

**Van Buren County Board of Road Commissioners**

December 12, 2024 - Regular Meeting

BE IT REMEMBERED: That on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of December, 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 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:

Amie Witkowski  
Mike Chappell, County Commissioner

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Brien requested that Item I(H), Resolution Recognizing Amie Witkowski, be moved to Item 6(A).

Motion by Nelson seconded by Burleson to approve the Agenda, as amended.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

The Chairman opened a Public Hearing on the 2025 Proposed Budget at 5:03 PM. Rader outlined the preliminary budget including the 2025 planned projects, routine and special maintenance, capital expenditures, and proposed revenues. The Public Hearing was closed at 5:11 PM.

Motion by Kinney, seconded by Askew to approve the Minutes of the November 7, 2024 Regular Meeting as presented by the Board Secretary.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

On a Motion by Boze, seconded by Kinney the following Resolution was adopted by the Board and read aloud before presenting to Amie Witkowski:

**RESOLUTION 2024-21**

WHEREAS: On October 18, 2024 Amie Witkowski gave generously of her time and resources when she voluntarily took event photos at the Van Buren County Road Commission's Second Annual Employee Appreciation Day; and,

WHEREAS: Amie Witkowski captured many photographs at the event, including a group photograph of all Road Commission employees which was tricky and required the use of a lift truck, which Amie handled confidently and professionally; and,

WHEREAS: Amie Witkowski's photographs were appreciated by the Board of County Road Commissioners and Road Commission staff, but also by area media, who also used Amie's photographs in their publications.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County hereby recognizes and honors Amie Witkowski for professionally serving as the Van Buren County Road Commission's photographer at the Second Annual Employee Appreciation Day event.

YES: 5

NO: 0

RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

The Board and those presented showed their support by a hearty round of applause.

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

County Commissioner Chappell updated the Board as follows:

- Holtec Nuclear Plant is providing funds to hire a full-time and a half-time employee from the Sheriff's Department, and to provide one vehicle for use by the Emergency Management Office of the Sheriff's Department. The funds will assist the County to comply with test requirements of FEMA. FEMA also provided an \$11,702.00 grant towards the operation of the Emergency Management Office.
- Commissioners approved the Brownfield Development Authority's application for a \$500,000.00 grant for environmental cleanup and revitalization of various sites in Van Buren County.
- Commissioners approved a request from the Sheriff's Department to lease space from Waverly Township to park vehicles at their location. The lease is for five years at a cost of \$1.00 per year.
- The Conservation District reported that it recycled 17,166 passenger tires, 95,022 pounds of electronics, 23,255 pounds of household hazardous waste, and 765 pounds of foam in 2024.
- Commissioners approved the creation of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Committee to determine the potential applications of AI for the county. The Committee is meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at 11:00 AM in the Board Room in Paw Paw. All are welcome to attend and listen to the discussions.

Department Updates were provided as follows:

**Finance and HR Department:**

- The Operating Budget through December 10, 2024 was reviewed.
- Staff are working hard on year-end preparation with billing, reporting, etc.

**Operations Department:**

- Snow and ice control (including a holiday and a Saturday and a few extended shifts).
- In between winter maintenance, crews are also working on a tree trimming project for Paw Paw Township on Paw Paw Road from the Village limits to M51.
- New Loader scheduled to arrive this week, or next.
- Staff and local Village/City auction took place with sealed bids due last Tuesday. Unit #124 (Mack Tandem) sold to the Village of Lawrence (\$10,000.00); Unit 414 (Loader with bent boom) sold to Staff (\$12,000.00); Unit #030 (2001 Ford F350 LX) sold to Staff (\$1,300.00).
- Ranger Bid auction to be scheduled likely after the first of the year.

The Board asked some questions about wing plow use, which were responded to by Brucks.

**Engineering Department:**

- Four projects that were advertised for bid were opened on December 10<sup>th</sup>. They are now pending Board and Township approvals. (Western Garage Oil/Water Separator; Lakeshore Drive, Lawrence Township; 69<sup>th</sup> Street, Bangor Township; 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue at CR388, Pine Grove Township).
- Engineering work continues on 2025 federal aid projects, and beyond.

- Grade Inspection meeting on Wednesday at 2:30 for Red Arrow Highway project in Hartford Township.
- Meeting next week with bridge inspector at 52<sup>nd</sup> Street bridge in Columbia Township to re-inspect following recent bridge work.
- RFP is being drafted for the 40<sup>th</sup> Street bridge, Waverly Township.
- Attended KATS meeting yesterday. Appears the VBCRC will receive funding on CR653 project in 2028 (from M40 to I94, Antwerp Township).

**Managing Director Witkowski:**

- Over the last few months the VBCRC has been fortunate to receive \$8,585,926 with a match of \$4,606,581 for a total of \$13,392,507 for road and bridge projects starting in 2025. Great work by everyone.
- VBCRC was part of two snow stories for channel 3 out of Kalamazoo last week.
- VBCRC is auctioning worn-out pickup trucks and plow trucks. We offered all the communities pickup trucks and plow trucks and the Village of Lawrence bought one plow truck for \$10,000.
- We had a couple of wrap-up meetings on sealcoat and fog seal, which have gone well. I included almost everyone who was part of the process in the meeting (from the office staff handling calls to the lead operator to mechanics). We have a good plan to improve in 2025. At the January meeting we can discuss that more for you to share with your townships.
- Windows at Western garage should be going in soon.
- The Township meetings went well. In keeping with trying to get better we will have a wrap-up meeting on those meetings. If you have any suggestions, please let me know so they can be part of the discussion.
- This week I had a county commissioner come in and I showed her all the VBCRC's facilities. People do not realize how big the VBCRC is.

