

# Van Buren County Board of Road Commissioners

April 13, 2023 - Regular Meeting

BE IT REMEMBERED: That on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2023 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:

Linda Norton, Village of Breedsville  
Steven Rogusta, Village of Breedsville  
Bruce Thatcher, Bangor Township Resident

Chair Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

Boze requested the addition of agenda item 5A, Approval of Per Diem for April 10 Meeting with Senator Nesbitt.

Motion by Boze to approve the Agenda, as amended.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Rader read the following statement in recognition Kristina Longcore:

**On April 6, 2023 Kristina Longcore, Safety Coordinator-Assistant to Operations Department, graduated from the Michigan Public Service Institute (MPSI).**

**MPSI is a three-year training program which provides instruction designed expressly for public works supervisors, managers, and directors. The course curriculum includes three one-week sessions (one week each year) focusing on training in public service, professional development and enhancing individual growth. The three-year program dives into delivering service excellence, leadership development, and supervising for excellence. Participants learn about communication and service excellence, understanding the budget process, problem solving, effective team membership, generational differences, successful training techniques and approaches for today's workforce, building dynamic team cohesiveness, employee motivation and loyalty, and much more.**

**Congratulations on your achievement, Kris. We are proud to have you as a hardworking team member!**

Motion by Boze to consider a Resolution at the next regular meeting in recognition of Kristina Longcore's accomplishment.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to approve the Minutes of the March 9, 2023 Regular Meeting as presented by the Board Secretary.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Boze, seconded by Kinney to approve a special per diem for Road Commissioners Boze, Kinney and Nelson for their attendance at the April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Road Commission with Senator Nesbitt.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

The Chairman opened the meeting to first public comment. Bruce Thatcher, a resident of Bangor Township, shared concerns regarding CR687 near Merriman Lake. Board indicated that staff would follow up with a response as Mr. Thatcher provided various means of contact.

Steven Rogusta, President of the Village of Breedsville, thanked Operations Director Brucks for pothole patching and snow plowing in the Village this past season.

Staff Reports:

Finance and HR Director Rader:

- Handed out month-end (March) budget to the Board. She will re-introduce providing this information to the Board monthly, then another report quarterly.
- Provided Board with information to log into MyCRA.
- Sweatshirt update provided.
- Admin VBCRC clothing options discussed.

Operations Director Brucks:

- Patching and gravel road grading continues county-wide.
- Storm washout repairs continue.
- De-berming.
- Discussed letter drafted by Attorney Bill Henn (MCRCSIP) regarding beaver dam encroachments.

Highway Engineer Anttila:

- Updated Board on Federal Aid projects: CR687, CR689 and CR388.
- Two RFPs awarded for preventative maintenance bridge projects FY2024 and FY2025.
- CR352 project update.
- 30<sup>th</sup> Street, Almena Township; project on hold as area needs to dry out.
- 70<sup>th</sup> Street, Geneva Township project update.

Managing Director Witkowski:

- Encouraged Board to take time to review budget updates.
- Southwest Council meeting on Monday 5/8 at 10:00. Van Buren County is hosting at Paw Paw Brewing Company. Let Jill know if you wish to be registered.
- Attending Managers Conference on May 4-5.
- Conducting meet & greets with staff.
- Market Van Buren searching for grants.
- Attending County Commission meetings. County Commission passed bonding resolution request for the purpose of constructing Road Commission facilities.
- Staff did a great job responding to water complaints.

Motion by Boze to approve the Vouchers totaling \$2,062,800.29:

Voucher #2300	\$185,369.48	Payroll
Voucher #2301	\$1,344,847.19	Accounts Payable
Voucher #2302	\$164,943.59	Payroll
Voucher #2303	\$206,200.64	Accounts Payable
Voucher #2304	\$161,439.39	Payroll
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,062,800.29</b>	

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Brucks read the following Resolution for the Board's consideration:

**RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS: On March 10, 2023 John Chancellor was driving on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Geneva Township near the Black River when he noticed a person lying off the road near the river exposed to the elements and near freezing temperatures; and,

WHEREAS: John recognized the danger of the situation for the individual and immediately stopped to help, not knowing anything about the person, what the problem could be, or whether he was putting himself at personal risk; and,

WHEREAS: John Chancellor's act of altruism brought the gentleman, who had suffered from a stroke when fishing on the Black River, the life-saving care he required as emergency response was called onto the scene and took him to a local hospital; and,

WHEREAS: Although John was not motivated by the desire to be recognized, and is extremely modest about what he did that afternoon, he is a hero and someone that we can all look to as an example to emulate.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County hereby recognizes and honors John Chancellor for the demonstration of true concern and care for his fellow man.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board wishes John Chancellor every success in his future endeavors.

Motion by Boze to adopt Resolution 2023-12, as proposed and read by Brucks.

YES: 5

NO: 0

RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

Witkowski provided discussion regarding the Agreement proposed by the County for American Rescue Plan Act funds in the amount of \$1,200,146.86 for a project on CR388 from CR653 to 22<sup>nd</sup> Street (the county line) in Pine Grove Township. Motion by Burleson, seconded by Boze to authorize Bret Witkowski, Managing Director, to execute the Subrecipient Agreement for American Rescue Plan Act SLFRF Funds, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5

NO: 0

MOTION CARRIED.

