

Van Buren County Board of Road Commissioners

February 5, 2026 - Regular Meeting

BE IT REMEMBERED: That on the 5th day of February, 2026 at 5:00 PM, E.D.T., the Board of County Road Commissioners for the County of Van Buren met in regular session at the Road Commission Administrative Office in Lawrence, Michigan.

PRESENT:

Road Commissioners Askew, Boze, Burleson, Kinney and Nelson
Managing Director Bret Witkowski
Highway Engineer Barry Anttila
Finance and Human Resources Director Linnea Rader
Operations Director Greg Brucks
Administrative Assistant-Board Secretary Jill Brien

ABSENT:

None

GUESTS PRESENT:

Georgette Peterson
County Commissioner Mike Chappell (Remote)

Chairman Burleson called the meeting to order at 5 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Rader requested the addition of Agenda Item 10E, Final 2025 Budget Adjustment. Motion by Nelson, seconded by Boze to approve the Agenda, as amended.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Kinney seconded by Boze to approve the Minutes of the January 8, 2026 Regular Meeting as presented by the Board Secretary.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

The Chairman opened the meeting to first public comment. None was received.

Department Updates were provided as follows:

Finance and HR Department:

- The Operating Budget through December 31, 2025 was provided to the Board.
- The actuaries continue working on the OPEB and Pension reports. Final year end investment statements were just made available in late January, which was the last piece of information the actuaries needed to finish calculations. I'm hoping for reports at the March (or April at the latest) meetings.
- As of right now our audit is scheduled for the first full week in April.
- We are working hard on year end preparation with billing, reporting, etc. A reminder that **questions regarding Township billing/invoices should be directed to Jill**. Township invoices are requested to be **paid in full no later than February 26, 2026**.
- We will be hosting open interviews Monday, March 2 and Tuesday, March 3 from 3-7pm. We will also be advertising for the following positions in "regular" interview format. We will be looking to hire:
 - 5-6 Seasonal Road Maintenance Employees (5-6 current employees are considering retirement)
 - Up to 2 Road Maintenance Employee Apprentices

- 2 Seasonal Engineering Interns
- Up to 1 General Mechanic
- Up to 1 Heavy Equipment Mechanic
- 1 Purchasing Clerk

Rader also relayed that she had attended a Job Fair at the Van Buren Tech Center yesterday. We now have a list of potential candidates for open interviews. In addition, Taylor Johnson has been found guilty of driving while intoxicated causing the death of Mack Isom, a Berrien County Road Department worker. Sentencing will take place on March 23rd. Those who feel strongly can provide a statement for the Judge to consider for sentencing. Questions were asked by the Board regarding cameras in work zones, winter operations policies, the snow budget, etc., which were responded to by Rader.

Operations Department:

- We have been busy with snow and ice control for all but four days since our last Board meeting. Drivers, Mechanics, and equipment are all getting tired but holding up well and doing a great job!

In addition, Brucks pointed out that one of our new tractors is parked out front for Board to see. Also, he and a VBCRC team went to Paw Paw Early Elementary School today for a 100th day of school Touch-A-Truck safety event. The event was very successful!

Engineering Department:

- Grade inspection for CR653 project (Federal Aid) was held, and the plans are ready for final submission to the MDOT after signature of the coversheet. Project should be on track for a May bid letting.
- Grade Inspection date for the CR687 project North of Hartford is February 13 at 10 AM.
- Soil borings for both the CR657 bridge project (Antwerp Township) and the 40th Street bridge project (Waverly Township) are being coordinated around the weather at this time.
- We received approval from EGLE for our continued “Authorized Public Agency” (APA) status.