The Board commended Witkowski for going to Pine Grove Township's meeting following the evening township annual meeting due to the inclement weather.

Review of Vouchers by Managing Director as follows:

Voucher #2387	\$	428,081.98	Accounts Payable
Voucher #2388	\$	177,127.81	Payroll
Voucher #2389	\$	402,498.12	Accounts Payable
Voucher #2390	\$	176,760.45	Payroll
Voucher #2391	\$	387,867.31	Accounts Payable
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,572,335.67</b>	

Motion by Nelson, seconded by Burlson to approve vouchers 2387-2391 totaling \$1,572,335.67.

YES: 5  
 NO: 0  
 MOTION CARRIED.

Rader presented the proposed December budget adjustment, which provides a more accurate depiction of revenues and expenditures to expect in 2024 as the year comes to a close. Motion by Boze, seconded by Nelson to approve the December 2024 Operating Budget Adjustment as presented by Finance and Human Resources Director Rader.

**Van Buren County Road Commission**

**2024 Operating Budget**

**December 2024 Budget Adjustment**

<b>Revenue</b>			
	<b>December, 2024</b>	<b>September 11, 2024</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>AOF - January 1, 2023</b>	\$ 9,093,535.80	\$ 9,093,535.80	\$ -
<b>Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF)</b>			
Engineering	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -
Primary	\$ 7,100,000.00	\$ 7,120,000.00	\$ (20,000.00)
Local	\$ 4,435,000.00	\$ 4,450,000.00	\$ (15,000.00)
Primary Urban	\$ 540,000.00	\$ 550,000.00	\$ (10,000.00)
Local Urban	\$ 232,000.00	\$ 234,000.00	\$ (2,000.00)
<b>Total MTF</b>	<b>\$ 12,317,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 12,364,000.00</b>	<b>\$ (47,000.00)</b>
<b>Other State Revenue</b>			
State Aid - Snow Funds	\$ 105,087.72	\$ 95,000.00	\$ 10,087.72
State Aid - Economic Development	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State Aid - Bridges	\$ 68.26	\$ -	\$ 68.26
State Aid - State D Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State Aid - Other (Safety, Grants, etc)	\$ 115,941.53	\$ 111,900.00	\$ 4,041.53
<b>Total Other State Funding</b>	<b>\$ 221,047.51</b>	<b>\$ 206,900.00</b>	<b>\$ 14,147.51</b>
<b>Federal Funds</b>			
Federal Aid - Secondary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Federal Aid - Safety HRRR	\$ -	\$ 750,000.00	\$ (750,000.00)
Federal Aid - Bridges	\$ 2,525.52	\$ -	\$ 2,525.52
Federal Aid - STP	\$ 65,682.02	\$ -	\$ 65,682.02
Federal Aid - CMAQ/Other	\$ 19.67	\$ -	\$ 19.67
<b>Total Federal Aid</b>	<b>\$ 68,227.21</b>	<b>\$ 750,000.00</b>	<b>\$ (681,772.79)</b>
<b>Property Taxes</b>			
County Wide Millage	\$ 3,073,602.98	\$ 3,166,616.33	\$ (93,013.35)
<b>County Appropriation</b>	<b>\$ 1,150,146.86</b>	<b>\$ 1,150,146.86</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Township Contributions</b>	<b>\$ 5,962,565.92</b>	<b>\$ 5,949,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 13,565.92</b>
<b>Other Revenues (Interest, Gain on Equip, etc.)</b>	<b>\$ 385,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 330,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 55,000.00</b>
<b>Total Revenue including AOF</b>	<b>\$ 32,271,126.28</b>	<b>\$ 33,010,198.99</b>	<b>\$ (739,072.71)</b>

**Van Buren County Road Commission**

**2024 Operating Budget**

**December 2024 Budget Adjustment**

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>December, 2024</b>	<b>September 11, 2024</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Heavy Maintenance</b>			
Primary Roads	\$ 2,925,000.00	\$ 4,330,601.15	\$ (1,405,601.15)
Primary Structures	\$ 62,536.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 22,536.00
Local Roads	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 2,100,000.00	\$ (100,000.00)
Local Structures	\$ 76,958.20	\$ 46,000.00	\$ 30,958.20
<b>Total Heavy Maintenance</b>	<b>\$ 5,064,494.20</b>	<b>\$ 6,516,601.15</b>	<b>\$ (1,452,106.95)</b>
<b>Maintenance</b>			
Primary Roads			
General Maintenance	\$ 1,100,000.00	\$ 1,100,000.00	\$ -
Traffic Services	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 65,000.00	\$ (15,000.00)
Snow & Ice Control	\$ 950,000.00	\$ 850,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
Special Maintenance Projects	\$ 2,700,000.00	\$ 3,515,000.00	\$ (815,000.00)
Routine Structure Maintenance	\$ 6,100.00	\$ 6,100.00	\$ -
Local Roads			\$ -
General Maintenance	\$ 2,400,000.00	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 400,000.00
Traffic Services	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$ (20,000.00)
Snow & Ice Control	\$ 1,300,000.00	\$ 1,300,000.00	\$ -
Special Maintenance Projects	\$ 4,200,000.00	\$ 4,700,000.00	\$ (500,000.00)
Routine Structure Maintenance	\$ 9,200.00	\$ 9,200.00	\$ -
Disaster Contingency	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -
<b>Total Maintenance</b>	<b>\$ 12,810,300.00</b>	<b>\$ 13,660,300.00</b>	<b>\$ (850,000.00)</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>			
Administration	\$ 1,121,457.00	\$ 1,400,000.00	\$ (278,543.00)
Interest Expense	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Long-Term Debt Payments	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Net Capital Outlay	\$ 1,232,110.00	\$ 1,232,110.00	\$ -
Net Equipment Expense	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ -
Distributive Expense	\$ 3,550,000.00	\$ 3,900,000.00	\$ (350,000.00)
Adjustments to Fund Balance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 6,403,567.00</b>	<b>\$ 7,032,110.00</b>	<b>\$ (628,543.00)</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 24,278,361.20</b>	<b>\$ 27,209,011.15</b>	<b>\$ (2,930,649.95)</b>
<b>Operating Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 7,992,765.08</b>	<b>\$ 5,801,187.84</b>	<b>\$ 2,191,577.24</b>
<b>Total Expenditures &amp; Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 32,271,126.28</b>	<b>\$ 33,010,198.99</b>	<b>\$ (739,072.71)</b>

YES: 5  
 NO: 0  
 MOTION CARRIED.

