

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 November 10, 2022.

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

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

ABSENT: Engineer Boileau.

GUEST PRESENT: Trout Lake Township Clerk Dave Hillman, Rudyard Township Supervisor Barry Davis, EUPTA representative Nick Huyck, and Neebish Island Residents: Matthew LaFave, Bryce Garrison, Don Harrod, Dave Grinold, Marla Craig, Jody Dabrowski, Robby Craig, Jamie Pringle, Lori Miller, Pat Stevens, Judy Lynderman, and Bob Malpass.

Chairman Timmer accepted the agenda as presented.

MOTION by Commissioner Gagnon **SECONDED** by Commissioner Moser that Payroll in the amount of \$157,147.76 and Vouchers in the amount of \$430,385.18 be approved and authorized for payment from the County Road Fund subject to audit.

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION by Commissioner Gagnon **SECONDED** by Commissioner Moser to approve the regular meeting minutes from October 27, 2022 and place them on file.

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Township Clerk Hillman inquired about additional brushhog work on the Molly Gibson. Manager Laitinen indicated it is a matter of scheduling that work but it can be looked at.

STAFF REPORTS

Office Manager Decker

- Fuel tank set at Goetzville and the equipment is installed.
- The tank is to be set at Drummond Island next week.
- Working on budget for next year.
- As of yesterday, the MTF total is up 1.09% from this time last year.

Superintendent Erickson

- Busy two weeks, working on gravel road maintenance and cold patching.
- Staking routes for winter operations.

- Getting equipment ready for winter.

Foreman Goodman

- Finishing staking and shoulder work. Chairman Timmer commented on a job well done at Tahqua Trail and how the road is holding up nicely.

Foreman Rye

- Dragging gravel roads.

Engineer Boileau

- No Report.

Clerk Christensen

- Awarded the MI Wish grant to use toward updating the SDS.

Union President Cheney

- No Report.

Payroll/H.R./Board Clerk Livermore

- Reminder the next meeting will be on Wednesday, November 23, 2022 to accommodate the Thanksgiving holiday on Thursday. There will be a Special Meeting immediately following for capital outlay followed by a closed session meeting for union negotiation strategy talks.

Chief Mechanic Marsh

- Getting caught up.

MANAGER' S REPORT

- Received notice from MDOT regarding redistribution of federal funding to Rural Task Force for 2023. We already sold our portion through the exchange.
- Have been contacted by the Wetland Board and Holly Vickers regarding GEI making no progress on projects going on year two and being released from their contracts. Will be assisting in performing some boundary and conservation easement survey work with legal description to wrap up open projects.
- We found a loader to rent this year for the state salt barn. We will be renting a VOLVO L70 from Alta Equipment this year. Last year they had nothing available to rent.
- Received the MDOT State Maintenance budget for this year. Total budget for the coming year is \$3.7M which is about 6% more than last year. This budget is a rolling five year average and there is still concern regarding fuel prices and funding to cover costs for winter operations.
- Looking into a permit fee structure policy for broad band installation. The liability pool has provided a policy and other counties have successfully implemented and been able to collect

on fines levied for non-compliance to the permit issued. Will have more for a meeting of the board later.

- Engineer Boileau and the Bay Mills Tribe are working with Dow Chemical on a new resin product to test the application. They are looking to test the product as a full application on the multi-use lane from the campground to M-221 next year.
- Expecting to see some state legislative activity soon. The state has approximately \$6B in excess revenue to distribute.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Neebish Island Improvement Association address to the Road Commission:

Manager Laitinen has been contacted by residents of Neebish Island and thanked everyone for attending the meeting, noting this is the largest crowd seen in attendance.

Been contacted by the Neebish Island Improvement Association (NIIA). The NIIA had a meeting to discuss some concerns going on the island. The elected spokesman is Bob Malpass. Manager Laitinen asked Bob to address the board.

Mr. Malpass reported he was approached by the association to be the spokesperson for the group with Dave Grinhold as the alternate. Met one on one with Rob to review a list of concerns and feels the meeting with Manager Laitinen went well and that a resolution can be found. Have not had a meeting with the association prior to this meeting to report on the meeting with the Road Commission.

Manager Laitinen read a written response to the list of concerns line item by line item.

Discussion ensued regarding line item #6 and the need for ferry employees to be able to get to work and the difficulty imposed when the plow doesn't start until after the first morning run. Manager Laitinen emphasized the diligence of the Road Commission staff and their ability to arrive at work even in the worst conditions and that all commuters must endure weather conditions on their morning commute. Mr. Malpass concurred that the conditions are no different than main land. Manager Laitinen offered a suggestion to station the ferry on the main land side where there is access to greater resources in the case of an emergency.

A printed copy of the response was provided to Mr. Malpass.

Manager Laitinen addressed the crowd regarding communication. He is happy to communicate with Mr. Malpass, Mr. Grinhold, or anyone

else and would be happy to attend any of the association meetings to answer questions.

Manager Laitinen addressed the perceived on-going hostility and harassment of our employee by the ferry captain over the last year. Manager Laitinen reported it is his understanding from reports of several people in attendance at a meeting on the island that Captain Pringle threatened to deny service to the island if the Road Commission did not fire employee, Matt Tuori. When asked to confirm, Captain Pringle denied the statement and stated "I have no problem with Matt. Matt's a very good worker." Manager Laitinen reported that Matt is an employee of the road commission in good standing and does a good job for the island.

Manager Laitinen requested any public criticism of an employee of the Road Commission be brought directly to him. Any action taken against any employee is privileged information and will never be shared with the public.

Chairman Timmer informed the crowd that if they are not happy with the manager's performance, they are welcome to contact him or the board.

Lori Miller addressed the board to clarify that the NIIA was not responsible for the creation of the itemized list. The discussion started at a meeting of the NIIA but was not assigned as a project or sub-committee. This has been started by individuals involved with the NIIA but not assigned as a project or voted on by the NIIA. Ms. Miller noted that Matt does an excellent job and is always approachable to explain what he is doing and why, siting policies and rules.

b. Policy #27 - Employee Data Privacy Policy

MOTION by Commissioner Gagnon **SECONDED** by Commissioner Moser to approve and sign Policy #27 - Employee Data Privacy Policy.

MOTION CARRIED

OLD BUSINESS

- NONE

County Commissioners Comments

- None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Judy Lynderman addressed the board indicating she was not a member of the NIIA and does not agree with the idea that

communication go only through the NIIA, believing the island is great and doesn't need to be improved. Discussion ensued regarding trails, private and public.

ROAD COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

- Chairman Timmer requested looking at the budget and considering over the road tree removal.

MOTION CARRIED

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 8:57 A.M.

Bobbie Livermore
Clerk for the Board

Richard Timmer
Chairman