

Van Buren County Board of Road Commissioners

May 4, 2022 - Regular Meeting

BE IT REMEMBERED: That on the 4th day of May, 2022 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, Hackenberg and Kinney
Managing Director Dan Bishop
Highway Engineer Barry Anttila
Finance and Human Resources Director Linnea Rader
Operations Director Greg Brucks
Administrative Assistant-Board Secretary Jill Brien

GUESTS PRESENT:

Julia Richardson, Mattawan (Almena Township)
County Commissioners Chappell and Doroh

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

Motion by Boze seconded by Burleson to approve the Agenda.

AYES: 5
NAYS: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Motion by Askew seconded by Boze to approve the Minutes of the April 7, 2022 Regular Meeting as presented by the Board Secretary.

AYES: 5
NAYS: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

The Chairman opened the meeting to first public comment. Julia Richardson, a resident of 27th Street, Mattawan (Almena Township) identified herself as speaking on behalf of the trees. She stated that she has lived at her residence for 55 years and she doesn't understand why the street has to be widened, or why the trees have to be removed. Road Commission staff, and the Board offered explanations and answered questions. Rader stated that Almena Township has provided for the work on 27th Street, and it is a financially responsible practice to remove overhang and clear the right of way in order to protect the township's investment. Ms. Richardson left the meeting at 5:15 PM.

Managing Director Bishop presented the following Staff Report:

STAFF REPORT May 4, 2022

1. I have been working with EGLE on a private property drainage issue in Bloomingdale Township. The Township Supervisor is not happy with the amount of time the process is taking. The requested work would drain one parcel of private property (outside the right-of-way) and move the water to another parcel of private property, again, outside of the right-of-way. Both are designated wetlands.
2. The Bloomingdale Township Supervisor hired a private company to drill soil borings on 45th Street. We were informed of the work and informed the contractor and supervisor that no work can occur on County Roads without proper permits and insurance. We did file a police report as several potential environmental issues may be present in this area.
3. Antwerp Township's Supervisor sent a letter to the County Commission asking them to change the millage allocation formula. I explained how the allocation works to the County Administrator. He asked me to explain it to the County Commissioners on May 10.
4. Staff has been working on preparing another cost estimate to address concerns on Howard Drive, Lawrence Township.
5. Staff met with the architects to discuss the process and parameters of our two projects. Once the schematic designs are prepared, they will come to the Road Commissioners for review. If approved

by the Board, we will progress to the design phase. When the designs are prepared, they will come to the Road Commissioners for review and, if approved, we will arrange financing and construct the buildings. We are also working on hiring a construction manager to assist with the actual construction.

6. Our Act 51 report is done. Our auditor normally reviews our numbers for accuracy. Our audit is scheduled to take place this week and a portion of next week. Assuming all goes as scheduled, the Board will have the Act 51 attestation page for approval at the June meeting and the Annual Report can be finalized.

Bishop stated that crews are out with the Road Commission's two Total Patchers.

Bishop also discussed a request by Antwerp Township Supervisor Daniel Ruzick to build a Road Commission garage in Antwerp Township. A Feasibility Study was sought by the Road Commission in 2021 which stated that the current garages are positioned nicely. Bishop stated that he has asked Supervisor Ruzick to put in writing the perceived benefits of having a Road Commission garage in Antwerp Township, and the perceived benefits of the current townships who have a Road Commission garage located in their township.

Additional discussion was held regarding the tree removals on 27th Street, Mattawan (Almena Township) between Road Commission staff and Board as it relates to the MDNR's suggestions to stop the spread of Oak Wilt.

A Voucher update was presented by Managing Director Bishop as follows:

Voucher #2248	\$153,564.63	Payroll
Voucher #2249	\$448,937.45	Accounts Payable
Voucher #2250	\$155,237.88	Payroll
Voucher #2251	\$622,687.29	Accounts Payable

The Board questioned a payment to Kelley Hardware, and Road Commission staff provided detailed information.

Motion by Burleson, seconded by Boze to approve the Vouchers, as presented.

AYES: 5
NAYS: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Operations Director Greg Brucks updated the Board regarding a public bid opening on April 26, 2022 for Drainage Pipe. Motion by Boze, seconded by Burleson to award the bid for Drainage Pipe to all bidding vendors with Jensen Bridge and Supply Co. as primary supplier, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission, and as recommended by Brucks.