Rader discussed proposed allocations for the 2025 RevShare program. The formula is consistent with 2024, with changes to mileage within each township. Motion by Askew, seconded by Burleson to approve \$1,101,600 in RevShare to be allocated to the townships in Van Buren County, as presented.

<u>Township</u>	<u>2024 Allocation</u>	<u>2025 Allocation</u>
Almena	\$76,422.78	\$78,146.62
Antwerp	\$100,581.87	\$103,130.09
Arlington	\$52,824.33	\$53,693.46
Bangor	\$56,615.78	\$57,680.69
Bloomington	\$58,912.99	\$60,213.01
Columbia	\$63,751.96	\$65,028.15
Covert	\$55,226.17	\$56,422.56
Decatur	\$49,697.43	\$50,753.30
Geneva	\$64,419.91	\$65,883.15
Hamilton	\$45,172.97	\$46,115.36
Hartford	\$55,675.74	\$56,874.05
Keeler	\$53,504.20	\$54,523.50
Lawrence	\$57,080.19	\$57,709.74
Paw Paw	\$67,320.96	\$68,573.64
Pine Grove	\$59,028.41	\$59,657.15
Porter	\$56,365.69	\$57,519.71
South Haven	\$54,708.42	\$55,859.12
Waverly	\$52,690.20	\$53,816.70
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,080,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,101,600.00</b>

YES: 5  
 NO: 0  
 MOTION CARRIED.

The Board then considered the proposed 2025 Preliminary Budget. Additional details were reviewed by Rader. Motion by Nelson, seconded by Burleson to approve the Preliminary 2025 Operating Budget, as presented by Finance and Human Resources Director Rader.

**Van Buren County Road Commission**

**2025 Operating Budget**

**Preliminary 2025 Budget**

<b>Revenue</b>			
	<b>Preliminary 2025</b>	<b>December 1, 2024</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>ACF - January 1, 2025</b>	\$ 7,992,765.08	\$ 9,098,535.80	\$ (1,100,770.72)
<b>Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF)</b>			
Engineering	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -
Primary	\$ 7,155,600.00	\$ 7,100,000.00	\$ 55,600.00
Local	\$ 4,472,250.00	\$ 4,435,000.00	\$ 37,250.00
Primary Urban	\$ 552,750.00	\$ 540,000.00	\$ 12,750.00
Local Urban	\$ 235,170.00	\$ 232,000.00	\$ 3,170.00
<b>Total MTF</b>	\$ 12,425,770.00	\$ 12,317,000.00	\$ 108,770.00
<b>Other State Revenue</b>			
State Aid - Snow Funds	\$ 95,000.00	\$ 105,037.72	\$ (10,037.72)
State Aid - Economic Development	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State Aid - Bridges	\$ -	\$ 68.26	\$ (68.26)
State Aid - State D Funds	\$ 261,032.00	\$ -	\$ 261,032.00
State Aid - Other (Safety, Grants, etc)	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 115,941.53	\$ (40,941.53)
<b>Total Other State Funding</b>	\$ 431,032.00	\$ 221,047.51	\$ 209,984.49
<b>Federal Funds</b>			
Federal Aid - Secondary	\$ 556,422.00	\$ -	\$ 556,422.00
Federal Aid - Safety HRRR	\$ 750,000.00	\$ -	\$ 750,000.00
Federal Aid - Bridges	\$ 748,166.00	\$ 2,525.52	\$ 740,640.48
Federal Aid - STP	\$ -	\$ 65,682.02	\$ (65,682.02)
Federal Aid - CMAQ/Other	\$ -	\$ 19.67	\$ (19.67)
<b>Total Federal Aid</b>	\$ 2,049,588.00	\$ 68,227.21	\$ 1,981,360.79
<b>Property Taxes</b>			
County Wide Millage	\$ 3,142,000.00	\$ 3,073,602.98	\$ 68,397.02
<b>County Appropriation</b>	\$ -	\$ 1,150,146.86	\$ (1,150,146.86)
<b>Township Contributions</b>	\$ 3,767,825.00	\$ 5,962,565.92	\$ (2,194,740.92)
<b>Other Revenues (Interest, Gain on Equip, etc.)</b>	\$ 330,000.00	\$ 385,000.00	\$ (55,000.00)
<b>Total Revenue including ACF</b>	\$ 30,138,980.08	\$ 32,271,126.28	\$ (2,132,146.20)

