

## Van Buren County Board of Road Commissioners

April 2, 2026 - Regular Meeting

BE IT REMEMBERED: That on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of April, 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  
Operations Director Greg Brucks  
Administrative Assistant-Board Secretary Jill Brien

### ABSENT:

None

### GUESTS PRESENT:

Ronnie Denney, CR376, Arlington Township  
Shannon South, 36<sup>th</sup> Street, Waverly Township  
Larry Jarousz, CR376, Arlington Township  
Ivona Tylka-Suleja, CR376, Arlington Township  
County Commissioner Mike Chappell

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Motion by Boze seconded by Kinney to approve the Agenda.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Kinney seconded by Askew to approve the Minutes of the March 5, 2026 Regular Meeting, and March 13, 2026 Special Session as presented by the Board Secretary.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

The Chairman opened the meeting to first public comment. Ryan Denning introduced himself as a resident living on CR376 in Arlington Township. He stated that he does not understand why the road was “tore up” and feels that it shouldn’t have been done, and that it is a “disgrace”.

Larry Jarousz, a resident on CR376, Arlington Township, explained to the Board that CR376 was paved in 1950 when his parents bought the home in which he now resides. He stated that he is tired of being treated like a “second class citizen”.

Yvonne Tylka-Suleja, who resides on CR376 in Arlington Township, stated that she is checking in after the Managing Director’s meeting with Arlington Township Supervisor and asked, “where do we stand” with regard to potential improvements on CR376? She stated that she received a notice from AEP that they are trimming and clearing trees from their power lines and she thought that perhaps that could mean less work for the Road Commission in a potential project.

Shannon South, introduced herself to the Board as a resident on 36<sup>th</sup> Street in Gobles. She indicated that her gravel road has been scraped twice, but that it is still “undriveable”. Brucks addressed her questions regarding grading and stated that she should see a smoother ride after her road has been graded and re-shaped as scraping is a very temporary fix.

Witkowski addressed the public who had comments regarding CR376 in Arlington Township. He indicated that there is a price gap that still needs to be covered, and that he is meeting again with the Arlington Township Supervisor next week. Witkowski requested a copy of the letter which the residents received from AEP and he was provided a copy by Mr. Denning. Witkowski indicated that he planned to follow-up with AEP regarding upcoming tree trimming/removals.

County Commission Update:

The March 2026 Board of Commissioners Activity Report was shared with the Road Commission.

Department Updates were provided as follows:

**Finance and HR Department** by Witkowski:

- Year-end reporting is underway for 2025.
- We are anticipating the auditors coming next week. We are all set and ready to go.
- Our new hires are scheduled to start Monday, April 6, 2026. We are excited to add them to our team.
- Operating Budget through March 31, 2026 was provided.

**Operations Department:**

Since the lifting of frost laws, Operations crews have been actively working on gravel roads using both trucks and graders. While it is difficult to bring roads into optimal condition using trucks alone, the crews have been able to make significant improvements given the poor initial conditions. At this point, all gravel roads have been addressed with either a truck or grader. Graders will continue progressing throughout the county until the entire gravel system has been fully maintained.

On the 24th and 25th of last month, Jesse Harris, Kevin Clayton, Colton Vincent, Chris Milhollin, and Rick Molenda attended training at Etnyre & Co. in southern Illinois. Etnyre specializes in manufacturing chip spreaders and distributors.

Wednesday and today, Kristina Longcore, Kevin Clayton, Brian Burrows, and attended a two-day Safety Summit in northern Michigan.

Additionally, staff took delivery of our 2026 mowing tractors and new cutters last Friday.

Routine maintenance activities are ongoing, including patching, tree work, storm cleanup, boom mowing, and pipe replacements.

Crews have also begun removing spinners from trucks in preparation for upcoming hot mix patching and shoulder work.

Additionally, we had our first two township road tours with Pine Grove and Keeler this week.

**Engineering Department** by Witkowski:

- 73rd St. from M-43 to CR 388 - Clearing and restoration - South Haven Twp. was awarded to American Arbor LLC. Work should start the week of 3/30/26.
- Silver Saddle Rd. - Clearing and turn-around creation - Columbia Twp. was awarded to K&H. Work should begin soon.
- CR 352 - Clearing, crush/shape, trench/widen, drainage corrections, paving, & restoration - Keeler Twp. was awarded to Thomas Excavating. Work should begin the week of 3/30/26.
- CR 653 Federal Aid Project - Crush/shape, trench/widen, drainage corrections, paving, & restoration - MDOT has received obligation, projecting an April bid letting. Tree removals are being done by our crews.
- CR 687 grade inspection plan set and bid documents corrections have been submitted. Tree work continues on this project. Should be in the MDOT June bid letting.

