Van Buren County Board of Road Commissioners

September 2, 2026 - Regular Meeting

BE IT REMEMBERED: That on the 2nd day of September, 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:

Michelle Green, VBCRC Communications-Permit Clerk
Vic Pantea, Resident of Scott Lake

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Motion by Boze seconded by Nelson to approve the Agenda.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Witkowski introduced the VBCRC's Communications-Permit Clerk, Michelle Green, to the Board and those present. Michelle provided some personal background information and relayed that she was excited and proud to be here at the VBCRC. The Board welcomed her to her new position.

Motion by Kinney seconded by Boze to approve the Minutes of the August 5, 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.

<u>County Commission Update</u>.

None.

Department Updates were provided as follows:

Finance and HR Department:

- I've been working with MCRCSIP on the life insurance coverage for any employee that is killed on the job. It appears that my "prompting" is working! We will be the test project for getting the data together and I've volunteered to ensure every Road Commission provides the necessary information to get this off the ground. A huge THANK YOU to MCRCSIP for taking on coverage like this.

- Normally I would be getting you a draft of next year's budget right around now. With the impending Neighborhood Roads Funds (NRF) coming in, I'm waiting for a better picture of what that is going to look like so our budget hearing information will be as

accurate as possible. If that information is not readily available by the October meeting, I'll still present a draft budget with the information I have at that time.

- Township Annual meetings are being held October 14 and 15, 2026. Alyssa has sent the invitations to the Townships as well as all Cities and Villages in Van Buren County. Reminders are in the weekly updates as well. The goal this year is to get all of our partners on the same page with planning and organization. Please encourage your Townships to attend and RSVP to Alyssa.

- We are updating the asset management plan with the new PASER data as well as construction for this year. This will allow for continued data driven decision making moving forward. With the additional NRF funds it will be wonderful to have this data driven approach.

- Per our conversation last spring, I've prepared 1st Amendment and De-Escalation training programs for the Board. Would you like to have those during a regular board meeting? Prior to a board meeting? Or at another time?
- We've had quite a challenge with our fuel tanks. We have found they have a growth of algae which we are working on having cleaned.

- The Snowplow Road-eo is scheduled for September 30, 2026. We have employee training that will begin at 6am, including our health insurance open enrollment meeting. Our plan is to start the Road-eo itself at 8am (sunrise is at 7:41am). The employee appreciation lunch will begin at noon.

Operating Budget is attached through August 31, 2026.

Operations Department:

Sealcoat is 79% complete and Fog Seal is 20% complete as of 8.28.26.

Decatur and Keeler Townships received another round of dust control on their gravel roads.

Drainage crews have been busy ditching and replacing cross culverts.

The second round of roadside mowing is around 80% complete.

This year's Brush Spray Program began last week on the Primary System, as well as Arlington, Hamilton, Geneva, and Porter Townships. Aside from a few days that were too windy to spray, it is progressing nicely.

Grading and compacting of this year's double chip over gravel is set to begin on Monday in Geneva.

Engineering Department:

County Road 380 in South Haven Twp. is all complete. Rathco has to replace a couple of signs that had to be pulled.

County Road 653 in Antwerp Twp, the paving has been completed as well as the shoulder gravel and the striping. Traffic loops and final restoration are the only remaining items to complete and should be done this week.

33rd Street in Antwerp Twp., received its asphalt overlay. Shoulders are scheduled to be placed on 9/1.

CR 687 in Hartford and Bangor Twps., all trenching has been completed and the contractor has been working on crushing the roadway.

Michigan Paving has completed milling and grading the Lawrence Garage parking area. Leveling course of paving is expected to be complete on Wednesday (9/2), and they will be back to complete top course paving on 9/8 or 9/10.

Wedge paving on CR 365 by Shafer Lake was completed on Thursday 8/27, as well as the wedge paving at the two locations in Waverly Twp on 40th Street. Shoulders should be placed soon, but no exact dates as of yet.

We also fixed a paving joint on the CR 352 (Territorial Road) project.

CR365 from the Village of Lawrence to I-94, Lawrence Township, milling is scheduled to begin on 9/10, pending weather.

Managing Director Witkowski:

- The next board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 8th, 2026.
- County Supervisors' meeting, Thursday, September 24th at 7:00 pm, at the Conference Center.
- Commissioner's Seminar is being held Sunday, September 27th, and Monday, September 28th, in Mt. Pleasant. If you would like to go, please let Jill know ASAP. I am happy to drive and go with any Commissioners.
- Our 4th Annual Employee Appreciation Day will be Wednesday, September 30th in Lawrence.
- Annual Township Meetings will be at the Lawrence Administration Building on Wednesday, October 14th at 6:00 PM, and Thursday, October 15th at 1:00 PM.
- I met with all 18 Township Supervisors for my annual one-on-one meetings, and have attended 15 Township board meetings. I have yet to attend Bangor, Hamilton, and Porter Township board meetings.
- The CRA Quarterly Journal, Crossroads, will be coming out this month with an article featuring the VBCRC.
- We have 61 vendors using ACH for payments.
- All the paperwork is now complete for the installation of safety lights for the Mattawan schools. Because we cannot contract with the schools, the contract is between the VBCRC and Antwerp Township with Antwerp Township to invoice the Mattawan schools. Kirby Heindorf of Traffic Services is ordering the items for that project.
- We will be hosting the Paint-a-Plow for high schools this year. The theme is "250 Years of Freedom".
- Fuel costs are up 13.78% for diesel and 12.77% for unleaded for the year. We are averaging $14,636 in fuel costs per month through July.