<b>Van Buren County Road Commission</b>			
<b>2025 Operating Budget</b>			
<b>Preliminary 2025 Budget</b>			
<b>Expenditure</b>			
	Preliminary 2025	December 1, 2024	Difference
<b>Heavy Maintenance</b>			
Primary Roads	\$ 4,101,984.00	\$ 2,925,000.00	\$ 1,176,984.00
Primary Structures	\$ 518,280.00	\$ 62,536.00	\$ 455,744.00
Local Roads	\$ 2,196,200.00	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 196,200.00
Local Structures	\$ 394,000.00	\$ 76,958.20	\$ 317,041.80
<b>Total Heavy Maintenance</b>	<b>\$ 7,210,464.00</b>	<b>\$ 5,064,494.20</b>	<b>\$ 2,145,969.80</b>
<b>Maintenance</b>			
Primary Roads			
General Maintenance	\$ 1,300,000.00	\$ 1,100,000.00	\$ 200,000.00
Traffic Services	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Snow & Ice Control	\$ 850,000.00	\$ 950,000.00	\$ (100,000.00)
Special Maintenance Projects	\$ 2,825,000.00	\$ 2,700,000.00	\$ 125,000.00
Routine Structure Maintenance	\$ 6,100.00	\$ 6,100.00	\$ -
Local Roads			
General Maintenance	\$ 1,800,000.00	\$ 2,400,000.00	\$ (600,000.00)
Traffic Services	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ -
Snow & Ice Control	\$ 1,300,000.00	\$ 1,300,000.00	\$ -
Special Maintenance Projects	\$ 2,550,000.00	\$ 4,200,000.00	\$ (1,650,000.00)
Routine Structure Maintenance	\$ 9,200.00	\$ 9,200.00	\$ -
Disaster Contingency	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -
<b>Total Maintenance</b>	<b>\$ 10,800,300.00</b>	<b>\$ 12,810,300.00</b>	<b>\$ (2,010,000.00)</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>			
Administration	\$ 1,400,000.00	\$ 1,121,457.00	\$ 278,543.00
Interest Expense	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Long-Term Debt Payments	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Net Capital Outlay	\$ 501,000.00	\$ 1,232,110.00	\$ (731,110.00)
Net Equipment Expense	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ -
Distributive Expense	\$ 3,900,000.00	\$ 3,550,000.00	\$ 350,000.00
Adjustments to Fund Balance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 6,301,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 6,403,567.00</b>	<b>\$ (102,567.00)</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 24,311,764.00</b>	<b>\$ 24,278,361.20</b>	<b>\$ 33,402.80</b>
<b>Operating Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 5,827,216.08</b>	<b>\$ 7,992,765.08</b>	<b>\$ (2,165,549.00)</b>
<b>Total Expenditures &amp; Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 30,138,980.08</b>	<b>\$ 32,271,126.28</b>	<b>\$ (2,132,146.20)</b>

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.



Witkowski presented the proposed amendments to Policy 2021-02, Policy Regarding Encroachments Within the County Highway Right-of-Ways. Motion by Burleson, seconded by Nelson to adopt the amended Policy, as presented. Discussion held regarding mailbox shields which have recently gained in popularity. Operations Director Brucks responded that so long as the shields are not overly large and are made of breakaway materials they will not be treated as an encroachment.

**POLICY REGARDING ENCROACHMENTS WITHIN THE COUNTY**  
**HIGHWAY RIGHT-OF-WAYS**

Policy 2021-02

The Van Buren County Road Commission (VBCRC) has identified numerous encroachments emanating originating from private properties onto county highway right-of-ways. The VBCRC has legal authority to control public right-of-ways within its jurisdiction. Per MCL 221.20, the statutory width of a Michigan highway right-of-way is 66 feet (33 feet on either side of the center line of the road). Highway right-of-ways may be wider but are seldom narrower.

A paramount concern for the VBCRC is that its roadways are reasonably safe for public travel and suitable for public use. Accordingly, Michigan law prohibits the placement of any object within a county road right-of-way other than traffic control devices, public utilities, and authorized mailboxes that meet the standards of the VBCRC and the United States Postal Service. **Any non-approved objects, which can include things like fences, landscaping, and crops or other vegetation, located within a highway right-of-way are considered encroachments.** Therefore, the VBCRC will remove any encroachment that interferes with the VBCRC's duty to keep roadways reasonably safe for public travel and suitable for public use.

The VBCRC acknowledges that in many instances there is no intent to jeopardize public safety or interfere with the public's use of a highway. Nevertheless, encroachments on VBCRC right-of-ways can pose a hazard to the public because they hinder the VBCRC's ability to fulfill its statutory obligation to maintain and repair the right-of-ways so that they are reasonably safe for public travel and use. Such concerns include but are not limited to: performing proper maintenance of the roadways; ensuring proper road drainage; and permitting adequate space for the construction and maintenance of utilities located within the right-of-way. Furthermore, certain encroachments have the potential of causing structural damage to the roads, like crop roots or fencing that destabilize the roadbed. Per MCL 230.7, the VBCRC may recover treble damages equivalent to three times the amount of the injury caused to a public road. Although the VBCRC strives to resolve all encroachment issues amicably, the VBCRC will enforce the full effect of this statute if it becomes necessary to do so.

In accordance with the foregoing, please be advised that is the VBCRC policy to immediately remove any encroachments that pose an imminent threat to public safety. Moreover, any encroachments that interfere with the Road Commission's day-to-day maintenance activities may be destroyed by those activities. The Road Commission assumes no liability for any such losses. Finally, the VBCRC may order the person responsible for any encroachment to remove the encroachment per MCL 247.171, even if such encroachment is not immediately interfering with VBCRC operations. Upon such an order, the person notified will have 30 days to remove the encroachment. If the notified party fails to remove the encroachment within 30 days, the VBCRC will take additional enforcement actions, which could include removing the encroachment and billing the violating party for the time and expense in the removal. Any unpaid invoices for encroachment removal are assessed by the township and levied as property taxes upon the adjacent parcel. In addition, the violating party could be ordered to pay a monetary fine for each day the encroachment remains beyond 30 days from the date of the letter.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Witkowski presented the proposed amendments to Policy 2020-04, Guidelines for Attendance/Communication. This Policy is reviewed on an annual basis and updates have been proposed this year for the Board's consideration. In addition he presented the County Commission's Guidelines, which are also required to be reviewed by the Road Commission on an annual basis. Motion by Nelson, seconded by Kinney to approve amended Policy 2020-04, and to authorize the Managing Director to direct a letter to the County Commission stating that the County's Guidelines continue to be effective relative to the Road Commission and that no changes are recommended at this time.