- Township project requests ongoing.
- Bridges have been submitted to MDOT for the Local Bridge Program. Deadline is April 1.
- Working with Greg on a cost estimate for cross-pipe failure on 40th Ave. in Arlington Twp. New pipe has been ordered for this project.
- Bid packet for CR 380 project is being worked on for a future bid letting from M140 to 76th St in South Haven Township.

**Managing Director Witkowski:**

1. **The next board meeting is scheduled for May 5th, 2026, pending approval from the VBCRC board to move it from May 6<sup>th</sup>.**
2. Revenue for MTF was up 7 plus % from last April. At the CRA conference MDOT spokesperson said the increase was going to be 12% so obviously there is a disconnect at MDOT. MTF revenue the last 12 months is down \$414,290.17 for a decrease of 3.25%. Long term it will be a good thing for road departments across the state, but I think the path chosen to be cautious with the finances is a smart one.

Witkowski shared a handout from the County Road Association of Michigan entitled "Road Funding 101" and provided an overview of the contents for the Board and those present.

3. I am making my way around the county, meeting with Township Supervisors and attending night board meetings. As I have those meetings I will continue to invite each of you to attend if you choose.
4. There is legislation proposed by 4 Republicans and 3 Democrats to eliminate the Marijuana tax money, which is a good portion of the road funding bill. The CRA does not think it will pass.
5. Still working with Rep. Wendzel's office to attempt to secure some funding for the new bridge to be built on CR 657, Antwerp Township.
6. Satellite in Antwerp Township is completed. The Township did a nice job. We are waiting to do some groundwork out there where material will be placed. If anyone would like to see the satellite, please let us know. Lease is a \$1 a year, plus gas and electricity.
7. The County Road Association Self-Insurance Fund have submitted their annual call for Board of Trustees Candidates. Road Commissioner and Road Commission administrative staff are eligible to run. If interested, please see the packet from CRASIF.
8. I will be attending the County Road Association's Manager's Meeting on May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.
9. VBCRC will be closed April 3<sup>rd</sup> in observance of Good Friday.

**Review of Vouchers by Witkowski:**

Voucher #2457	\$	191,051.39	Payroll
Voucher #2458	\$	173,841.11	Accounts Payable
Voucher #2459	\$	182,209.66	Payroll
Voucher #2460	\$	533,302.75	Accounts Payable
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,080,404.91</b>	

Motion by Nelson, seconded by Boze to approve vouchers 2457 through 2460, inclusive, in the total amount of \$1,080,404.91.

YES: 5  
 NO: 0  
 MOTION CARRIED.

Operations Director Brucks updated the Board on bids for hot mix asphalt patching material which were publicly opened on March 24, 2025 at 11 AM. The bid tabulation was shared with the Board. Upon recommendation it was moved by Boze, seconded by Kinney 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 outlined the bid history for Drainage Pipe over the past two years and relayed that St. Regis Culvert has, again, offered to extend its bid prices for a one-time purchase in 2026. Upon recommendation it was moved by Boze, seconded by Askew to accept St. Regis Culvert's offer to extend its bid prices for T-2 Aluminized (corrugated or spiral ribbed al-alloy) drainage pipe from 2024, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Witkowski provided discussion for the Board regarding a proposed amendment to Policy 2022-01, Projects Funded by Townships. Witkowski explained the importance of rating roads on an annual basis not only for the purposes of Asset Management, but also for sealcoat pricing purposes. Motion by Nelson, seconded by Boze to adopt Revised Policy 2022-01 as recommended by staff.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

**Projects Funded by Townships**  
**Policy No. 2022-01**

**Overview**

Due to limited funding, road work that is requested which is not included in the Van Buren County Road Commission's ("Road Commission") budget is often funded by the townships, such as sealcoat, fog seal, gravel road improvement projects, and paved road improvement projects. The Road Commission and the Township Partners have worked together for decades to provide additional road projects with funding from the township level. This partnership between the Road Commission and the townships is built from necessity to best serve the public of Van Buren County, and is greatly appreciated by the Road Commission and the motoring public.

