

## Van Buren County Board of Road Commissioners

August 2, 2023 - Regular Meeting

BE IT REMEMBERED: That on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of August, 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:

Barb and Jim Alden, Paw Paw VFW  
County Commissioners Chappell and Doroh  
Kim Sinclair, Van Buren Conservation District  
Alex Florian, Van Buren Conservation District  
Emilly Hickmott, Van Buren Conservation District  
Abbie Bristol, Van Buren Conservation District  
Ivona Tylka-Suleja

Chairman Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM.

Nelson requested that item 10(F) Reconsider July Special Per Diems, be added to the Agenda.

Motion by Boze to approve the Agenda, as amended.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Rader explained Moody on the Market's recognition of Kristina Longcore, Safety Coordinator & Assistant to Operations, to the 40 under 40 Class of 2023, which is 40 working professionals under the age of 40 nominated for their work and for making a positive impact in the community. The Board and those present congratulated Kristina Longcore with a round of applause. Chair Nelson offered his thanks on behalf of the Board for all Kristina does for the agency.

Chair Nelson introduced Kim Sinclair of the Van Buren Conservation District who explained the Conservation District's three years of cooperative work with the Road Commission in treating Japanese knotweed and phragmites growing on the roadsides in Van Buren County and the damage these plants can cause to roadways and bridges. Emilly Hickmott, Alex Florian and Abbie Bristol all spoke on behalf of the Conservation District and shared information and maps depicting the significant progress being made to eradicate these invasives from the roadsides. The team from the Conservation District exited the meeting following their presentation.

Motion by Boze to approve the Minutes of the July 12, 2023 Regular Meeting as presented by the Board Secretary.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

The Chairman opened the meeting to first public comment. Jim Alden introduced himself and his wife, Barb Alden, to the Board as residing at 45660 CR653, Almena Township, and

representing the Paw Paw VFW and fallen soldier, Gabriel DeRoo. James and Barb Alden requested that the Board consider recognizing Army Sergeant DeRoo by naming a segment of Red Arrow Highway from Hamilton Street to CR653 as a memorial highway. The Paw Paw VFW is willing to pay the costs for the signs and labor to install the signs. Maintenance and removal fees were also discussed by the Board as they had not been considered by the Aldens. The Board will consider the request, together with the Sign Policy currently in place. Discussions were also held on possible improvements to CR669 in Decatur Township, which were responded to by staff. The Aldens exited the meeting following their public comment.

Ivona Tylka-Suleja requested an update on the status of discussions for improvements to CR376 in Arlington Township. Managing Director Witkowski advised that conversations with the Supervisor are ongoing and that no final decision has yet been made. Ms. Tylka-Suleja exited the meeting after expressing her satisfaction that discussions were ongoing.

Department Updates were provided as follows:

#### **Finance and HR Department:**

- Reminder that the 2023 Snowplow Road-ee and Employee Appreciation lunch has been scheduled for September 14, 2023. Lunch will take place at noon with the recognition event taking place around 1pm. We would love for Commissioners to attend and help recognize these employees. Also, if you're interested in helping judge the road-ee competition, we are always in need of help! Just let me know if you're willing and able to help that day.
- We are working on a revised table set up for the Board room. We will have temporary tables set up to demonstrate the design we are looking at purchasing during the Board meeting. The initial table that the Board looked at will be too large for the space, so we are looking at alternative options. Quotes for the custom-made tables are currently LESS than originally anticipated.
- We are continuing the process to find a document management service to utilize as an agency. We believe we have found the product we would prefer and are working to develop a more accurate quote based on the quantity of documents and the type of set up needed. More details should be available for the September meeting.
- We are working on the preliminary 2024 operating budget.
- The apparel order has been submitted for all staff. We don't yet have a delivery date for the items.
- The Operating Budget is attached. This is run as of 7/31/2023 as noted.

#### **Operations Department:**

- Sealcoat continues. If all continues to go well (at meeting time) we will have less than 60 miles remaining in Van Buren and 32 miles in Cass.
- Boom mowers are out clearing vision obstructions as manpower allows.
- Second round of roadside mowing may start with a tractor or two as early as August 3rd or 4th but should be going full tilt by Aug 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Hot mix patching, ditching and pipe replacements continue county-wide.
- Invasive species treatments, in a partnership with the Conservation District's Strike Force Team, will begin in early August.
- The previously mentioned invasive spray program will be followed by the natural woody stem brush spray treatments in late August to early to mid-September.
- The townships electing 2 or 3 applications of dust control will begin to see the next application in the coming weeks.
- RangerBid auction has been scheduled for August 22, 2023. Anyone may bid by going to: [www.rangerbid.com](http://www.rangerbid.com).

#### **Engineering Department:**

- 30<sup>th</sup> Street in Alma Township continues this week with cross-pipe installations and drainage improvements. (Update: discovered a gas line in one of the crosspipes so we are now waiting on gas utilities to remove/relocate).
- Working on getting a pre-construction meeting scheduled for CR 388 through Kendal, Pine Grove Township. (Update: scheduled for 8/9).
- CR 689, South Haven Township, MDOT letting is this Friday, August 4, 2023.
- 26<sup>th</sup> Street in Antwerp Township, contractor has completed wedge paving and project awaits chip sealing by Road Commission crews.