Managing Director Witkowski:

- The next board meeting is scheduled for March 5th, 2026.
- SW District Council meeting on February 9 in Barry County.
- The annual CRA Highway Conference and Road Show in Lansing starts with dinner on Tuesday, March 24th. Then the “normal part” of the conference is on Wednesday, March 25th, and Thursday, March 26th. If you would like to go, let Jill or me know so we can get you to sign up and, if needed, get you a hotel room.
- This past week we met with AEP. They have finished renting the VBCRC property for the materials needed to fix their system in Van Buren County. On Tuesday, I gave the VBCRC monthly report to the VB Board of Commissioners, and on Wednesday I met with the Van Buren County EOC Director to discuss maps that need updating.
- The Sheriff’s Department approached me to see if the VBCRC would be interested in their large floodlights and generator, which they do not use. I talked with staff and they would like VBCRC to obtain them. Once we are caught up with snow plowing, we will go look at them.
- Starting in March I will begin attending township night meetings, and one-on-one meetings with our township supervisors. As in the past, I will communicate with you when I have a meeting with the supervisor in your district.

Witkowski also provided an update regarding the VBCRC’s application for State funding on the bridge that carries CR657 over the East branch of the Paw Paw River. We are still awaiting final word on the funding request.

Review of Vouchers:

Voucher #2449	\$	272,232.93	Payroll
Voucher #2450	\$	135,090.61	Accounts Payable
Voucher #2451	\$	201,269.43	Payroll

Voucher #2452	\$	290,541.24	Accounts Payable
TOTAL	\$	899,134.21	

Motion by Nelson, seconded by Askew to approve Vouchers 2499 through 2452, inclusive, totaling \$899,134.21.

YES: 5
 NO: 0
 MOTION CARRIED.

A discussion was led by Brucks regarding the public opening of Motor Fuels bids on January 27, 2026 at 11 AM. Fleming Brothers Oil is the low bidding Vendor for Diesel and No Lead fuel at the Bloomingdale Garage and the Bangor Garage. Petroleum Traders is the apparent low bidding Vendor for Diesel at the Lawrence Garage until the winter additive cost is factored, which makes their mark up or margin **\$0.11** during a majority of the year. In addition, the number of suppliers of fuel (“including BP, Exxon, Valero, Citgo, etc.) as set forth in Petroleum Traders’ bid is also of note/concern. And finally, Petroleum Traders is also requiring “transport loads of 7,000 gallons” for their margins. Our tanks are only 11,000 gallons and waiting until we are down 7,000 gallons is concerning when in one day we can use upwards of 3,000 gallons of fuel. That would consistently leave operations out of the Lawrence Garage with only a little more than a days’ worth of fuel when awaiting a delivery. Upon recommendation by Brucks it was moved by Boze, seconded by Kinney to award the bid for motor fuels to all bidding vendors with Fleming Brothers Oil Co. as primary supplier for Diesel and No Lead fuel in all Garages, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5
 NO: 0
 MOTION CARRIED.

Witkowski reviewed two (2) un-opened bids for Liquid Dustlayer with the Board: one from Michigan Chloride and one from Great Lakes Chloride. Bids for Liquid Dustlayer were due on January 27, 2026 at 11 AM; however, the two un-opened bids were received on Thursday, January 29, 2026 from FedEx. A review of FedEx’s website showed an “Active Service Disruption” message due to the impacts of winter storms across the US. The message outlined different levels of impact, including zip codes with no pickup and delivery services due to inclement weather. The Board asked questions, which were responded to by staff. After discussion it was moved by Boze, and seconded by Askew to open the sealed FedEx envelopes from Michigan Chloride Sales, LLC and Great Lakes Chloride, Inc. to be included with the timely bids received for liquid dustlayer for the 2026 season due to the severe storm that impacted FedEx’s ability to timely deliver packages.

YES: 5
 NO: 0
 MOTION CARRIED.

Operations Director Brucks then opened the sealed bids as follows:

Michigan Chloride Sales	“No Bid”
Great Lakes Chloride	Same prices as hand-delivered bid which was received on time and before the bid deadline.

Upon recommendation by Brucks it was moved by Boze and seconded by Kinney to award the bid for Liquid Dustlayer to all bidding contractors, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission and the Townships. This will allow the Townships to choose which product they would like to use as dust control within the Township.

YES: 5
 NO: 0
 MOTION CARRIED.