As recommended by Operations Director Brucks, the bid for various types of drainage pipe was awarded, on motion by Boze seconded by Askew, to all bidding vendors with St. Regis Culvert, Inc. as the primary supplier, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5

NO: 0

MOTION CARRIED.

Upon recommendation by Operations Director Brucks, the bid for plant mixed hot mix asphalt patching material was awarded, on motion by Boze, 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.

Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to award the bid for heavy maintenance work on Red Arrow Highway from the Lawrence Village limits to CR671 South, Lawrence and Paw Paw Townships, to the as-read low bidding contractor, Michigan Paving & Materials, in the amount of \$915,271.00, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5

NO: 0

MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Askew to award the bid for heavy maintenance work on 26<sup>th</sup> Street from 66<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 63<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Antwerp Township, to the as-read low bidding contractor, Michigan Paving & Materials, in the amount of \$100,376.00, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission, pending approval by Antwerp Township.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Nelson to award the bid for heavy maintenance work on 26<sup>th</sup> Street from CR358 to 66<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Antwerp Township, to the as-read low bidding contractor, Rieth-Riley Construction, in the amount of \$136,100.60, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission, pending approval by Antwerp Township.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Burleson to award the bid for heavy maintenance work on 26<sup>th</sup> Street from the Village of Mattawan to Red Arrow Highway, Antwerp Township, to the as-read low bidding contractor, Rieth-Riley Construction, in the amount of \$101,424.40, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission, pending approval by Antwerp Township.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Askew to award the bid for heavy maintenance work in Autumn Vineyards Subdivision, Antwerp Township, to the as-read low bidding contractor, Rieth-Riley Construction, in the amount of \$554,121.00, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission, pending approval by Antwerp Township.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Burleson, seconded by Kinney to award the bid for heavy maintenance work on 32<sup>nd</sup> Street from 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue to CR388, Pine Grove Township, to the as-read low bidding contractor, Michigan Paving & Materials, in the amount of \$186,773.00, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission, pending approval by Pine Grove Township.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Anttila outlined the scope of the Federal Aid project on CR689 from 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue to CR388 (Phoenix Road). Plans have been prepared and approved by Hurley Stewart and the project is ready to be let for bid by MDOT. Each Board Member executed the Coversheet, as required for the bid letting.

Witkowski provided discussion regarding the liquid dustlayer bids received. Additional questions were asked by the Board regarding products and the goal of the Road Commission. Motion 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 Townships.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Witkowski updated the Board regarding the distribution of the mowing in the county road right-of-way news release, including the paid for advertising in the Van Buren Reminder. Motion by Boze to pay for additional advertising in the Herald Palladium, the South Haven Tribune, and the Decatur Republican at a cost of \$410.00.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Updates and Reports:

- W.C. Askew, Sr., Attended CRA Highway Conference in Lansing on 3/22. Met with Geneva Township on 3/20. Attended the Township Supervisors' meeting on 3/23. Attended Covert, Geneva and Bangor Township regular meetings.

Mr. Thatcher addressed the Board again regarding maintenance operations.

- Rick Boze, Attended Hartford and Lawrence Township regular meetings on 3/16. Attended the CRA Highway Conference and legislator's dinner on 3/22. Attended Keeler Township regular meeting on 4/4. Met with Senator Nesbitt at the Road Commission office on 4/10. Attended Hamilton Township's regular meeting on 4/11.
- Doug Bureson, Attended Bloomingdale Township regular meeting on 3/15. Attended the CRA Highway Conference on 3/22. Attended the Township Supervisors' meeting on 3/23. Attended Pine Grove Township regular meeting on 4/5. He and Bret also met with Bloomingdale Township's Supervisor on 4/6.
- Greg Kinney, Attended Decatur Township's regular meeting on 3/9. Attended the CRA Highway Conference on 3/22. Attended the Township Supervisors' meeting on 3/23. Attended KATS Policy meeting on 3/29. Met with Senator Nesbitt at the Road Commission office on 4/10.
- Wayne Nelson, Attended Almena Township's regular meeting on 3/15. Attended the CRA Highway Conference on 3/22. Attended the Township Supervisors' meeting on 3/23. He and Bret have attended meet and greet sessions with Almena Township's Supervisor, and with Antwerp Township's Supervisor. Attended Antwerp Township and Porter Township regular April meetings with Bret.

Chair Nelson addressed the Board that the conversation has come up again regarding the lack of Road Commission facilities on the east side of the County. Antwerp Township is actively pursuing consideration of a storage facility with a possible partnership with the Village of Lawton's DPW. It is Chair Nelson's hope that a collaboration can be brought back to the Board for consideration in the near future.

The Regular Meeting was recessed by Chair Nelson at 6:40 PM in order to open a Regular Meeting of the Board of Public Works.

Motion by Boze to reconvene the Regular Meeting of the Board of County Road Commissioners at 6:42 PM with all Members present.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

The Chairman opened the meeting to second public comment. Bruce Thatcher questioned the bid awards and the manner in which work accomplished, which was responded to by the Board.

Additional discussion was held regarding Board laptops.

Witkowski advised that a meeting was scheduled with State Representative Joey Andrews at 11:30 AM on Tuesday, April 18<sup>th</sup> and invited the Board to attend.

Motion by Boze to adjourn the Call of the Chair at 6:48 PM.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

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Board Secretary

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Board Chairman