**Managing Director Witkowski:**

1. I met with Van Buren County Administrator for lunch and gave my monthly update to the County Board of Commissioners last week.
2. We had Consumers come out to our Lawrence facility, and we are purchasing new lights that will cost \$25,000; then, VBCRC gets a rebate of \$20,000 from Consumers and should save VBCRC around \$15,000 in electric costs.
3. Congrats to Kristina Longcore for being named one of Moody on the Market under 40 stars.
4. There is a 2023 Commissioners Seminar **on October 22-23** in Mt Pleasant; if any commissioner wants to go, please let Jill know as soon as possible.
5. The facility improvement plan is entering its final stages. Top of the list is replacing the roof at the administration building and the Lawrence and Bloomingdale salt facilities.

Witkowski also discussed that Linnea and Jill are working to provide documentation to the CRA regarding a \$95,000 annual reduction in MTF by MDOT as they have eliminated the jurisdictional transfer payment to agencies including the VBCRC. Additionally, Witkowski and Brucks met with the mowing contractors to discuss this year's mowing and to stay ahead of any complaints.

Chair Nelson discussed the Northern Michigan Association's annual conference as he received information via US Mail.

Motion by Boze, seconded by Nelson to approve the following Vouchers:

Voucher #2318	\$	168,214.18	Payroll
Voucher #2319	\$	687,081.12	Accounts Payable
Voucher #2320	\$	182,116.87	Payroll
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,037,412.17</b>	

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to award the bid for Underbody Scraper Blades to all bidding contractors with Michigan CAT as the primary supplier, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Askew, seconded by Boze to authorize the Chairman and the Managing Director/Chief Fiscal Officer to execute MDOT Form 2067, Annual Certification of Employee-related Conditions.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

NOTE: A copy of Form 2067 is on file at the Administrative Office of the Road Commission and is available for inspection by contacting the office, or by viewing online at [www.vbcrc.org/compliance](http://www.vbcrc.org/compliance).

Motion by Boze, seconded by Burlison to mark the CRASIF Board of Trustees official ballot for the three at-large candidates as follows: Tom Doty, Ken Hulka, and Beth Hunt.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

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

**RESOLUTION 2023-19**

WHEREAS: On July 11, 2023 Carl Davis completed his service as the Clerk of Keeler Township, Van Buren County; and,

WHEREAS: Carl Davis was first elected to the Keeler Township Board in 1972 where he served as the Treasurer until 1980; and,

WHEREAS: In 1986 Carl Davis was elected as the Clerk of Keeler Township where he served the residents of Keeler Township for 37 years, operating the Township's waste transfer site and cemetery, administering elections, and attending meetings of all boards and commissions in the township; and,

WHEREAS: Throughout his many years of service as both the Treasurer of Keeler Township and the Clerk of Keeler Township, Clerk Davis worked in cooperation with the Van Buren County Road Commission to maintain and improve the public road network throughout Keeler Township; and,

WHEREAS: The residents of Keeler Township have been served well by the actions and efforts of Carl Davis.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County hereby adopts this Resolution as a tribute to Carl Davis for his dedication and contributions to local government and the county transportation system.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County extends its best wishes for success and happiness to Carl Davis in his future endeavors.

Roll Call Vote:

Askew: Yes  
Boze: Yes  
Burleson: Yes  
Kinney: Yes  
Nelson: Yes

RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

Finance & HR Director Rader and Managing Director Witkowski updated the Board regarding staff's development of an equipment purchase and replacement plan. The plan identifies equipment replacement needs by the number needed, estimated cost and year to be purchased with a proposed equipment replacement plan by year beginning in 2024 and continuing until 2026. The plan also includes the anticipated life cycle of each piece of equipment. This plan will help to eliminate the peaks and valleys of purchasing which will help the agency fiscally moving forward. In addition, all Road Commission pick-ups purchased in the future will all be silver/gray so as to be more easily identified.

Chair Nelson explained the motion set forth in the minutes of the July 12, 2023 meeting regarding requests for special per diem by Nelson and Boze. Commissioner Kinney has since provided a copy of the Resolution made by the County Commission which requires the requesting Commissioner to abstain from voting. Motion by Nelson, seconded by Kinney to reconsider the July 12<sup>th</sup> motion to approve requests for special per diem.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Chair Nelson announced that the original motion is now before the Board as follows:

Motion by Burleson, seconded by Kinney to approve requests for special per diem as follows:

Nelson 4/3/2023  
Nelson 4/4/2023  
Nelson 5/2/2023  
Nelson 5/18/2023  
Boze 5/24/2023

YES: 3  
NO: 0  
ABSTAIN: Nelson and Boze  
MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Updates and Reports:

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

Attended Bangor Township's July Board meeting.

**Rick Boze**

Attended Keeler Township's August Board meeting last night.

**Doug Burleson**

No report.

**Greg Kinney**

Attended Arlington Township's Board meeting on July 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Wayne Nelson**

Talked to the Antwerp Township Supervisor. The Supervisor is moving forward with a Phase 1 survey on the site. Attended Almena Township's Board meeting on July 19<sup>th</sup>. Nelson also confirmed the Board's receipt of the Retirement System Annual Report for FY 2022 recently emailed by Rader. Rader advised that the Report is also available on the Road Commission's website.

The Chairman opened the meeting to second public comment. Discussion by Boze regarding work on CR352, which was responded to by Anttila. Additional discussion regarding CR376 in Arlington Township. Commissioner Kinney announced that Decatur Township's regular board meetings have been changed from 7 PM to 8 PM.

Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to adjourn the Call of the Chair at 7:08 PM.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

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Board Secretary

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Board Chairman