

## Van Buren County Board of Road Commissioners

April 4, 2024 - Regular Meeting

BE IT REMEMBERED: That on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of April, 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  
Highway Engineer Barry Anttila  
Operations Director Greg Brucks  
Administrative Assistant-Board Secretary Jill Brien

### ABSENT:

None

### GUESTS PRESENT:

County Commissioners Doroh and Chappell

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Motion by Askew seconded by Nelson to approve the Agenda.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Kinney seconded by Nelson to approve the Minutes of the March 7, 2024 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.

Commissioner Doroh provided the following update for the Board and those present:

- Jerry Happel, GIS Director, is working to make improvements to the County's geographic data
- Reappointed Lisa Phillips to a 3-year term on the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
- Approved the purchase of new timekeeping software
- Approved the following millages: 911 Local Surcharge Renewal; Vet Services Renewal; Road Millage Renewal; Public Transit Renewal
- He attended the annual Van Buren Municipal Summit
- Sharon Woods explained County housing study
- Unveiled Market Van Buren's new brand. We are now known as "Market One" since Cass County is part of it
- He and Commissioner Chappell attended Palisades meeting with Governor Whitmer and Energy Secretary Granholm announcing loan to Holtec to re-open
- He is attending classes at ISD for planning commission presented by MSU Extension one night a week for six weeks - 3 hours each night

Department Updates were provided as follows:

### Operations Department:

- Intersection sweeping will be complete this week for the entire county.
- Covert Township; 30th Avenue between 75th and 76th Streets – this crew continues to make progress with ditching and crosspipe/driveway tube installations.

- Boom mowing is complete on the primary system. Local roads remain in South Haven and Keeler Townships; mowers are active here this week.
- Weather permitting, total patchers will begin on the primary road system this week.
- Reported washouts in Covert and Antwerp Townships are being addressed/repared today (Tuesday).
- The deberming crew has completed the initial round of primary roads as well as all local roads that have been submitted by Townships thus far.
- Our crews started tree removals on CR 384 in Geneva Township for Barry's job.
- Road tours this week include the following Townships: Arlington, Paw Paw, Waverly, Hamilton
- Two of the three new pick-ups were delivered and are in-service.
- Open interviews for seasonal staff will be held April 16th and 17th from 3PM to 7PM.

Brucks additionally reported that the new pickups purchased by the Road Commission have been delivered and are available for inspection by the Commissioners. Additional discussions were held regarding the purchase of the units.

**Engineering Department:**

- Bids for work on CR384 in Geneva Township were opened on Tuesday
- VBCRC crews are working on tree removals on CR384 and other projects around the county
- Bridge funding applications were submitted
- Howard Drive, Lawrence Township, scheduled to begin the week of April 15th
- CR360, Hamilton Township, culvert replacement to begin approximately the second week of April

**Managing Director Witkowski:**

1. I met on Monday with Pine Grove Township Road Rep. On Tuesday, I met with the staff at the Bloomingdale Garage, and on Wednesday, I attended the KATS and SAM meeting in Kalamazoo. Next week, I will meet with Antwerp Township and plan to attend the Pine Grove Township monthly meeting. I met with 67% of the supervisors and attended 17% of the township evening meetings.
2. The Van Buren County Commissioners passed language for the millage renewal on March 26.
3. Discussion on how to go forward promoting millage renewal.
4. We are holding open interviews for summer help on April 16th and 17th from 3:00 to 7:00 PM. Summer hourly pay is \$15.62.
5. We are waiting for tires for the roadside mowers to be delivered, they are hoping to be here on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March.
6. We have taken delivery of 2 of the 3 new pickup trucks.
7. The cell tower owner at the Western Garage wants to negotiate the contract with VBCRC; as I told the owner, we already have a contract with five years left. I wouldn't say I like using attorneys that often, but Bill Henn has dealt with them a lot, so he will help us on the contract so we get the maximum money we can from the tower.
8. We do have an agreement with a farmer who would like to rent the 16 acres for \$225 an acre, for revenue of \$3,600, in 2024 there is no taxes on the land, but in 2025 the estimated tax bill will be \$1,300

In addition, Witkowski reported that he has received an Agreement from Antwerp Township regarding the satellite garage and has forwarded it to the attorney for approval. He also announced that after the meeting the Board and anyone interested can look at the new shingle roof on the salt barn at the Lawrence Garage. Staff is now in the process of getting quotes to paint the salt barn. Questions were asked and discussions held regarding a possible new road millage and its timing. A final decision will be made by the Board in June regarding a possible new road millage.

