

Van Buren County Board of Road Commissioners

September 11, 2024 - Regular Meeting

BE IT REMEMBERED: That on the 11th day of September, 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
Operations Director Greg Brucks
Administrative Assistant-Board Secretary Jill Brien

ABSENT:

None

GUESTS PRESENT:

Kurt Doroh, County Commissioner
Mike Chappell, County Commissioner (Remote)
Larry Jarosz, CR376 - Arlington Township
Ronnie Denney, CR376 - Arlington Township
Kathy Conley, CR376 - Arlington Township
Phil Pitts, CR376 - Arlington Township
Ivona Tylka-Suleja, CR376 - Arlington Township

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and a Moment of Silence observed to mark the attacks on September 11, 2001.

Motion by Burleson seconded by Askew to approve the Agenda, as presented.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

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

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

The Chairman opened the meeting to first public comment. Phil Pitts spoke to the history of the gravel section of CR376 from CR681 to CR215 in Arlington Township as he feels with the increase of traffic that the Road Commission needs to get this segment on their road improvement plan. Other present residents commented on the dirt and water on their property.

A resident of CR681 indicated that he was "promised" his ditch would be cut as "all the water goes on his land". Witkowski indicated that no such promise was made and, further, that he would be reporting the situation to the State of Michigan for possible resident wetland violations.

The Board relayed to the audience that while they were sympathetic to the concerns brought by the CR376 citizen group, the road does not meet the criteria necessary for the Road Commission to program a heavy maintenance project at this time.

County Commissioner Doroh updated the Board as follows:

- Broadband expansion efforts.
- The County Commission adopted a Proclamation for Pete Sinclair for his many years of work.
- Many contracts were recently renewed.

In addition, County Commissioner Doroh provided highlights from the County Medical Examiner's annual report.

Department Updates were provided as follows:

Finance and HR Department:

Witkowski presented the Finance and HR Department Update in the absence of Linnea Rader as follows:

- The annual report is complete and is being packaged now. Hopefully you have it in your boxes for the meeting.
- The Act 51 report has been approved by the State of Michigan.
- The Operating Budget through September 5, 2024, is attached.

Operations Department:

Brucks updated the Board as follows:

Second round of mowing is going well.

Completed Townships:

Almena
Waverly
Bangor
Paw Paw
Lawrence
Hartford
Porter
Decatur

Townships In the Works:

Pine Grove
Covert
Hamilton – will move to Arlington upon completion of Hamilton this week-ish
Keeler – will move to Geneva upon completion of Keeler this week-ish

Sealcoat wrapped up last week. Including Cass Co., City of Bangor, Village of Bloomingdale, Village of Gobles, Village of Mattawan and our own local and primary work; we ended just shy of 250 miles for the season!

Fog Seal began immediately following the conclusion of sealcoat on last Wednesday and thus far is going really well and looks great.

The final applications of dust control will be completed in Bangor, Waverly and Bloomingdale this week.

Our 2 new power brooms for the sweeping of intersections and for use in the seal coat program arrived last week.

And finally, bids were opened last week for ice control sand. Official action on that, is a little deeper into the agenda but I wanted to explain my recommendation in a little more detail. All but 1 bidding supplier included an alternate material for us to consider. When a bidder submits an alternate for consideration, it must be accompanied with a material testing order. This "test order", show us exactly what the material is made of and the percentages to expect from each aspect. From rocks, to stones, to small chips, all the way down to the fines and essentially dust. You may notice while looking at the bid tabs, that I don't

recommend 2 of the lowest alternative bids. This is because the test results show that the particular material is made up of almost 8% of stones larger than 1". Being as we mix this with salt and spread it on the roads all winter, that amount and size of rocks would be a large concern to the traveling public and their windshields.

Engineering Department:

Anttila reported as follows:

- CR 388 between CR 653 S and the Kalamazoo County Line in Pine Grove Township remains closed with guardrail installation, pavement markings, and restoration expected to be completed this month. The posted detour for this route follows CR 653 S, M-43, and 2nd Street in Kalamazoo County.
- CR 380/20th Avenue between Ruggles Road and 76th Street in South Haven Township is open to traffic. A few punch list items remain, but the project is complete.
- CR 384 between CR 687 and the West Township Line in Geneva Township was milled, paved, and sealcoated last week. Fog seal is expected to be completed as VBCRC staffing allows.

In addition, Anttila reported that he is working on Rural Task Force submissions and other township issues, as well. He also provided a status update for the Board regarding pavement markings, as well as some statistical data.