## VAN BUREN COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

Policy No. 2020-04

### **Guidelines for Attendance/Communication**

The Van Buren County Road Commission (“Road Commission”), and the Road Commissioners of Van Buren County (“Commissioners”) should remain in close contact throughout the year with its Partners in Transportation so as to improve the quality and safety of our roads. Partners in Transportation include, but are not limited to:

**Road Commissioners of Van Buren County  
Van Buren County Road Commission Staff  
Van Buren County Board of Commissioners  
Van Buren County Township Officials  
Residents and the Motoring Public of Van Buren County**

Each partner plays a distinct role to improve communications, and more effectively serve each other as set forth herein.

### **Road Commissioners’ Role as an Ambassador**

The Road Commissioners’ role to the Township Board is to serve as an Ambassador or Liaison representing the Road Commission. The definition of Liaison is a **“person who establishes communication between multiple groups”**; in this instance, one who helps facilitate cooperation between the Road Commission, the Township, and its residents. Specifically, a Road Commissioner Liaison’s duties are to:

- Communicate important Board action to the Township/Residents.
- Share Road Commission resources that are available for Township/Resident assistance.
- Cultivate constructive relationships with the Township Board and its residents
- Promote learning.
- Serve as a bridge between the Township Board and its residents.

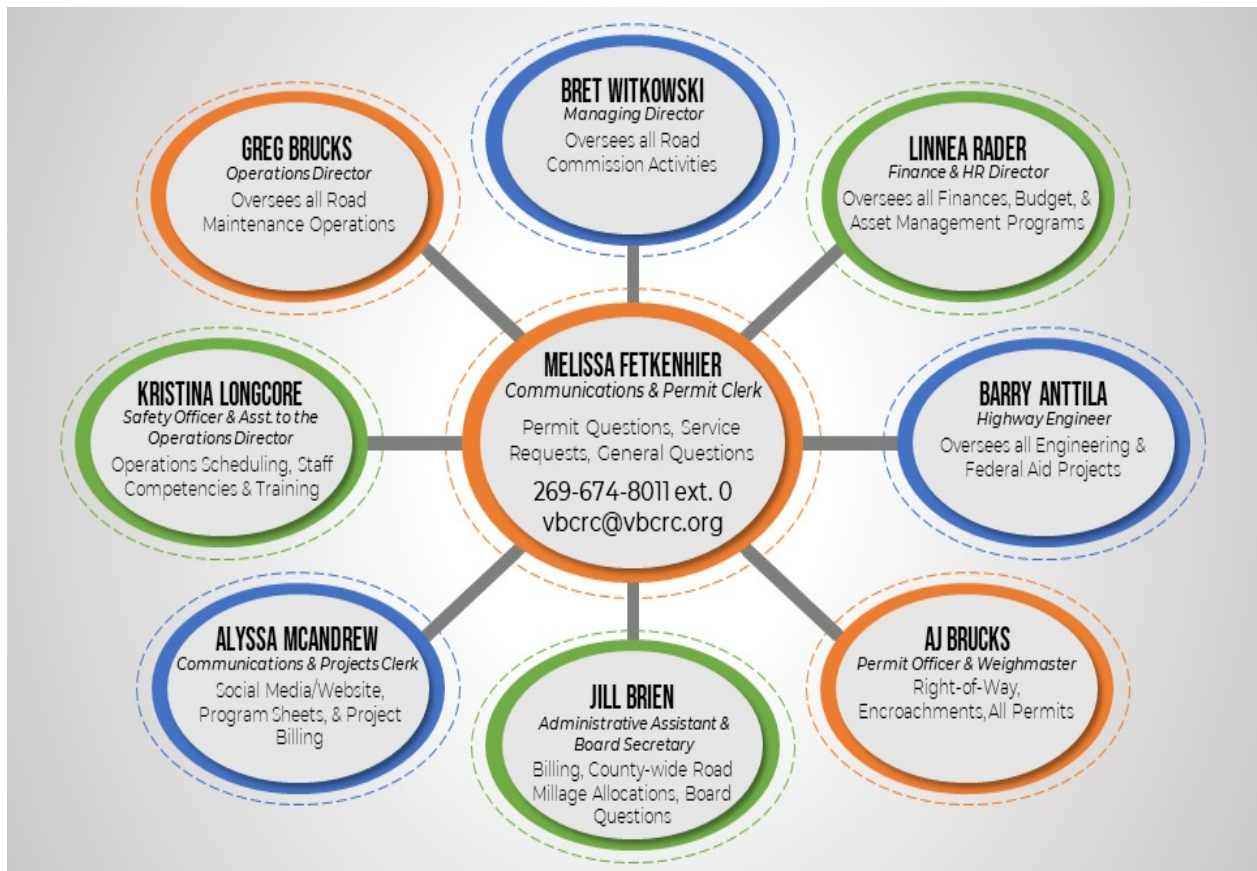
If questions arise during a township board meeting either from a Township Board Member or from a member of the audience about the day-to-day operations of the Road Commission, as a key player in bringing everyone together and supporting the Road Agency itself, a Road Commissioner will:

- Admit to not knowing the answer.
- Connect the individual(s) with VBCRC Administration.
- Continue to facilitate and foster those township or intergovernmental relationships.
- Advocate for their Road Commission.

