

A REGULAR MEETING of the Board of Chippewa County Road Commissioners was held in their offices located at 3949 S. Mackinac Trail, Sault Ste. Marie, MI on May 27, 2021.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 A.M.

PRESENT: Chairman Timmer, Commissioner Gagnon, Commissioner Moser, Manager Laitinen, Office Manager Decker, Superintendent Erickson, Foreman Goodman, Foreman Rye, Union President Mills, Clerk Livermore, Clerk Christensen, Chief Mechanic Marsh.

ABSENT: Engineer Boileau

GUEST PRESENT: Rudyard Township Supervisor Barry Davis, Pickford Township landowner Fred Gulick

Chairman Timmer accepted the agenda as presented.

MOTION by Commissioner Gagnon **SECONDED** by Commissioner Moser that Payroll in the amount of \$156,369.11 and Vouchers in the amount of \$581,970.66 be approved and authorized for payment from the County Road Fund subject to audit.

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION by Commissioner Moser **SECONDED** by Commissioner Gagnon to approve the regular meeting minutes from May 13, 2021 and place them on file.

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Fred Gulick, a landowner in Pickford Township, addressed the board regarding access to a sizeable piece of property on the other side of the Pennington Road Bridge. The current Three (3) Ton Load Limit on the bridge limits Mr. Gulick from accessing his property with a truck and camper and he inquired to if or when this bridge could be fixed or replaced so that he can utilize his 320 acres that he described as inaccessible. **Manager Laitinen** informed Mr. Gulick the Road Commission faces a couple of issues with this crossing. The first being last year's gate issue with another adjoining landowner. Several Road Commission employees were approached and intimidated into leaving the area. So long as a gate blocks public access to a road, the Road Commission cannot spend tax payers' money to maintain it. **Mr. Gulick** informed the Road Commission that the gate that was removed last year has been re-established. **Manager Laitinen** continued into the second issue of securing nearly \$800K in funding to repair/replace this crossing. In June the bridge inspector will be at this site and we can work with the inspector on acceptable ways to re-establish the structural integrity of the pipe. When more information regarding the inspection becomes available, it

will be sent to Mr. Gulick. **Mr. Gulick** indicated that his acreage is of no value to him and indicated a willingness to possibly sell his interest in this land. **Manager Laitinen** indicated this could potentially be something the Wetland Preservation Group may have interest in. Inquiry will be made to the group.

STAFF REPORTS

Office Manager Decker

- Attended the CRA F&HR Annual Conference. It was good to be with everyone again.
- The F&HR committee was tasked with identifying the MTF shortfall for each county. For Chippewa County, our funding was \$569K short of projections. We have been advised to apply to our County Board for funding available through the State/Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Act.
- Charter Communication was here to update the internet and in the process have shuffled our phone system. They are working to correct.

Superintendent Erickson

- Working on grading gravel roads where we can.
- Townships have started brining the gravel roads.
- The AMZ machine is out.
- Changed a bunch of culverts.
- Touched up the washout on Nicolet.
- Moving out to 9 Mile to get ready for the large pipe replacement.
- Bat Wing mower is out doing slopes. Much more efficient machine.
- Sugar Island is working on gravel roads and doing some sweeping.

Foreman Goodman

- Brimley crew started the Prairie Road culvert change.
- Eckerman/Rudyard crews are working with MDOT from Luce County Line to Racco. They've put down nearly 4,000 tons of shoulder gravel.
- Thanked the crews for the really nice job being done on M-28 and the rotating of the crew to cover the flag work.

Foreman Rye

- Working on Drummond Island road project.

Clerk Christensen

- Attended F&HR. It was nice to meet everyone and network.
- Working out the logistics of the tire grant. The Road Commission will have 16 trailers to rotate for the collection of old tires. Certain criteria has to be met for the drop off and collection.

- Melanie Williams with Mackinac Administrators came to visit and meet with us. Melanie is partnered with Al Roden and came to meet with us regarding some workers comp information.
- Following up this week on the truck replacement grant.

Union President Mills

- No Report.

