

## Van Buren County Board of Road Commissioners

February 15, 2024 - Regular Meeting

BE IT REMEMBERED: That on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2024 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 (Remote) and Nelson  
Managing Director Bret Witkowski  
Finance and Human Resources Director Linnea Rader  
Operations Director Greg Brucks  
Administrative Assistant-Board Secretary Jill Brien

### ABSENT:

None

### GUESTS PRESENT:

County Commissioner Doroh  
County Commissioner Chappell  
Ivona Tylka-Suleja, CR376 resident  
Linda Read, Hill Drive resident  
Karen and Bob Christopherson, Hill Drive resident  
Rhonda and Jim Beatty, Hill Drive resident  
Mary and Tim Redmon, Hill Drive resident

Chairman Boze called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Commissioner Boze requested that item 10(D) ORV Ordinance Discussion, be added to the Agenda.

Motion by Nelson seconded by Askew to approve the Agenda, as amended.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Burleson seconded by Askew to approve the Minutes of the January 18, 2024 Regular Meeting as presented by the Board Secretary.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

The Chairman opened the meeting to first public comment. County Commissioner Chappell discussed the County's proposed ORV ordinance as it relates to the various primary roads the Road Commission mentioned closing for ORV use. Commissioner Chappell indicated that he will request input from the Supervisors at their upcoming Supervisors' Meeting regarding roads they wish to close to ORV use or even keep their entire township closed to ORV use and will email a list to Managing Director Witkowski in follow up.

Ivona Tylka-Suleja, a resident of CR376 in Arlington Township, requested information from the Board regarding the status of proposed work on CR376 East of CR681. Managing Director Witkowski advised that it is his hope to prime and double chip seal with fog seal this section of road in 2026 if positive results are seen on a test section in Decatur Township. Brucks clarified that while 2026 is the earliest that the prime and double chip seal with fog seal can be accomplished, other work may have to occur first, such as drainage and tree work.

County Commission Update:

County Commissioner Doroh provided a copy of the "Highlights for January 2024" from the Board of Commissioners. The Board Secretary will request to be added to the distribution list to forward to the Road Commission in the future.

Department Updates were provided as follows:

**Finance and HR Department:**

- Our "Big Picture Leadership Program," began in December for 13 Road Maintenance Employees and Mechanics who have signed up. The intent of the program is to assist in the growth of our employees whether they would like to remain road staff or move up within the organization. The program will focus on various leadership skills, soft skills, organizational skills, and awareness of the organization as a whole. Having 13 employees volunteer to take part in the program is impressive and shows we have a workforce interested in personal and professional growth. The program has gotten off to an amazing start with great interaction and growth.
- We have been very busy working on year end reporting. We should have all reports run so we can begin having operating budgets to share next month.
- With the exit of the Right-of-Way Superintendent, we are taking a few weeks to regroup and ensure that we move ahead in a positive manner.
- We are working on updates to the 5-year road plan and should have a draft for the March meeting. We will also be working throughout the year to update our entire Transportation Asset Management Plan which will need to be submitted to TAMC later this year.
- The trial for Logan Brown, the individual charged in the death of Rene Rangel Jr., concluded earlier this month. Logan Brown was convicted of 2 of the 3 counts. Sentencing will take place April 15, 2024.

**Operations Department:**

- Tree work on CR 215 is nearly complete.
- This week's focus will be patching pot holes with some wash-out repairs, boom mowing, stump grinding and trimming scattered in the mix (county-wide).

Brucks also advised that he had two staff members attend Paw Paw Early Elementary's 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School event: Zane Yandell and Megan Stainbrook. Motion by Boze, seconded by Nelson to adopt the following Resolution:

**RESOLUTION 2024-03**

WHEREAS: On February 8, 2024, Zane Yandell and Megan Stainbrook participated in Paw Paw Early Elementary's 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School event; and,

WHEREAS: By participating in this event Zane and Megan served as valuable Road Commission ambassadors bringing public safety concerns and issues to the attention of both the students and the Elementary School Staff.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County hereby recognizes and expresses their thanks to Zane Yandell and Megan Stainbrook for their representation of the Van Buren County Road Commission and positive participation in the 100<sup>th</sup> day of School event.

YES: 5

NO: 0

RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

Commissioner Boze discussed boom mowing operations in Lawrence Township on 50<sup>th</sup> Street and his concerns regarding the operations.