Bids for the removal of stumps and trees along CR687 from CR376 South to CR372 in Bangor and Hartford Townships were reviewed by Anttila with the Board. Motion by Nelson, seconded by Boze to award the bid to the low bidding contractor, Krohn Excavating, LLC, for the total bid price of \$89,500.00 with an hourly rate for additional services of \$820.00 per hour, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road

Commission.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Witkowski reviewed with the Board a ballot which allows the VBCRC one vote for the open four-year seat on the CRA Board of Directors that represents the Southern Section. This term begins April 1, 2026 and runs through March 31, 2030. Motion by Nelson, seconded by Kinney to mark the CRA Board of Directors Ballot for the candidate Tom Donnellon for the open 4-year Southern Seat.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Rader discussed the proposed 2026 Special Maintenance Cost Schedule before the Board for consideration. As our slag piles have been depleted, trap rock sealcoat is all that the VBCRC will offer. Rader recommended holding the 2025 sealcoat pricing to 2026. She recommended a decrease in De-Berミング costs due to efficiencies that have been developed, including how and where spoils are hauled. Rader also recommended no change in the cost of spreading Contract Gravel. Motion by Boze, seconded by Nelson to approve the 2026 Special Maintenance Project pricing schedule, as presented:

SEALCOAT + FOG SEAL	Price Per Sq. Foot	2026 Average/Mile Cost (assume 21' road width)	2025 Pricing (Reference Only)
Roads Rated 1-3	\$0.347	\$38,475.36	\$0.347
Roads Rated 4-6	\$0.317	\$35,148.96	\$0.317
Roads Rated 7+	\$0.284	\$31,489.92	\$0.284

DE-BERMING	2026 Pricing	2025 Pricing (Reference Only)
Local Roads per mile	\$4,500.00	\$5,600.00
Primary Roads per mile	\$4,500.00	\$5,600.00

Contract Gravel	2026 Pricing	2025 Pricing (Reference Only)
Spreading cost per ton	\$2.28	\$2.28

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Anttila explained the need for the Board's signature of the coversheet for the Federal Aid project on CR653 from Red Arrow Highway to 48th Avenue, Antwerp Township. The coversheet was signed by each of the Commissioners so as to allow the bidding process to continue at the MDOT.

Rader reviewed the Final 2025 Budget Adjustment with the Board and those present. This line item budget adjustment has been prepared at the direction and request of the State's auditor, Derek Hall, to allocate the line item labeled "Distributive Expense" to the various expenditure accounts. Questions were asked by the Board and responded to by Rader. Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to approve the final line item only 2025 Operating Budget Adjustment as presented by Finance and Human Resources Director Rader.

Van Buren County Road Commission			
2025 Operating Budget			
2025 Final Budget Adjustment			
Revenue			
	December 17, 2025	December 17, 2025	Difference
AOF - January 1, 2025	\$ 12,213,365.77	\$ 12,213,365.77	\$ -
Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF)			
Engineering	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -
Primary	\$ 6,991,847.37	\$ 6,991,847.37	\$ (0.00)
Local	\$ 4,380,570.33	\$ 4,380,570.33	\$ 0.00
Primary Urban	\$ 547,206.91	\$ 547,206.91	\$ 0.00
Local Urban	\$ 233,646.09	\$ 233,646.09	\$ -
Total MTF	\$ 12,163,270.70	\$ 12,163,270.70	\$ 0.00
Other State Revenue			
State Aid - Snow Funds	\$ 107,291.64	\$ 107,291.64	\$ -
State Aid - Economic Development	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State Aid - Bridges	\$ 83,934.00	\$ 83,934.00	\$ -
State Aid - State D Funds	\$ 237,000.00	\$ 237,000.00	\$ -
State Aid - Other (Safety, Grants, etc)	\$ 911,294.00	\$ 911,294.00	\$ -
Total Other State Funding	\$ 1,339,519.64	\$ 1,339,519.64	\$ -
Federal Funds			
Federal Aid - Secondary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Federal Aid - Safety HRRR	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 750,000.00	\$ -
Federal Aid - Bridges	\$ 693,900.00	\$ 693,900.00	\$ -
Federal Aid - STP	\$ 691,819.20	\$ 691,819.20	\$ -
Federal Aid - CMAQ/Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Federal Aid	\$ 2,135,719.20	\$ 2,135,719.20	\$ -
Property Taxes			
County Wide Millage	\$ 3,180,150.00	\$ 3,180,150.00	\$ -
County Appropriation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Township Contributions	\$ 5,800,000.00	\$ 5,800,000.00	\$ -
Other Revenues (Interest, Gain on Equip, etc.)	\$ 550,000.00	\$ 550,000.00	\$ -
Total Revenue including AOF	\$ 37,382,025.31	\$ 37,382,025.31	\$ 0.00