**1. Project Billing**

- A. The Road Commission may enter into agreements with the Township Boards in Van Buren County to perform highway, road and street special maintenance and construction operations on roads and streets. Work so contracted shall be invoiced at specified per mile/ton pricing or at cost.
- B. The township should ensure that it fully understands the scope of any work to be performed prior to authorizing a project and should ensure that all project details are included on the Program Sheet if there are specific instructions.
- C. Upon signing any Engineer's Opinion of Costs for projects that will be let for bid, the Townships will provide a \$500 deposit prior to the Road Commission developing plans and bid packet documents. Once the project has been let for bid, if the Township proceeds with the project, the deposit will be credited to the pre-construction deposit. If the Township cancels the project, the deposit, less expenses incurred to date will be refunded to the Township. If the project's costs to date exceed the \$500 deposit, the Township will be billed for the remaining balance.
- D. The Road Commission shall require a 75% pre-construction deposit on any township funded projects over \$10,000, less the \$500 deposit, to be paid before work commences.
- E. Townships may utilize the Road Commission's revenue sharing program, RevShare, in accordance with the RevShare policy 2022-03 to assist with funding various township requested road projects.

- F. The Road Commission shall absorb any over-run costs on projects funded by the Township as set forth in the signed Program Sheet/Change Orders.
- G. Should the Road Commission invoice a township for work performed and the township neglect and/or refuse to pay the bill in a reasonable amount of time the Road Commission, at its discretion, may utilize the township's current and/or future RevShare fund(s) as may be necessary to pay for the township's portion of the project.
- H. Any work performed by the Road Commission for projects/special maintenance on roads outside the jurisdiction of the Road Commission (i.e., under special assessment) shall be billed at cost, to include fringe benefits and overhead expenses. No RevShare funds may be utilized for work performed on roads not under the jurisdiction of the Road Commission. It is recommended by the Road Commission that private subcontractors be hired for this purpose without involving the Road Commission as this allows the Road Commission to focus solely on roads within its jurisdiction.

## 2. **Cross-pipe Replacements, Bridge Replacements, and Bridge Preventative Maintenance**

- A. Cross-pipes, regardless of the size, bridge replacements, and bridge preventative maintenance on the Primary Road system are typically funded 100% by the Van Buren County Road Commission. (Townships may choose to participate as set forth in Policy 2011-01, Requests for Improvements on Primary Roads.)
- B. Failed cross-pipe replacements on the Local Road system measuring under 36" are funded 100% by the Van Buren County Road Commission.
- C. Failed cross-pipe replacements on the Local Road System measuring 36" and larger are cost-shared 50/50 between the Road Commission and the township in which the failed cross-pipe is located.
- D. Undersized cross-pipes replaced on the Local Road System up-sized to measure 36" or larger are cost shared 50/50 between the Road Commission and the township in which the cross-pipe is located.
- E. Typically, all cross-pipes and driveway pipes (culverts) are replaced during heavy maintenance projects on Local Roads and on Primary Roads. Regardless of the size of the cross-pipe or the driveway pipe, they are funded 100% by the township on Local Road projects.
- F. Any costs for bridge replacements and bridge preventative maintenance on the Local Road system not paid for through federal and/or state local bridge funds, including design/construction engineering costs, are cost-shared 50/50 between the Road Commission and the township.
- G. Non-routine cross-pipe installations, repairs and/or replacements, regardless of size or location (Primary Road versus Local Road), may require township participation and are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

## 3. **Public Safety Issues on Local Roads**

- A. In the event of a Public Safety Issue on a Primary or Local Road, as deemed by the Managing Director of the Road Commission, or their designee, the Road Commission shall do everything within its reasonable means to open the road to the motoring public as soon as reasonably possible.
- B. If a Public Safety Issue exists on a Local Road, such as a failed cross-pipe, the Road Commission shall:
  - i. Make contact with the Township Road Liaison as soon as is feasible to discuss the Public Safety Issue location, project cost estimate, road closure plans, if any, etc.
  - ii. Provide the Township Road Liaison with a Program Sheet or Engineer's Opinion of Costs and shall request that the Township authorize the project funding (typically 50/50).

- iii. Move forward with the project to resolve the Public Safety Issue as soon as reasonably possible and regardless of the status of the Township's project authorization.
- iv. Invoice the Township for its portion of the cost share which can be paid for by the Township through its funding sources, or with RevShare funds as allocated by the Township, or as set forth herein in Section 1(G).