**Review of Vouchers:**

Voucher #2352	\$	170,553.83	Payroll
Voucher #2353	\$	1,060,965.02	Accounts Payable
Voucher #2354	\$	174,470.82	Payroll
Voucher #2355	\$	198,060.59	Accounts Payable
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,604,050.26</b>	

Motion by Nelson, seconded by Askew to approve Vouchers 2352 through 2355 totaling \$1,604,050.26.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Anttila brought discussion to the Board regarding the project let for bid on CR384 from the South Haven Township line to CR687 in Geneva Township. The bids for the project which included tree removals, HMA base crushing and shaping, trenching and widening, drainage improvements, and HMA leveling and top course paving came in higher than the budget allowed. Anttila recommended that the Board reject all bids to consider a more budget friendly project on this segment which will be reviewed later on the Agenda tonight. Motion by Burleson to reject all bids received, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Brucks discussed bids received for Hot Mix Asphalt Patching Materials which were publicly opened on April 2, 2024. At the recommendation of the Operations Director it was moved by Burleson, seconded by Askew, to award the bid to all bidding contractors with pick up based upon proximity and availability, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Brucks advised that Drainage Pipe bids were publicly opened on April 2, 2024. Upon recommendation it was moved by Askew, seconded by Nelson to award the bid for Various Types of Drainage Pipe to all bidding vendors with St. Regis Culvert as primary supplier, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Anttila discussed the bids received for heavy maintenance work on CR384 from South Haven Township line to CR687, Geneva Township. The scope of the project was changed considerably in the second letting of this project. Upon recommendation by Anttila a motion was made by Nelson to award the bid to the low bidding contractor, Michigan Paving and Materials Company, at the price of \$303,518.25, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission. Further discussion was held regarding the change of the project's scope and the project's final estimated cost. Staff will review the change in the project's scope with Geneva Township's Supervisor in light of its financial commitment to the project.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Anttila discussed the Proposal for Bridge Inspection Services provided by Scott Civil Engineering Company. Individual bridge costs were discussed along with the VBCRC's satisfaction and long-term relationship with Scott Civil Engineering. Motion by Burleson, seconded by Nelson to award the 2024 Routine Inspection Services, 2025 Off-cycle Inspections and as-needed services to Scott Civil Engineering Company, as set forth in its Proposal dated March 19, 2024, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Updates and Reports:

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

He and Managing Director Witkowski attended meetings in Covert, Bangor and Geneva Township in March. He also attended the CRA Highway Conference on March 19-21, and the Market One Van Buren Municipal Summit on March 21.

**Rick Boze**

Boze reported that he attended Hamilton Township, Hartford Township and Lawrence Township March board meetings. He also attended the CRA Highway Conference and brought discussion to the Board regarding break-out sessions he attended which included the Endangered Species Act listing for monarch butterflies as “warranted but precluded”, and policy development in addressing road abandonment requests. Boze also attended Keeler Township’s board meeting.

**Doug Burleson**

Burleson reported that he attended the CRA Highway Conference on 3/20. He also attended a road meeting in Pine Grove Township with Managing Director Witkowski on 3/25 and attended Pine Grove Township’s board meeting last night with Witkowski.

Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to approve Burleson’s request for a special per diem for attending the road meeting in Pine Grove Township on 3/25.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Discussion was held regarding the State’s project on M40 at 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the detour route, which has been approved by the VBCRC. Also discussed availability of 22A Gravel, which Brucks reported has been without issue.

**Greg Kinney**

Kinney reported that he had remote attended the KATS Policy meeting on 3/27.

**Wayne Nelson**

No report.

The Chairman moved to recess the Regular Meeting to open a Regular Meeting of the Board of Public Works at 5:55 PM. The motion was seconded by Nelson.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Nelson, seconded by Askew to reconvene the Regular Meeting at 5:56 PM with all Board Members present.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

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

Motion by Askew, seconded by Nelson to adjourn the Call of the Chair at 5:58 PM.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

---

Board Secretary

---

Board Chairman