Van Buren County Road Commission			
2025 Operating Budget			
2025 Final Budget Adjustment			
Expenditure			
	December 17, 2025	December 17, 2025	Difference
Heavy Maintenance			
Primary Roads	\$ 4,400,000.00	\$ 3,900,000.00	\$ 500,000.00
Primary Structures	\$ 670,000.00	\$ 570,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
Local Roads	\$ 3,000,000.00	\$ 2,500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00
Local Structures	\$ 479,000.00	\$ 479,000.00	\$ -
Total Heavy Maintenance	\$ 8,549,000.00	\$ 7,449,000.00	\$ 1,100,000.00
Maintenance			
Primary Roads			
General Maintenance	\$ 1,400,000.00	\$ 1,100,000.00	\$ 300,000.00
Traffic Services	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Snow & Ice Control	\$ 1,800,000.00	\$ 1,300,000.00	\$ 500,000.00
Special Maintenance Projects	\$ 2,700,000.00	\$ 2,600,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
Routine Structure Maintenance	\$ 6,100.00	\$ 6,100.00	\$ -
Local Roads			
General Maintenance	\$ 2,600,000.00	\$ 2,100,000.00	\$ 500,000.00
Traffic Services	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Snow & Ice Control	\$ 2,300,000.00	\$ 1,800,000.00	\$ 500,000.00
Special Maintenance Projects	\$ 4,200,000.00	\$ 4,000,000.00	\$ 200,000.00
Routine Structure Maintenance	\$ 9,200.00	\$ 9,200.00	\$ -
Disaster Contingency	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -
Total Maintenance	\$ 15,270,300.00	\$ 13,070,300.00	\$ 2,200,000.00
Other Expenses			
Administration	\$ 1,700,000.00	\$ 1,400,000.00	\$ 300,000.00
Interest Expense	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Long-Term Debt Payments	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Net Capital Outlay	\$ 891,984.00	\$ 891,984.00	\$ -
Net Equipment Expense	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ -
Distributive Expense	\$ -	\$ 3,600,000.00	\$ (3,600,000.00)
Non-Road	\$ 800,000.00	\$ 800,000.00	\$ -
Adjustments to Fund Balance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Other Expenses	\$ 3,891,984.00	\$ 7,191,984.00	\$ (3,300,000.00)
Total Expenditures	\$ 27,711,284.00	\$ 27,711,284.00	\$ -
Operating Fund Balance	\$ 9,670,741.31	\$ 9,670,741.31	\$ 0.00
Total Expenditures & Fund Balance	\$ 37,382,025.31	\$ 37,382,025.31	\$ 0.00

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Updates and Reports:

W.C. Askew, Sr.

No report.

Rick Boze

Went to Keeler Township on Tuesday. Received compliments on road conditions.

Greg Kinney

No report.

Wayne Nelson

No Report.

Doug Burleson

Attended Columbia Township on 1/20. Attended Bloomingdale Township on 1/21.

The Chairman opened the meeting to second public comment. Georgette Peterson, Supervisor for Arlington Township said, "Thank you for all you do" at the Road Commission.

County Commissioner Chappell said that prior to becoming an elected official part of his official duties entailed decision-making regarding school closures due to severe weather. He recalled times when school would close not due to more snow falling, but due to the blowing and drifting of snow along several roads that were last on the plow list due to their rural location. Chappell asked if the Road Commission has ever considered addressing these drifted roads before beginning regular operations to open up those roads that are known to drift over so that school can continue. Brucks responded to Commissioner Chappell's questions by stating that on occasion the Road Commission has adjusted those routes that are prime candidates for drifting for that very reason. Commissioner Chappell appreciated the update as it's been about 10 years since he's been out of that position.

Motion by Nelson, seconded by Boze to adjourn the Call of the Chair at 5:57 PM.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Board Secretary

Board Chairman