Review of Vouchers by Witkowski:

Voucher #2480	$	209,793.94	Payroll
Voucher #2481	$	1,145,644.14	Accounts Payable
Voucher #2482	$	206,465.91	Payroll
Voucher #2483	$	1,370,425.95	Accounts Payable
TOTAL	**$**	**2,932,329.94**	

Motion by Nelson, seconded by Kinney to approve Vouchers 2480 through 2483, inclusive, in the total amount of $2,932,329.94.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

By general consensus the Board moved Agenda items 11(C), (D), (E) and (F) forward to address ahead of 11(A) and (B) to accommodate Rader's schedule.

Rader outlined the proposed adjustment to the Board's 2026 Operating Budget as follows:

- Adjust beginning available operating fund (AOF) balance to line up with the audited ending balance from 2025.
- We are still not making any adjustments to MTF. We anticipate being able to make an adjustment later in the year as our monthly deposits are steadily increasing.

- We've received notice that we will be getting $1,060,593.43 in Neighborhood Roads Funds sometime in September. This has not yet been added to the budget since we do not yet know how much is from Marijuana Funds and will need to be held until the court case is finalized. I'm hopeful we will have additional information this week.
- Township Contributions adjusted to what has been authorized for this year.
- Primary Heavy Maintenance has been adjusted following bid openings.
- Local Heavy Maintenance has been adjusted to what has been authorized by Townships this year.
- Local General Maintenance is increasing due to increased needs of the local road system. Currently we have spent 74% of the local general maintenance budget.
- Local Special Maintenance is increasing due to the authorized Township Projects referenced in #4.
- Capital Outlay has been adjusted to cover actual bid costs for equipment projected for the year.

Moved by Boze, seconded by Askew to approve the September 2, 2026 *Operating Budget Adjustment as presented by Finance and Human Resources Director Rader.

*The Board's September 2, 2026 Adjusted Operating Budget can be reviewed by contacting the VBCRC Administrative Office at 269-674-8011.

Rader presented the proposed revisions to the Board's Drug-Free Workplace Policy, 2020-01. The current policy aligns with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration guidelines. The proposed revisions suggest going above those guidelines to align our random alcohol testing selection with our random controlled substance testing selection so that all employees chosen for random drug testing are also tested for alcohol. Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to approve the Drug-Free Workplace Policy as presented, with the ability to make minor changes to formatting and wording as may be necessary when removing the redline/strikeouts by Finance and Human Resources Director Rader.

Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to approve the amended *Drug-Free Workplace Policy (2020-01), as presented, with the ability to make minor changes to formatting and wording as may be necessary when removing the redline/strikeouts by Finance and Human Resources Director Rader.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

*A copy of the amended Drug-Free Workplace Policy is available for inspection by contacting the VBCRC Administrative Office at 269-674-8011.

Rader discussed the successful re-negotiation of an extension to the Board's contract with unionized employees. She presented the proposed contract revision which includes a one-year extension. Together these provides for union employees to continue receiving reasonable health insurance contribution rates. The Union ratified the agreement on Thursday, August 27, 2026. Motion by Boze, seconded by Nelson to approve the *Agreement between the Van Buren County Board of County Road Commissioners and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO Local 2901, effective December 1, 2026 through December 31, 2030, as presented by Finance and Human Resources Director Rader.

Roll call vote:

Askew: Yes
Boze: Yes
Kinney: Yes
Nelson: Yes
Burleson: Yes
MOTION CARRIED.

*A copy of the Agreement between the Van Buren County Board of County Road Commissioners and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO Local 2901, effective December 1, 2026 through December 31, 2030 is available for inspection by contacting the VBCRC Administrative Office at 269-674-8011.

A proposed amended Purchasing Policy was presented by Rader to the Board. The amended Policy takes into consideration recent changes approved by the Governor to

thresholds related to the purchase of machines, tools, appliances, and materials by the Board of a county road commission. The Act currently requires such purchases to be made through advertisement and sealed bids if the amount of the expenditure exceeds $15,000 or, under emergency conditions, $50,000. The passed bill increased those threshold amounts to $75,000 and $250,000 respectively. The Purchasing Clerk has also been added to the authorized purchaser list and other structural changes were made to ensure the best process possible. Motion by Nelson, seconded by Boze to approve the amended Purchasing Policy, as presented, with the ability to make minor changes to formatting and wording as may be necessary when removing the redline/strikeouts by Finance and Human Resources Director Rader.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

*The amended Purchasing Policy (2017-02) is available for inspection by contacting the VBCRC Administrative Office at 269-674-8011.