**4. Traffic Signs and Signals**

- A. The Road Commission shall install, maintain, repair and/or replace all Regulatory and Warning Signs, Posts, and Signals on its certified roadways as set forth in Policy No. 2018-05, Sign Policy.
- B. The installation of any non-regulatory signs, such as street name signs, township boundary signs, etc., may be funded by the Township, as approved by the Highway Engineer or their designee.
- C. As approved by the Highway Engineer or their designee, LED traffic signs may be installed by the Road Commission upon receipt of a Resolution from the Township stating:
  - i. That the Township will pay for any and all costs associated with the purchase and installation of the approved sign(s).
  - ii. That the Township will pay for any and all costs associated with the maintenance, replacement and/or removal of a LED sign(s) as may be deemed necessary by the Road Commission for a minimum of 10 years following installation.
  - iii. That the Road Commission's engineering staff shall have the sole discretion, based upon sound engineering decisions made in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission, to remove the LED sign(s) at any time following installation upon written notice to the Township.
- D. The Board of County Road Commissioners requests that each township in Van Buren County consider a private road ordinance, policy, or requirement that sets forth minimum required signage where non-certified roads connect to the certified road system, such as a stop sign, street name sign, no outlet sign, etc.

**5. PASER Data Collection Program**

- A. The Road Commission has implemented the use of PASER, a uniform rating system for all asphalt roads in the State of Michigan. This data is collected annually by the Road Commission and provides the Road Commission and the townships with important data, serves as a tool to evaluate maintenance operations, and is used to make decisions and provide data to back-up those decisions.
- B. The Road Commission asks that all townships participate in the PASER Data Collection Program as follows:
 

Year 1	The townships reimburse the Road Commission for the cost of rating all Local and Primary Roads. (Years 2022, 2025, etc.)
Year 2	Road Commission will cover the cost of rating all Local Roads and Primary Roads. (Years 2023, 2026, etc.)
Year 3	Road Commission receives reimbursement from the Asset Management Council for rating all Local and Primary Roads. (Years 2024, 2027, etc.)
- C. If a township refuses or neglects to sign a Program Sheet authorizing PASER data collection, the data will not be collected on the Local Road system in that township for that year and the Road Commission may, at its discretion, utilize the township's current and/or future RevShare funds to pay for the cost.

6. **Township Water and/or Sewer Systems**

- A. When a township's water and/or sewer system is located within the county road right of way, prior to the commencement of any cross-pipe replacement project the township must cause to have the area surveyed specifically to locate water/sewer systems. The survey is the township's cost to bear 100%.
- B. If water/sewer is found 18" or less from the location of any cross-pipe the township or water/sewer district must have the water/sewer lines re-located and pay 100% of the cost of the re-location prior to the replacement of the cross-pipe.

7. **Miscellaneous**

- A. Nothing in this Policy shall prohibit the Road Commission from performing such operations as may be necessary for the protection of life and property in the event of either nuclear or natural disaster.
- B. This Policy amends any and all previous policies adopted by the Board of County Road Commissioners including, but not limited to the Policy Relative to Force Account Contracts adopted/amended 11/1/79, 1/28/80, and 2/7/80; Policy for Private Road Engineering on Roads Which Will Be Dedicated As Public Highways After Reconstruction adopted 8/20/87; and the Policy of Absorbing Any Overrun Costs on Locally Funded Township Projects adopted 12/15/94.

Motion by Kinney, seconded by Boze to adopt the following Resolution:

**RESOLUTION 2026-11**

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Managing Director, Bret Witkowski (BretWitkowski@vbcrc.org), and the Highway Engineer, Barry Anttila (BarryAnttila@vbcrc.org), are hereby AUTHORIZED to execute M.D.O.T. Contract No. 26-5101, Control Section STUL 80000; Job Number 224559CON for work as follows:

**Hot mix asphalt base crushing and shaping, trenching and hot mix asphalt paving along County Road 653 from Red Arrow Highway to 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue, including aggregate base and shoulders, drainage improvements, concrete curb and gutter, traffic loops, permanent signing and pavement markings; and all together with necessary related work.**

YES: 5  
NO: 0

RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

Witkowski provided discussion regarding the proposed decertification of a private driveway in Columbia Township North of 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue. He explained that Joel carefully reviews the certification maps and when errors are discovered brings them to light. In this instance there is a gate at the drive's entrance which leads to a single home. The drive is not maintained by the Road Commission. Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to adopt the following Resolution:

**RESOLUTION 2026-12**

WHEREAS, a private driveway appears on the Certification maps of the Van Buren County Road Commission north of 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue in Section 36 of Columbia Township beginning approximately .07 miles (385') East of 48<sup>th</sup> Street and extending North for 0.25 mi. to approximately Upper Jephtha Lake; and,

WHEREAS, the private driveway was inadvertently added to certification as it appears that the Van Buren County Road Commission does not hold or own any right-of-way on this private driveway; and,

WHEREAS, the Van Buren County Road Commission does not currently maintain this private driveway as it is gated at the entrance at 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the private driveway north of 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue in Section 36 of Columbia Township beginning approximately .07 miles (385') East of 48<sup>th</sup> Street and extending North for 0.25 mi. to approximately Upper Jephtha Lake is hereby DELETED for Act 51 Transportation funds, as recommended by Van Buren County Road Commission staff.

YES: 5  
NO: 0

RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

Due to a scheduling conflict Witkowski requested that the Board move its May regular meeting to Tuesday, May 5, 2026. Motion by Kinney, seconded by Nelson to move the May regular meeting of the Board from May 6, 2026 at 5:00 PM to May 5, 2026 at 5:00 PM.

YES: 5  
NO: 0

MOTION CARRIED.

Brucks updated the Board on the award of the contract gravel bid, which the Board authorized him to award as he was in the process of collecting all sieve analysis reports from bidding contractors. The bid was awarded to all bidding contractors with the Primary Suppliers in each township as follows:

Location	Contractor	Product	Price Per Ton
Almena Township	H&H Contract Haulers	22A	\$14.01
Arlington Township	Stoneco of MI	22A	\$12.80
Bangor Township	Stoneco of MI	22A	\$13.30
Bloomington Township	H&H Contract Haulers	22A	\$13.62
Columbia Township	H&H Contract Haulers	22A	\$13.62
Decatur Township	H&H Contract Haulers	22A	\$11.96
Geneva Township	H&H Contract Haulers	22A	\$13.62
Hamilton Township	H&H Contract Haulers	22A	\$11.96
Keeler Township	H&H Contract Haulers	22A	\$11.96
Lawrence Township	H&H Contract Haulers	22A	\$11.69
Paw Paw Township	H&H Contract Haulers	22A	\$11.69
Pine Grove Township	H&H Contract Haulers	22A	\$14.57
Porter Township	H&H Contract Haulers	22A	\$14.57
Waverly Township	H&H Contract Haulers	22A	\$11.96
Van Buren County Road Commission (Boudreau Pit)	Yerington Brothers	23A	\$11.30
Van Buren Co. Road Commission (Bangor Garage)	H&H Contract Haulers	23A	\$13.36
Van Buren Co. Road Commission (Bloomingtondale Garage)	H&H Contract Haulers	23A	\$11.70

The Board asked questions regarding his analysis of the difference in contract gravel products. Brucks explained that to-date no bids have been received for the 22A modified in order to conduct an analysis.

Commissioner Updates and Reports:

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

Attended meetings in Covert, South Haven, Bangor, and Geneva Townships.

**Rick Boze**

Attended Keeler Township’s meeting on 3/3. Attended Hamilton Township’s meeting on 3/10. Attended Hartford Township’s meeting on 3/12. Attended Lawrence Township’s meeting on 3/19. Attended a luncheon with Pauline Wendzel and Aric Nesbitt’s office on 3/30. Attended Managing Director’s annual meeting with Keeler Township Supervisor, Don Blackmond, on 3/31.

**Greg Kinney**

Attended Decatur Township’s board meeting on 3/12. Attended Special Session of the Board on 3/13.

**Wayne Nelson**

Attended no outside meetings.

**Doug Burleson**

Attended Bloomingdale Township’s meeting on 3/18. Working together with Witkowski regarding a township road millage on the August ballot. Attended the County Road Association Highway Conference on 3/25 in Lansing. Attended Pine Grove Township’s meeting on 4/1.

Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to recess the regular meeting to open a regular meeting of the Board of Public Works at 5:57 PM.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Boze, seconded by Nelson to reconvene the regular meeting of the Board of County Road Commissioners at 6:00 PM with all Members being present.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

The Chairman opened the meeting to second public comment. Ivona Tylka-Suleja asked about questions that came up at Arlington Township’s meeting that was attended by Witkowski regarding a store owner on 56<sup>th</sup> Street at M43 and a driveway issue. Witkowski advised that he has not heard anything further.

Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to adjourn the Call of the Chair at 6:03 PM.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

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Board Secretary

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Board Chairman