**Engineering Department** (in the absence of Highway Engineer Anttila the Board chose to read the Engineering Report):

Working on estimates for upcoming Road Commission work as follows:

- CR 384; South Haven Twp line to CR 687 (South Haven Township)
- CR 380/20th Avenue; Ruggles Road to 76th Street (South Haven Township)
- CR 388; CR 653 to Kalamazoo County line (Pine Grove Township)
- CR 215; 44th Ave to 48th Ave (Arlington Township)

Also Local Bridge submittals are due on April 1, 2024. We are allowed to submit 4 structures this year as opposed to 5 in previous years.

**Managing Director Witkowski:**

1. An updated 5-year plan will be completed by 2/26/2024 for the township supervisors meeting on February 27, 2024
2. I met with the supervisor of Hartford Township this week; it was an excellent, positive meeting. My goal next week is to meet with the new Supervisor or Paw Paw Township, as of Friday I will have met with 28% of the township supervisors. (Update: met with Supervisor Palenick on Tuesday).
3. Met with Drain Commissioner about the culvert and county drain issue from the resident in Pine Grove Township. Drain Commissioner is going to clean out the county drain, both at the his residence and downstream which should help a lot. Because we dug a bigger ditch on the other side of the road that should eliminate heavy rainfalls over going over the road. The resident would like the culvert replaced but there is nothing the VBCRC can do about that because it is on private property.
4. Met with resident in Waverly township, there is a county road on paper (dead end of 40th Ave off 665) which includes 50 feet of grass. With it being so wet, vehicles have gotten stuck, so best to move the road ends sign to where the gravel road ends and the grass starts.
5. EPS has installed the smoke and fire alarm system at the Bloomingdale garage.
6. For January we had 235 SeeClixFix submissions, 65 mailboxes, 29 storm cleanups, 24 snow removals, with 99% response on time rate, which is incredible.
7. Facebook is up 288 likes in the month of January.
8. In March, I plan to attend township meetings with you; I need to ensure they know who I am and that I am available.
9. The CRC conference is March 19-21, 2024.
10. Discuss under new business discussion on the millage at the supervisors meeting on February 27<sup>th</sup>.

Witkowski also updated the Board regarding the proposed fire hydrant at the Bangor property. He met with the Bangor Fire Chief and is waiting to hear back from him regarding the cost, which he will bring back to the Board. It was the Board's consensus to let Witkowski re-establish contact Townships, etc. regarding possible contributions should the project move forward.

Witkowski advised that he had been in contact with the Bangor Township Assessor to discuss taxes should the Board decide to lease the Bangor property for farming. The next step is to look into how much land is farmable at the location so that the Board can make a decision regarding the value of a lease for farming.

**Review of Vouchers:**

Voucher #2345	\$	321,338.81	Accounts Payable
Voucher #2346	\$	200,955.01	Payroll
Voucher #2347	\$	370,188.31	Accounts Payable
Voucher #2348	\$	180,856.71	Payroll
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,073,338.84</b>	

Motion by Burleson, seconded by Askew to approve the Vouchers totaling \$1,073.338.84.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Brucks discussed the bids received for Liquid Dustlayer, which were publicly opened on February 6, 2024. Motion by Burleson, seconded by Nelson to award the bid for Liquid Dustlayer to all bidding contractors, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission and the 18 Townships.

YES: 5  
 NO: 0  
 MOTION CARRIED.

The Board reviewed the bid tabulation for Motor Fuels which were publicly opened on February 6, 2024. Pursuant to Brucks' recommendation, the Board awarded the bid for Motor Fuels on motion by Askew, seconded by Burleson as follows: No lead gasoline to Fleming Brothers Oil for the Bloomingdale and Bangor garages, and to Crystal Flash for the Lawrence garage, and diesel fuel to Fleming Brothers Oil for Lawrence, Bloomingdale and Bangor garages, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5  
 NO: 0  
 MOTION CARRIED.

Bids for MDOT 22A Contract Gravel were reviewed by the Board. Motion by Nelson, seconded by Askew to approve all bidding Contractors with primary Contractors as recommended by Brucks as follows:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Price Per Ton</b>
Arlington Township (500 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$12.29
Bangor Township (2,500 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$13.28
Bloomingdale Township (3,500 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$13.95
Columbia Township (3,000 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$13.66
Decatur Township (500 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$11.58
Geneva Township (1,000 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$14.67
Hamilton Township (5,000 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$11.54
Keeler Township (3,000 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$12.43
Lawrence Township (3,000 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$10.75
Paw Paw Township (5,000 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$10.59
Pine Grove Township (2,000 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$15.75
Porter Township (5,000 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$12.88
Waverly Township (1,000 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$12.53
Van Buren County Road Commission (Boudreau Pit) (3,500 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$9.04
Van Buren County Road Commission (Western Garage) (1,600 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$12.70
Van Buren County Road Commission (Bloomingdale Garage) (2,000 tons)	Yerington Bros.	\$13.09

YES: 5  
 NO: 0  
 MOTION CARRIED.

