regular board agenda.

Deah Szymanski believes that Sunrise Township agreed to $10,000 for the Royal Wilcox Community Center to be transferred to the Almelund Threshing Company for the building. Greg Strom said that he believes Sunrise Township agreed to $8,000. Clerk Kowalke will forward the meeting minutes to the Town Board Members. Treasurer Karen Anderson will also look into the financial agreement.

Royal Wilcox Community Center (off River Road): Clerk Kowalke informed the citizens of Sunrise Township to look at the sunrisetownship.com website for historical information on the Royal Wilcox Community Center Building move to Almelund Threshing Company.

Park Equipment at New Town Hall: Adam Grobove III informed the citizens that the Town Board is looking into Park Equipment at new town hall. Rebuilt the park a little bit by the water. It would be nice to have a walking path at the park. There are funds at Chisago County when developments are built that are put into a park fund for each particular township. There is an application process that needs to be followed in order to access these funds. Playground equipment has been looked at. Adam Grobove III will try to put a plan together for the 2027 annual meeting.

CO Detectors – North Branch Fire Department: North Branch Fire Department has 100 CO Detectors to give away. Please contact North Branch Fire Department if you are interested.

Community Night Out: Tuesday, August 4, 2026.

Approve site and time for 2027 Annual Meeting: Motion by David Stertz, second by Lynn Wolleat to hold the 2027 Annual Meeting on Tues., March 9, 2027 at 8:15 at the Sunrise Town Hall located at 12080 Sunrise Road, Harris, MN. Motion carried.

Other Business: ***Deah Szymanski made a previous motion that Sunrise Town Board does not sell the ballpark property in perpetuity.***
Discussion: Troy Montague informed the citizens of Sunrise Township that the Sunrise Township lawn mower spends more time on the field than any people do. It doesn't get used. We spend a lot of money maintaining the ballfield.

Adam Grobove III said we have a request for a children's league to practice at the ballpark for 2026. James McCarthy asked if other uses such as pickleball, other activities could be a possibility. Manley Olson informed the citizens of Sunrise Township that his father donated the property in 1961 for the sole purpose of this being a ballfield. It wasn't for the Township to assume and turn around and make money.

Original motion under Possible Vacation of Downtown Sunrise Roads. Motion carried.

Public Comment: No Public Comments.

Sunrise Township March 10, 2026 Election Results: Clerk Kowalke read the Election Results.

A Total of 225 votes cast
(Total number of register of electors is 1611)

Supervisor A – Three (3) Year Term
Greg Strom 119
Connie Grobove 100
Write-ins 0
Undervotes 6
Overvotes 0

Supervisor B – Three (3) Year Term
Carl Peter "Pete" Johnson . 116
Jeske Noordergraaf 108
Write-ins 0
Undervotes 1
Overvotes 0

Clerk – Two (2) Year Term

Wendy S. Kowalke..... 188
Write-ins..... 4
Undervotes 33
Overvotes..... 0

The Canvass Board will be held on Tuesday, March 10, 2026 immediately following the annual meeting to certify the election results. Motion carried.

Motion by David Stertz to adjourn at 10:16 p.m.

Attest: Wendy Kowalke, Clerk

Moderator

Sunrise Township

Chisago County, Minnesota

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN BOARD TO INITIATE THE VACATION OF TOWN ROADS

WHEREAS, the issue of vacating the following described abandoned roads was raised and discussed at the annual town meeting or special town meeting of the electors of Sunrise Township, Chisago County, Minnesota, on March 10, 2026;

1. Water Street between Sunrise Road and Wilcox Road
2. Oak Street between Sunrise Road and Minnesota Avenue
3. Minnesota Avenue between Sunrise Road and the Sunrise River

WHEREAS, Minn. Stat. § 164.06, subd. 1, allows a town board to initiate the town road establishment, vacation, or alteration procedure contained in Minn. Stat. § 164.07 upon receiving authorization of the town electors;

WHEREAS, the town electors determined it is in the best interests of the town to authorize the town board to initiate the road procedure in Minn. Stat. § 164.07 without having to obtain the petition described in Minn. Stat. § 164.07, subd. 1;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the electors of Sunrise Township, Chisago County, Minnesota, hereby authorize the town board to initiate the road vacation procedure in Minn. Stat. § 164.07 regarding the above referenced abandoned roads.

Adopted this 10th day of March, 2026.

Richard Olseen

Richard Olseen, Town Meeting Moderator

Attest: Wendy S Kowalke

Wendy Kowalke, Town Clerk