AYES: 5
NAYS: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Anttila provided discussion for the Board regarding the public bid opening on April 26, 2022 for projects as follows:

- 16th Avenue from 60th Street to 62nd Street, Geneva Township; prepare existing roadway for paving; low bidding contractor, Brad Thomas Excavating, \$172,234.00.
- Burgess Road from 82nd Avenue to 38th Street, Decatur Township; base paving; low bidding contractor; Rieth-Riley Construction, \$291,245.00.
- 16th Avenue from 60th Street to CR681, Geneva Township; paving; low bidding contractor, Rieth-Riley Construction, \$257,954.00.
- 67th Street from CR380 to 16th Avenue, Geneva Township; mill and pave; low bidding contractor Rieth-Riley Construction, \$141,225.00.

Motion by Askew, seconded by Boze to award the bids to the as-read low bidding contractors, as recommended by Anttila, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission and the respective townships.

AYES: 5
NAYS: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

The Board asked questions, and Road Commission staff provided responses regarding procedures for resident project notification letters, which are sent on practically all larger projects with the exception of paving, which progresses very quickly with little delay to motorists.

Brucks outlined the options the Road Commission offered residents in the past regarding installation, pick up or delivery of driveway culverts. In 2021, the Road Commission ceased installing driveway culverts, but still offered options to residents to pick up or deliver culverts. Due to a variety of issues, including staff availability, materials availability, scheduling conflicts, etc., the Road Commission will no longer be providing residents the option for pick-up or deliver of driveway culverts. While it is not necessarily a cost savings, it is approximately \$25,000 in funds that will no longer be tied up in additional inventory.

Bishop reviewed the DRAFT Request for Qualifications (RFQ)-Labor and Employment/General Counsel Legal Services with the Board and explained the process should they decide to move forward with the RFQ. He further explained the Board also has the option to continue utilizing Varnum Law for General Counsel and Labor & Employment legal services. The Board asked questions regarding staff's satisfaction level with Varnum's services, which were responded to favorably by Bishop. Motion by Boze, seconded by Askew to continue utilizing Varnum Law for General Counsel and Labor & Employment legal services, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

AYES: 5
NAYS: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Discussion held regarding the status of the Road Commission's revised Strategic Plan. Bishop and Rader provided information regarding work accomplished to date. The Board requested that staff provide them with the proposed Strategic Plan as soon as possible. Information and input have been collected by Road Commission staff from the townships, the Board, etc. since 2019. Bishop will provide the Board with the current Strategic Plan, revised Goals, and notes from the January 2019 Strategic Planning Session so that the Board can provide input to finalize the Strategic Plan.

Rader provided discussion for the Board regarding the Engineering Reimbursement (MDOT Form 2044) request for the time period 7-1-21 through 6-30-22. Upon recommendation it was moved by Boze, seconded by Burleson to authorize signature of MDOT Form 2044, Engineering Reimbursement, by the Chairman and two Members of the Board.

AYES: 5
NAYS: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Updates and Reports:

- W.C. Askew, Sr. - Attended Covert Township; all okay. Attended Geneva Township; all okay. Attended South Haven Township; gave kudos. Attended Covert Township; gave kudos.
- Rick Boze - On 4/12 attended Hamilton Township. On 4/14 attended Lawrence Township. Question regarding culvert on 54th Street. Attended Hartford Township on 4/14; all is good. Attended Keeler Township last night. Questions came up regarding the Road Commission's Dust Control Policy. Clarifications were made for the Board by staff. The Board requested that the Policy be emailed to all Townships with a reminder that if dust control is authorized, it will be applied to all gravel roads.
- Doug Burleson - Attended Columbia Township on 4/19; they prefer to receive all reports in a written format. Burleson also thanked staff for grading 8th Avenue again.

- Todd Hackenberg - Attended Porter Township. Attended Almena Township. Received calls from Antwerp Township.
- Greg Kinney - Attended Decatur Township on 4/14. Attended Arlington Township on 4/20. Attended KATS on 4/27. Kinney discussed spots on CR352 East of 41st Street that need to be repaired.

The Chairman opened the meeting to second public comment. Commissioner Doroh provided discussion regarding the County's commitment to broadband expansion, the financial commitment of \$7M, and work accomplished to date. Commissioner Chappell updated the Board and those present regarding the MSU student project to research if Van Buren County should have its own parks department. The project is currently in a discussion phase. The Board questioned the establishment of a Parks Department as it relates to the Board of County Road Commissioners serving as the Board of County Park Trustees. Chappell gave his understanding that one or more of the Road Board would also serve on the Parks Commission.

Motion by Kinney, seconded by Boze to adjourn the Call of the Chair at 6:22 PM.

AYES: 5
NAYS: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Board Secretary

Board Chairman