Rader exited the meeting for an excused prior commitment.

Brucks shared the tabulation for Ice Control Sand bids which were publicly opened on August 25, 2026. Upon recommendation it was moved by Boze, seconded by Nelson to award the bid for Ice Control Sand to all bidding contractors with H&H Contract Haulers as primary supplier for the Lawrence Garage at $8.25/ton, and the Bangor Garage at $8.25/ton, and Remington Excavating as primary supplier for the Bloomingdale Garage at $7.50/ton, in the best interest of the VBCRC.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Brucks shared the tabulation for the Cold Patching Material bids which were due by 11:00 AM on August 25, 2026. Brucks also discussed a late/unopened bid received from Ace Asphalt and Paving Co. that was delivered by FedEx at 11:57 AM on August 25, 2026. After discussion regarding past practices it was moved by Boze, seconded by Nelson to reject the late bid submission from Ace Asphalt and Paving Co. in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Upon recommendation it was moved by Boze, seconded by Askew to award the bid for Cold Patching Material to all bidding contractors with Lakeland Asphalt Corp. as primary supplier for their alternate material, BMPWinter, at $140.00/ton, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Yellow Rose Transport's proposal to extend pricing for CST Trap Rock was shared with the Board by Brucks. Brucks outlined the bid history for the Board and discussions were held regarding the past practices regarding price extensions. Motion by Askew, seconded by Boze to accept the proposal from Yellow Rose Transport to extend its quoted price of $64.00/ton for CST Trap Rock for the 2027 season provided delivery is taken of the total tonnage (approximately 20,000 tons) by the VBCRC by April 1, 2027, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

On motion by Boze, which was seconded by Nelson, the following Resolution was adopted:

RESOLUTION 2026-18

WHEREAS: On September 24, 2026, Timothy Nicholas will retire from his position as a Road Maintenance Employee for the Van Buren County Road Commission after nearly 41 years of outstanding service; and,

WHEREAS: Tim began his career with the Van Buren County Road Commission on December 23, 1985, as a Road Maintenance Employee; and,

WHEREAS: Throughout his career, Tim faithfully served the residents of Van Buren County, contributing to the maintenance and improvement of the county road system while demonstrating dedication, dependability, and a strong commitment to public service; and,

WHEREAS: Tim's extensive knowledge, experience, and commitment to excellence made him a valued trainer and mentor to numerous employees over the course of his career, helping to foster a culture of safety, professionalism, and public service within the Van Buren County Road Commission; and

WHEREAS: As a Road Maintenance Employee, Tim also performed winter maintenance operations, including snow removal and ice control, very often through snow emergencies, exhibiting personal dedication and extraordinary efforts to safeguard the motoring public throughout Van Buren County; and,

WHEREAS: Tim performed his many duties at the Van Buren County Road Commission with pride and professionalism, always in the best interest of the citizens of Van Buren County and the Van Buren County Road Commission.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of County Road Commissioners, together with the Employees of the Van Buren County Road Commission, express their heartfelt gratitude and sincere appreciation for Tim Nicholas's many years of dedicated service and wish him and his wife, Sandy, the very best in the years ahead.

AYES: 5
NAYS: 0
RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

Commissioner Updates and Reports:

W.C. Askew, Sr. Attended Covert Township on August 11. Attended Geneva Township, brush spraying questions received and relayed. Attended South Haven Township, no problems. Attended Southwest Council Meeting on August 10.

Rick Boze Attended Hamilton Township on August 11. Attended Keeler Township on August 11. Attended Hartford Township on August 13. Attended Lawrence Township on August 20. Attended Southwest Council Meeting on August 10.

Greg Kinney No Report.

Wayne Nelson Attended the Southwest District Council meeting in Cass on August 10, a good dialog was held at the meeting. Attended the Parks Commission meeting on August 11, they had a quorum for the first time in three meetings. Final bid specs for the kayak launch were approved. Attended Antwerp Township's August 11 meeting. The township approved an agreement with Mattawan Schools for the installation of LED traffic control devices. Mattawan Schools will pay for the signs and installation through Antwerp Township. Attended Porter Township on August 12. Attended Almena Township on August 19, no issues.

Doug Burleson - Attended Bloomingdale Township on August 19.

The Chairman opened the meeting to second public comment. Vic Pantea of Scott Lake asked the Board how the VBCRC determines which roads improvement projects are funded by the Township, and which are funded by the Road Commission. Witkowski explained the process that the Road Commission has adopted out of necessity to best serve the public of Van Buren County.

Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to adjourn the Call of the Chair at 6:36 PM.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

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Board Secretary Board Chairman