The Board reviewed proposed 2024 special maintenance costs, including the combination of fog seal with sealcoat to ensure the best product is provided to Townships and residents with the greatest longevity. Motion by Burleson, seconded by Askew to approve the 2024 Pricing Schedule as follows:

<b>SLAG SEALCOAT + FOG SEAL</b>	<b>Price Per Sq. Foot</b>	<b>2024 Average/Mile Cost (assume 21' road width)</b>
Roads Rated 1-3	<b>\$0.268</b>	\$29,715.84
Roads Rated 4-6	<b>\$0.240</b>	\$26,611.20
Roads Rated 7+	<b>\$0.207</b>	\$22,952.16

<b>TRAP ROCK SEALCOAT + FOG SEAL</b>	<b>Price Per Sq. Foot</b>	<b>2024 Average/Mile Cost (assume 21' road width)</b>
Roads Rated 1-3	<b>\$0.309</b>	\$34,261.92
Roads Rated 4-6	<b>\$0.279</b>	\$30,935.52
Roads Rated 7+	<b>\$0.244</b>	\$27,054.72

<b>DE-BERMING</b>	<b>2024 Pricing</b>
Local Roads per mile	<b>\$5,600.00</b>
Primary Roads per mile	<b>\$5,600.00</b>

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Managing Director Witkowski presented a PowerPoint Millage Discussion for the Board and those present. The current county-wide road millage was discussed as it is essential to continue to provide the level of service townships and residents are used to receiving, allows the Road Commission to leverage Federal and State Aid, and allows the Road Commission to revenue share with the townships. Additionally, a new proposed Asset Management Millage was discussed including an allocation to each township related to primary road miles for townships to dedicate towards asset management plan projects which ensures data-driven decision making and consideration of township input. Additional discussion was held by the Board regarding mills to be sought if we move forward, and the availability of a Draft Asset Management Plan prior to formal approval by the Board at its March meeting. This presentation will be made to the Township Supervisors at the upcoming meeting on February 27<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Boze led a discussion on the proposal of a county-wide ORV ordinance and the closing of roads for ORV use by the Road Commission. Boze would like to see traffic counts utilized in the process of determining which roads to close to ORV use as they are restricted by law to 25 mph. No additional comments were heard from the Board.

Commissioner Updates and Reports:

**W.C. Askew, Sr.**

Attended Covert Township; they are happy with the Road Commission. Attended Bangor Township; brought two issues which were discussed with staff. Attended South Haven Township; no issues. Attended Geneva Township; they were pleased that their proposal for work on CR384 was approved for 2024.

**Rick Boze**

Attended Keeler Township on the 6<sup>th</sup>; informed them (and all townships during attendance at meetings) that although there was no snow to plow work crews are still out boom mowing, patching, etc., so the savings are really in the fuel use. Attended Hartford Township and Lawrence Township on the 8<sup>th</sup>; concerns were voiced about closing primary roads for ORV use.

**Doug Burleson**

No report.

**Greg Kinney**

Scheduled for surgery on February 27<sup>th</sup> which may require hospitalization.

**Wayne Nelson**

Had communications with Porter Township Supervisor. Attended the Southwest Council Meeting on February 12<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Nelson also noted that Linnea Rader is in the “wrap-up” phase of her work for the City of Hartford. He thanked her for agreeing to take on the challenge and help the City.

The Chairman opened the meeting to second public comment. Karen Jensen identified herself as a resident of Hill Drive in Lawrence Township. She relayed concerns about the condition of Hill Drive as it is gravel and fills up with potholes shortly after being graded. Other residents on Hill Drive also spoke to the poor condition of the roadway and requested that it be reviewed following a rain as drainage is also poor. A group discussion was held with the Commissioners, Road Commission Staff, and the residents which resulted in Witkowski advising that Hill Drive would be reviewed during the spring road tour with Lawrence Township with an eye towards a solution, which could take up to as long as 4-5 years to accomplish and may require resident cost sharing in the form of a special assessment depending upon the size/type of project.

Motion by Askew, seconded by Nelson to adjourn the Call of the Chair at 6:33 PM.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

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Board Secretary

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Board Chairman