Managing Director Witkowski:

1. The Supervisors' meeting is on September 26th at 7:00 at the ISD building in Lawrence.
2. The bathroom remodel at the Western Garage is moving along; you have seen how the current bathroom looks. We are getting bids to update the signs at the Western Garage and the Bloomingdale Garage.
3. I will be on vacation next week, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. The following week, I will be at the Commissioner's conference on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday for our workers comp meeting, both of which are held in the same location. As always, I will be available either by phone or email.
4. Bids came in to fix the water from the plow truck drainage issue that has been ongoing for several years, and the bids came in very high, so we will rebid that in the spring to get a better price. We spend around \$3,000 a year to pump out the water, and bids came in \$20,000 higher than originally estimated.
5. Employee Appreciation Day and Rodeo has been officially scheduled for October 18, 2024.
6. This will be the Board's last Wednesday meeting due to the end of summer hours on September 27. The Board's next regular meeting will be on Thursday, October 3rd.
7. Tomorrow at 4 PM Staff will be celebrating Randy Moser's 45th Work Anniversary with cake.

Review of Vouchers by Witkowski:

Voucher #2374	\$	191,266.60	Payroll
Voucher #2375	\$	1,006,406.44	Accounts Payable
Voucher #2376	\$	183,932.44	Payroll
Voucher #2377	\$	1,791,054.50	Accounts Payable
Voucher #2378	\$	180,217.42	Payroll
TOTAL	\$	3,161,610.80	

Motion by Askew, seconded by Nelson to approve Vouchers 2374-2378 totaling \$3,161,610.80.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Witkowski reported that the Road Commission has received a request a request from Keeler Township to open some of their primary roads to ORV use as follows:

- CR352 (Territorial Road) from the Berrien County line East to CR681
- CR687 from 94th Avenue East to M51
- CR342 from CR687 West to M152
- CR690 from M152 North to CR352

Other remaining segments of primary roads in Keeler Township (CR690 from the Cass County line North to M152; and, CR687 from the Hartford Township line South to 94th Avenue) would remain closed to ORV traffic as Keeler Township recently paid to have the Road Commission place “Bike Route” signs and sharrows (pavement marking when bikes share the roadway with motor vehicles). Supervisor Blackmond agreed that these segments are NOT part of the Township’s request to open for ORV use due to safety concerns. (CR362 is jurisdictionally located in Hartford Township, and CR681 is jurisdictionally located in Hamilton Township). Motion by Boze seconded by Nelson to open the following segments located in Keeler Township for ORV use: CR352 (Territorial Road) from the Berrien County line East to CR681; CR687 from 94th Avenue East to M51; CR342 from CR687 West to M152; CR690 from M152 North to CR352.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Witkowski explained to the Board that the VBCRC (and all local road agencies) are required by Statute to submit a new Transportation Asset Management Plan (Plan) to the Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC) every 3 years. The DRAFT Plan in front of the Board today is due for submission by October 1, 2024.

This year the VBCRC is utilizing the template required by the TAMC which was difficult to work with as it draws much of the information contained in the Plan from RoadSoft, a computer program designed for collecting, storing, and analyzing data associated with transportation assets. However, some information in RoadSoft is not 100% accurate, such as the number of certified road miles, number of paved road miles, number of un-paved road miles, etc. The template information itself cannot be manipulated or changed in these instances.

The VBCRC’s planned paved county primary road projects for the years 2025-2027 are set forth on pages 45-49. This is the VBCRC’s DRAFT 3-year Plan.

Staff is in the process of finalizing the more user-friendly version of the Transportation Asset Management Plan. That Plan will contain more accurate information relating to VBCRC statistics. It will also contain a **5-year** plan for paved county primary road projects. BOTH Plans will be made available on our website once they have been approved by the Board.

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

RESOLUTION 2024- 14

WHEREAS: The Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County is required by statute to submit an updated Asset Management Plan to the Transportation Asset Management Council by October 1, 2024; and,

WHEREAS: The Van Buren County Road Commission has updated its Transportation Asset Management Plan, including a 3-year (2025-2027) paved county primary road plan; and,

WHEREAS: The Van Buren County Road Commission intends to submit the updated Transportation Asset Management Plan to the Transportation Asset Management Council for approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County hereby adopts the 2024 Transportation Asset Management Plan 2025-2027, as proposed, and authorizes its submittal to the Transportation Asset Management Council for its review and approval.