Payroll/H.R./Board Clerk Livermore

- Attended F&HR. The sessions this year were scheduled for the event that was canceled this year, but contained some great content. From it, we will be meeting and working with some of our neighboring county road commissions on some Cogitate learning session.
- Attended the MERS Unfunded Liability Workshop. This was a more in depth learning opportunity regarding the pension plan and its performance.

Engineer Boileau - Reported by Manager Laitinen

- Payne and Dolan is available to begin working sooner than expected. Next week work will begin in Rudyard and then move to MacDonald Road in DeTour.
- Shunk Road will begin the week after MacDonald Road in DeTour is finished.
- Culvert replacement work on 9 Mile road to begin next week.

Chief Mechanic Marsh

- Two new pickups were delivered after the last meeting.
- Picked up the last two new plow trucks.
- The Low Boy trailer arrived earlier than expected.
- The shop air compressor could possibly be here 2-3 weeks ahead of schedule.
- Working on repairs here and in Pickford in the absence of the Pickford Mechanic.
- Parts are still slow to arrive. Discussion ensued.

MANAGER'S REPORT

- Watching Senate Bill 429 which focuses on removing local authority for gravel pit operations and assigning it to EGLE. Our concern with this is that it could pose greater regulation on opening a new sand and gravel operation. Existing pits would be exempt.
- Worked with DeTour Village on a salt storage facility. There was a piece of land that was sold to them, but the deed had never been recorded. They have found the original.
- Spoke with residents at Dix Point Road. They are requesting a rename of the road and certification onto our system. They have been directed to work with Central Dispatch on granting the rename.

- Anticipating a request from Sims Point Road for acceptance onto the system.
- Completed the ROW acquisition for 6 Mile box culvert job to allow for utility relocation.
- Underfunded Liability workshop was a great learning experience. Complicated problem with an in depth discussion.
- 9 Mile Road closure next week for about 2 weeks.
- Received a phone call from Brian Eavou with Payne and Dolan regarding our work zone on M-28. His sentiment was that the work zone looks great with excellent workmanship. **Chairman Timmer** reiterated his appreciation for work and attention to detail. **Manager Laitinen** expressed praise to MDOT for expanding the maintenance budget and allowing us to get an early start on the work.

NEW BUSINESS

- A.) Transfer to OPEB Trust.

MOTION by Commissioner Gagnon **SECONDED** by Commissioner Moser to transfer \$150K to the OPEB Trust at Morgan Stanley.

MOTION CARRIED

- B.) Soo Township Road Agreements.
 - i. 5 ½ Mile Road between Mackinac Trail and M-129 (township share \$179,690)
 - ii. Smart Road from I75 Business Spur (township share \$35,200)
 - iii. Shunk Road from 5 Mile Road approx. 4 Miles (township share \$21,707)

MOTION by Commissioner Gagnon **SECONDED** by Commissioner Moser to approve and sign the three projects and presented in the township road agreements.

MOTION CARRIED

- C.) Bruce Township presented a petition signed by several residents requesting a speed study of South Scenic Drive between 13 Mile and 15 Mile Roads. The current speed is 55 mph. The residents would like the outcome of the study to result in a speed reduction to 35 mph. The group has been made aware of how a speed study is conducted and how the results are determined.
- D.) Blue Cross Bule Shield health insurance renewal - Manager Laitinen indicated the union has been given the opportunity to review and ask questions regarding the renewal. The group does not have an objection to the presented minimal increase.

MOTION by Commissioner Moser **SECONDED** by Commissioner Gagnon to approve the BCBS renewal.

OLD BUSINESS

A.) Policy #18 - Hiring Policy

Manager Laitinen requested this policy be tabled until the board meeting on June 10, 2021.

County Commissioners Comments

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

ROAD COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

Commissioner Moser started a conversation regarding the ATV traffic on Drummond Island and the damage being done to the trails and roads. Discussion ensued.

Chairman Timmer thanked the crew again and asked everyone to stay safe.

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:21 A.M.

Bobbie Livermore
Clerk for the Board

Richard Timmer
Chairman