By building this understanding, the Road Commissioner will help the Township Board and the public to understand his or her role as part of a collaborative board, listening to resident concerns, linking them with the appropriate staff, and sharing their vision for roads and right of way in Van Buren County.

### **Road Commission Staff**

Road Commission Staff (“Staff”) are responsible for the day-to-day maintenance operations, special maintenance, road and bridge projects, service requests and other road-related responsibilities. Townships and the Public should contact the Van Buren County Road Commission as a **first source** of communication to ensure proper tracking of their request. Staff are available to provide information, take complaints and requests for service, answer questions relating to projects as follows:



### Township Officials and the Public

The Township Officials play an intricate role in communications with Staff and Commissioners. Their role is two-fold in that the Public will, at times, contact them for service requests, project concerns, maintenance issues, etc. In addition, the Township must communicate their own maintenance and project needs and concerns to the Road Commission.

As stated herein, the most effective means of communication regarding administrative, project, service requests, or other such communications are **directly with Staff**, as set forth in the Communication Flow Chart. This is so that delays and mis-information regarding locations, and other concerns can be avoided.

In addition, Staff and Commissioners provide many other opportunities for communication throughout the year, such as:

- Weekly Operations Update.
- **Township** Road Rating and Asset Management data.
- **Transportation Asset Management Plan**
- News Releases.
- ~~Transportation Partners Booklet~~ **Township Partnership Guide**, which includes information regarding Road Commission operations, policies and procedures.
- Board Meeting Minutes.
- Various booklets and handouts and information packets from the County Road Association of Michigan.
- Notification or invitation to various seminars and workshops, such as Traffic Safety Workshops, RoadSoft Training by Michigan LTAP, and Asset Management / Road Rating.
- Information, news, updates, and more via the Road Commission's website ([www.vbrcr.org](http://www.vbrcr.org))
- News, information, project updates, and more through social media outlets, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- Strategic Plan development.

### Attendance

In addition to the communications as set forth herein, Staff and Commissioners have many opportunities to meet with their Township Partners and the Public throughout the year.

- A. Specifically, Commissioners will make every reasonable effort to:
- Attend Township Board Meetings; both as encouraged by County Commission, and as may be requested by Township officials.
  - Attend Annual Township Meetings in the fall, either individually, or as a group.
  - Attend special meetings with Township and Public over specific issues.
  - Attend Township Supervisors' Association meetings annually, or as otherwise requested.
- B. Specifically, Staff will make every reasonable effort to:
- Hold Annual Township Meetings, either individually or as a group, in **the fall** ~~October/November~~ for the purpose of:
    - Planning the Township's following year Call for Projects.
    - Discussing ongoing or upcoming issues to better build the Township/Road Commission partnership.
 This Annual Meeting is open to all Township Officials, Road Committee Members, and County Board Officials.
  - **Provide the option for a fall road tour to review projects, maintenance and plans.**
  - Attend annual spring road tour for the purpose of identifying current road needs, and assisting with planning future road work.
  - Attend special meetings with Township and Public over specific issues.
  - Attend Township Board Meeting at the Township's specific request.
  - Provide newly elected Township officials an orientation packet and/or provide orientation, at official's request, for the purpose of education.
  - Attend Township Supervisors' Association meetings annually, or as otherwise requested.

The Commissioners, and the Staff believe that delays and mis-information are less likely to occur through these Guidelines, thus providing the means for enhanced and more effective communications with the Township and Public.

Townships can provide the following form to residents to gather information for service requests. Anyone utilizing this form can then submit their request to the Road Commission per the instructions on the form.

**VAN BUREN COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION SERVICE REQUEST**

For the most prompt and efficient service, please have the Resident contact VBCRC directly at (269) 674-8011 ext. 0 with the information as set below. The request can also be sent via facsimile at (269) 674-3770 or via email to vbcrc@vbcrc.org.

1. **Fill out completely. Incomplete requests cannot be processed properly.**
2. **Be sure to get correct spelling of first and last name.**

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ LAST NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

REQUEST FOR SERVICE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_ TOWNSHIP \_\_\_\_\_

If the request is to remove a tree, does the homeowner want the wood? \_\_\_\_\_



Scan the QR code with your phone camera for a link to See Click Fix

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

The Township Partnership Guide was reviewed by Witkowski and the Board. Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to approve the revised Township Partnership Booklet and to authorize the Managing Director to make any final formatting or clarification revisions prior to distribution.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Witkowski presented information for the Board to help in their understanding of the additions and deletions to the VBCRC's certified mileage for 2025. While the total mileage changed almost insignificantly, there was a total mileage added for 2025 of 0.33 and a total mileage deleted for 2025 of 0.45 due to urban area boundary changes and miscellaneous changes and corrections. Motion by Nelson, seconded by Kinney to adopt the following Resolution:

**RESOLUTION 2024-20**

**WHEREAS:** Public Act 51 of 1951, as amended, provides that the Michigan Department of Transportation shall jointly, with the Board of County Road Commissioners, ascertain and fix the total mileage of County Primary Roads and the total mileage of County Local Roads in each county of the state which have been taken over as County Primary and County Local Roads; and,

**WHEREAS:** In complying with the provisions of said Act, the Michigan Department of Transportation has requested that this Board certify the mileage and location of such roads required by said Act to be fixed and ascertained.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Board of County Road Commissioners of the County of Van Buren, Michigan, does hereby certify that all of the roads on which lengths have been entered along the road bands of the attached township and enlarged section maps are normally open to automobile traffic during the months of May through October, and are under the jurisdiction of the Van Buren County Road Commission as follows:

<b>Township</b>	<b>Sheet Numbers</b>	<b>Township</b>	<b>Sheet Numbers</b>
Pine Grove	80-1, 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F, 1G	Antwerp	80-11, 11B, 11C, 11D, 11E, 11F, 11G, 11H, 11J, 11K, 11L, 11M, 11N, 11P, 11Q, 11R, 11S, 11T, 11U, 11V, 11W, 11X, 11Y, 11Z, 11AA, 11BB, 11CC, 11DD, 11EE, 11FF, 11GG, 11HH, 11JJ, 11KK, 11LL, 11MM, 11NN, 11PP, 11QQ, 11RR, 11SS, 11TT, 11UU, 11VV, 11WW, 11XX, 11YY
Bloomington	80-2, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F	Paw Paw	80-12, 12A, 12B, 12C, 12D, 12E, 12F, 12G, 12H, 12J, 12K, 12L, 12M, 12N, 12P
Columbia	80-3, 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E, 3F, 3G, 3H	Lawrence	80-13, 13A, 13B, 13C, 13D
Geneva	80-4, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4E, 4F	Hartford	80-14, 14A, 14B, 14C
South Haven	80-5, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D	Porter	80-15, 15A(1-7), 15B(1-2), 15C(1-4), 15D, 15E, 15F
Almena	80-6, 6A, 6B, 6C, 6D, 6E, 6F, 6G, 6H, 6J, 6K, 6L, 6M, 6N, 6P	Decatur	80-16, 16A, 16B
Waverly	80-7, 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D, 7E, 7F, 7G	Hamilton	80-17, 17A
Arlington	80-8, 8A, 8B, 8C, 8D, 8E	Keeler	80-18, 18A, 18B(1-11), 18C(1-5), 18D, 18E, 18F

Bangor	80-9, 9A, 9B, 9C	Urban	South Haven, Almena, Waverly, Antwerp, Paw Paw
Covert	80-10, 10A		

**IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED:** That Barry Anttila, Highway Engineer, is hereby authorized to electronically sign the Cover Sheet to digitally submit the certification package to the Michigan Department of Transportation.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

Bid results for Lubricants and Fluids were reviewed with the Board by Operations Director Brucks. Motion by Burleson, seconded by Askew to award the bid to all bidding vendors with Rowleys Wholesale as primary supplier, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Anttila reviewed bids received for the installation of an oil/water separator at the Bangor Garage with the Board. Motion by Askew, seconded by Nelson to award the bid to the low bidding contractor, Krohn Excavating, LLC, for the total bid price of \$83,830.00, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

The Board reviewed the bid tabulation for heavy maintenance work on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue at CR388, Pine Grove Township. Motion by Burleson, seconded by Askew to award the bid to the low bidding contractor, Langlois & Sons Excavating, Inc. upon approval of the project by Pine Grove Township, for the total bid price of \$107,254.00, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission and Pine Grove Township.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Anttila provided discussion regarding bids for heavy maintenance work on 69<sup>th</sup> Street in Bangor Township which were publicly opened on December 10<sup>th</sup>. The low bidding contractor did not include the required bid bond for the project. In addition the Road Commission has received confirmation from both MCRC SIP and the Michigan Townships Association that the low bidder is also disqualified due to an existing conflict of interest. It was therefore Anttila's recommendation to award the bid to the second low bidding contractor, Thomas Excavating, Inc. Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to award the bid for heavy maintenance work on 69<sup>th</sup> Street in Bangor Township to the second low bidding contractor, Thomas Excavating, Inc., for the total bid price of \$409,440.58, upon approval by Bangor Township, in the best interest of the Road Commission and Bangor Township.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Anttila reviewed with the Board bids that were opened for heavy maintenance work on Lake Shore Drive and Meadow Drive in Lawrence Township. Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to award the bid to the low bidding contractor, Krohn Excavating, LLC, for the total bid price of \$49,930.00, upon approval of the project by Lawrence Township, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission and Lawrence Township.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Brucks discussed an offer he received from Asphalt Restoration to extend its pricing from the 2024 season to the 2025 season. This pricing is through a contract between Asphalt Restoration to the RCKC which pricing has been extended to include the Van Buren County Road Commission. Motion by Nelson, seconded by Boze to accept Asphalt Restoration's offer to extend pricing from the RCKC contract extended price of \$1.29/lb for overband crackfilling for the 2025 season, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Brucks reviewed an offer from Michigan Paving and Materials to extend pricing from 2024 to the 2025 season for CRS-2M chip seal emulsion, CQSEA fog seal emulsion, and AMS SP portable asphalt patching machine emulsion. Motion by Askew, seconded by Nelson to accept the offer to extend pricing from 2024 to the 2025 season by Michigan Paving and Materials, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Boze, seconded by Kinney to adopt Resolutions 2024-22 through 2024-27:

#### **RESOLUTION 2024 - 22**

WHEREAS: On December 31, 2024, Richard Godfrey will complete his service as the County Commissioner of District 4 in Van Buren County; and,

WHEREAS: Richard Godfrey has served the residents of Van Buren County in his capacity as the County Commissioner of District 4 in Van Buren County for 14 years, and a Chairman of the County Commissioners for 10 of those 14 years; and,

WHEREAS: The Van Buren County Road Commission has appreciated the partnership of Richard Godfrey in working to improve and construct the public road systems throughout Van Buren County; and,

WHEREAS: The residents of Van Buren County have been served well by the efforts of Richard Godfrey throughout his service.

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

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County extends its best wishes to Richard Godfrey in his future endeavors.