YES: 5
NO: 0
RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

Brucks provided information to the Board regarding the September 4 public bid opening for Ice Control Sand. As previously relayed in his Department Update, he is not recommending award of two of the alternate material bids due to the amount and size of rocks as set forth in the sieve test received with the bid. Upon recommendation it was moved by Burleson, seconded by Nelson to award the bid for Ice Control Sand to all bidding contractors with Yerington Brothers as primary supplier for the Lawrence Garage (\$9.62/ton-Alternate meets material gradation requirements), Holcim (Aggregate Industries) as primary supplier for the Bloomingdale Garage (\$8.85/ton-MDOT 2NS), and to H&H Contract Haulers as primary supplier for the Bangor Garage (\$9.76/ton-MDOT 2NS), in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Brucks updated the Board regarding the public bid opening on September 4 for Cold Patching Material. The low bidding contractor is Lakeland Asphalt Corp. At \$134.00/ton for their alternate material, BMP7 (CP7 equivalent). Motion by Nelson, seconded by Boze to award the bid for Cold Patching Material to all bidding contractors with Lakeland Asphalt Corp. as primary supplier, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Anttila relayed information to the Board regarding the public bid opening on September 4 for the installation of an oil separator and storm improvements at the Bangor Garage facility. One bid was received from Harris ConAg, LLC in the amount of \$124,985.00 which is 45.48% over the Engineer's Estimate. At the recommendation of Anttila, it was moved by Boze and seconded by Askew to reject the bid received and to allow staff to conduct a second bid opening for award by the Board at a later date, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission.

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

In the absence of Finance and HR Director Rader, the Managing Director presented the proposed 2024 Operating Budget Adjustment to the Board. Questions were asked by the audience as it relates to the addition of a heavy maintenance project on CR376, Arlington Township and the current Fund Balance, which were responded to by the Board. Motion by Nelson, seconded by Burleson to approve the September 11, 2024 Operating Budget Adjustment as presented.

Van Buren County Road Commission

2024 Operating Budget

September 2024 Budget Adjustment

Revenue			
	September 11, 2024	March 7, 2024	Difference
AOF - January 1, 2023	\$ 9,098,535.80	\$ 9,474,299.67	\$ (380,763.87)
Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF)			
Engineering	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -
Primary	\$ 7,120,000.00	\$ 7,120,000.00	\$ -
Local	\$ 4,450,000.00	\$ 4,450,000.00	\$ -
Primary Urban	\$ 550,000.00	\$ 550,000.00	\$ -
Local Urban	\$ 234,000.00	\$ 234,000.00	\$ -
Total MTF	\$ 12,364,000.00	\$ 12,364,000.00	\$ -
Other State Revenue			
State Aid - Snow Funds	\$ 95,000.00	\$ 95,000.00	\$ -
State Aid - Economic Development	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State Aid - Bridges	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State Aid - State D Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
State Aid - Other (Safety, Grants, etc)	\$ 111,900.00	\$ 111,900.00	\$ -
Total Other State Funding	\$ 206,900.00	\$ 206,900.00	\$ -
Federal Funds			
Federal Aid - Secondary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Federal Aid - Safety HRRR	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 750,000.00	\$ -
Federal Aid - Bridges	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Federal Aid - STP	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Federal Aid - CMAQ/Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Federal Aid	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 750,000.00	\$ -
Property Taxes			
County Wide Millage	\$ 3,166,616.33	\$ 2,767,000.00	\$ 399,616.33
County Appropriation	\$ 1,150,146.86	\$ 1,150,146.86	\$ -
Township Contributions	\$ 5,949,000.00	\$ 3,727,500.00	\$ 2,221,500.00
Other Revenues (Interest, Gain on Equip, etc.)	\$ 330,000.00	\$ 330,000.00	\$ -
Total Revenue including AOF	\$ 33,010,198.99	\$ 30,769,846.53	\$ 2,240,352.46

Van Buren County Road Commission				
2024 Operating Budget				
September 2024 Budget Adjustment				
Expenditure				
		September 11, 2024	March 7, 2024	Difference
Heavy Maintenance				
Primary Roads		\$ 4,330,601.15	\$ 4,422,882.50	\$ (92,281.35)
Primary Structures		\$ 40,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Local Roads		\$ 2,100,000.00	\$ 2,100,000.00	\$ -
Local Structures		\$ 46,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 31,000.00
Total Heavy Maintenance		\$ 6,516,601.15	\$ 6,552,882.50	\$ (36,281.35)
Maintenance				
Primary Roads				
General Maintenance		\$ 1,100,000.00	\$ 1,100,000.00	\$ -
Traffic Services		\$ 65,000.00	\$ 65,000.00	\$ -
Snow & Ice Control		\$ 850,000.00	\$ 782,000.00	\$ 68,000.00
Special Maintenance Projects		\$ 3,515,000.00	\$ 2,875,000.00	\$ 640,000.00
Routine Structure Maintenance		\$ 6,100.00	\$ 6,100.00	\$ -
Local Roads				\$ -
General Maintenance		\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 1,800,000.00	\$ 200,000.00
Traffic Services		\$ 110,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$ -
Snow & Ice Control		\$ 1,300,000.00	\$ 1,300,000.00	\$ -
Special Maintenance Projects		\$ 4,700,000.00	\$ 2,550,000.00	\$ 2,150,000.00
Routine Structure Maintenance		\$ 9,200.00	\$ 9,200.00	\$ -
Disaster Contingency		\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -
Total Maintenance		\$ 13,660,300.00	\$ 10,602,300.00	\$ 3,058,000.00
Other Expenses				
Administration		\$ 1,400,000.00	\$ 1,400,000.00	\$ -
Interest Expense		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Long-Term Debt Payments		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Net Capital Outlay		\$ 1,232,110.00	\$ 1,580,196.77	\$ (348,086.77)
Net Equipment Expense		\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ -
Distributive Expense		\$ 3,900,000.00	\$ 3,650,000.00	\$ 250,000.00
Adjustments to Fund Balance		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Other Expenses		\$ 7,032,110.00	\$ 7,130,196.77	\$ (98,086.77)
Total Expenditures		\$ 27,209,011.15	\$ 24,285,379.27	\$ 2,923,631.88
Operating Fund Balance		\$ 5,801,187.84	\$ 6,484,467.26	\$ (683,279.42)
Total Expenditures & Fund Balance		\$ 33,010,198.99	\$ 30,769,846.53	\$ 2,240,352.46

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Anttila advised that he recently received a request from Abonmarche, the engineering firm for the Friends of the Blue Star Trail, to remove Allegan County from the Board's Resolution passed at its August 7, 2024 meeting as the Friends have not been able to establish support for maintenance responsibilities for that portion of the trail in Allegan County. Motion by Nelson, seconded by Kinney to adopt the following REVISED Resolution:

REVISED Resolution 2024-13

WHEREAS: The Van Buren County Road Commission is an Act 51 Agency and, therefore, is an eligible entity for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant, a competitive grant program offered through the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT); and,

WHEREAS: Abonmarche, an engineering firm for the Friends of the Blue Star Trail, has prepared a TAP Grant for partial funding of a Non-Motorized Trail Project in South Haven ~~City; and Van Buren and Allegan County~~, Michigan naming the Van Buren County Road Commission as the agency applying for the TAP Grant and implementing the Grant project; and,

WHEREAS: Should the TAP Grant be awarded by the MDOT, the Van Buren County Road Commission will be a contracted party with the MDOT for this Non-Motorized Trail Project in South Haven ~~City; and Van Buren and Allegan County~~, Michigan; and,

WHEREAS: The estimated construction budget includes TAP Grant funds, as well as local match funds to be provided by the Friends of the Blue Star Trail; and,

WHEREAS: The Van Buren County Road Commission will not be providing any funding for the Non-Motorized Trail Project; and,

WHEREAS: The Van Buren County Road Commission shall be reimbursed by the Friends of the Blue Star Trail for any fees and/or costs associated with implement and/or administering the TAP Grant; and,

WHEREAS: The Van Buren County Road Commission will commit to keep that portion of Blue Star Highway under its jurisdiction at the road-trail portion of the proposed project in reasonable repair and in a condition reasonably safe and fit for travel, including trail pavement markings, for as long as the segment remains under its jurisdiction.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of County Road Commissioners of Van Buren County authorizes Abonmarche to proceed with an application for TAP Grant funds for the purpose of funding a Non-Motorized Trail Project in South Haven ~~City; and Van Buren and Allegan County~~, Michigan naming the Van Buren County Road Commission as the applicant/implementing the Grant.

YES: 5
NO: 0

RESOLUTION ADOPTED.

Commissioner Updates and Reports:

W.C. Askew, Sr.

Attended Covert Township's board meeting with Managing Director Witkowski. It was a good meeting with no problems to address. Attended Geneva Township also with Managing Director Witkowski. Attended Bangor Township with Managing Director Witkowski. A Trustee voiced her pleasure with roadside mowing operations.

Rick Boze

Attended Lawrence Township on August 8. Attended Hartford Township on August 8. Attended the Southwest Council meeting on the 12th at the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County's new facilities. Tried to attend Hamilton Township's meeting on August 13th but the meeting date had been changed.

Doug Burleson

Attended Columbia Township on August 20. Attended Pine Grove Township on September 4.

Discussed a possible concern on CR388 near the greenhouse where the ditch water pools because there is nowhere for the water to go. Anttila will continue to review this ongoing project and keep this area in mind.

Greg Kinney

No report.

Wayne Nelson

Attended all three August meetings in his assigned district. No concerns were raised.

A resident of Almena Township asked him to drive down his road to review a situation, but he was unable to find any problem.

He also attended a meeting with the Almena Township Supervisor and Managing Director Witkowski for work to be done in subdivisions, and attended a Special Board Meeting with hearings on those projects.

The Chairman opened the meeting to second public comment. A resident of CR376, Arlington Township, asked the Board if he will be able to use his pole barn this year. The Board responded that the roadway would continue to be graded and made suitable for traffic. He also raised questions about the ditch as he indicated that "a lot of water comes from the field". Witkowski advised that he would review the location and respond accordingly.

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

YES: 5
NO: 0
MOTION CARRIED.

Board Secretary

Board Chairman