#### **RESOLUTION 2024 - 23**

WHEREAS: On November 20, 2024, James Lisowski completed his second term of service as the Supervisor of Bloomingdale Township, having previously served as Bloomingdale Township's Supervisor from 2008 through 2016; and,

WHEREAS: Throughout his second four-year term of service as the Supervisor of Bloomingdale Township, James Lisowski worked in cooperation with the Van Buren County Road Commission to maintain and improve the public road network throughout Bloomingdale Township; and,

WHEREAS: The residents of Bloomingdale Township have been served well by the actions and efforts of James Lisowski in his capacity as the Supervisor of Bloomingdale Township.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County hereby adopts this Resolution as a tribute to James Lisowski 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 James Lisowski in his future endeavors.

**RESOLUTION 2024-24**

WHEREAS: On November 20, 2024, Douglas DeLeo completed his service as the Supervisor of Arlington Township, Van Buren County, Michigan; and,

WHEREAS: In addition to serving as the Supervisor of Arlington Township for approximately 1½ years, Doug also served as a Trustee for 12 years, and the Clerk for approximately 2½ years; and,

WHEREAS: As an elected official for Arlington Township, Doug worked in cooperation with the Van Buren County Road Commission to maintain and improve the public road network throughout Arlington Township; and,

WHEREAS: The residents of Arlington Township have been served well by the actions and efforts of Douglas DeLeo in his various capacities as an elected official for Arlington Township.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County hereby adopts this Resolution as a tribute to Douglas DeLeo 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 Douglas DeLeo in his future endeavors.

**RESOLUTION 2024 - 25**

WHEREAS: On November 20, 2024, Don Smith completed his service as the Supervisor of Pine Grove Township, Van Buren County, Michigan; and,

WHEREAS: Throughout his four years of service as the Supervisor of Pine Grove Township, Don worked in cooperation with the Van Buren County Road Commission to maintain and improve the public road network throughout Pine Grove Township; and,

WHEREAS: The residents of Pine Grove Township have been served well by the actions and efforts of Don Smith in his capacity as the Supervisor of Pine Grove Township.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County hereby adopts this Resolution as a tribute to Don Smith 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 Don Smith in his future endeavors.

**RESOLUTION 2024-26**

WHEREAS: On November 20, 2024, Dr. Carl Druskovich completed his service as the Supervisor of Hamilton Township, Van Buren County, Michigan; and,

WHEREAS: As the Supervisor of Hamilton Township, Dr. Carl was responsible for managing and supervising township public improvements, including the public road system throughout Hamilton Township; and,

WHEREAS: Throughout his 24 years of service as the Supervisor of Hamilton Township, Dr. Carl Druskovich has always worked cooperatively with the Van Buren County Road Commission to accomplish many road improvement projects and special maintenance projects in Hamilton Township; and,

WHEREAS: The residents of Hamilton Township have been served well by the efforts of Dr. Carl Druskovich to maintain, improve, and reconstruct the certified road network throughout Hamilton Township.

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

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County extends its best wishes of happiness, success and enjoyment to Dr. Carl Druskovich and his wife, Amy.



**RESOLUTION 2024 - 27**

WHEREAS: On November 20, 2024, Robert Reits completed his service as the Supervisor of Waverly Township, Van Buren County, Michigan; and,

WHEREAS: Throughout his four years of service as the Supervisor of Waverly Township, Robert Reits worked in cooperation with the Van Buren County Road Commission to maintain and improve the public road network throughout Waverly Township; and,

WHEREAS: The residents of Waverly Township have been served well by the actions and efforts of Robert Reits in his capacity as the Supervisor of Waverly Township.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County hereby adopts this Resolution as a tribute to Robert Reits 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 Robert Reits in his future endeavors.

YES: 5

NO: 0

RESOLUTIONS 2024-22 through 2024-27 ADOPTED.

Motion by Kinney, seconded by Nelson to authorize the Managing Director, Bret Witkowski, to sign the Third Party In-Kind Contributions Notification and Assurances FY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program on behalf of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5

NO: 0

MOTION CARRIED.

Finance and HR Director Rader provided instructions for the year-end evaluation of the Managing Director. By consensus the Board chose to provide an average of the total points given by each Commissioner of 102, Exceeds Expectations. The Board stated that Witkowski's interactions with other agencies, road departments, and staff are commendable and that they are thankful to have him as the Director of the organization. Motion by Boze, seconded by Burleson to finalize Managing Director Witkowski's performance evaluation as "exceeds expectations".

YES: 5

NO: 0

MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Updates and Reports:

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

Attended Covert Township's meeting on December 10<sup>th</sup> with Operations Director Brucks. Attended Bangor Township's meeting. Attended Geneva Township's meeting. Attended South Haven Township's meeting. Remote attended the Township Annual Meeting on December 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Rick Boze**

Attended Keeler Township's meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November. Attended Hamilton Township's meeting on November 12<sup>th</sup>. Attended both Township Annual Meetings.

**Doug Burleson**

Attended Bloomingdale Township's meeting on November 20<sup>th</sup>. Attended both Township Annual Meetings. Attended Pine Grove Township's meeting on December 4<sup>th</sup>.

Extra width mowing operations were discussed with Brucks who confirmed that after this season there will no longer be a need for township funded extra width mowing due to the increase in maintenance operations countywide.

**Greg Kinney**

No report. Was unable to attend Township Annual Meetings due to technical difficulties.

**Wayne Nelson**

No recent meetings due to the inclement weather. Attended a pizza party at Gobles High School Art Room to celebrate their Paint-A-Plow victory. Attended both Township Annual Meetings. Extended condolences to Commissioner Askew on behalf of the Board for the loss of his mother.

A brief discussion was held regarding next meeting's election of officers.

Motion by Burleson, seconded by Kinney to adjourn the Call of the Chair at 6:27 PM.

YES: 5  
NO: 0  
MOTION CARRIED.

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Board Secretary

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Board Chairman