

The meeting for the Board of Road Commissioners of the County of Calhoun was held Wednesday, January 3, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. in their office located at 13300 Fifteen Mile Road, Marshall, Michigan.

Present: Commissioner Chester E. Travis, Chairman
Commissioner Charles E. Monaweck, Vice-Chairman
Commissioner Scott Brown, Member
Dennis Randolph, Managing Director
Joanna Johnson, Assistant Managing Director
Kevin Henning, Finance Director
Pixie Coats, Human Resource Director
Angela Kline, Assistant County Highway Engineer

Also Present: Tom Frank, Albion Township Supervisor
Eugene Hamaker, Marshall Township Supervisor
John Neterer, Leroy Township Supervisor
Frank Manke, Clarendon Township Supervisor
Judy Mackinder, Pennfield Township Resident
Alice Godde, Pennfield Township Resident
Dave Veramay, Clarence Township Resident
Joe Bramble, Convis Township Resident
Clarence Millard, Newton Township Resident
Gardy Berezonsky, Marengo Township Resident
J. R. Walter, Pennfield Township Resident
Elaine Walter, Pennfield Township Resident
Mrs. Monaweck, Athens Township Resident
Denny Smock, Fredonia Township Resident
Doug Chapman, Leroy Township Resident
Shannon Fuller, Leroy Township Resident
Jim Russell, Sheridan Township Resident
Steve Ball, Calhoun County Road Commission
Hershel Stacy, Calhoun County Road Commission
Robert Volkmer, Calhoun County Road Commission
Paul Adams, Calhoun County Road Commission
Paul Beardslee, CCRC General Attorney

Clerk Joanna Johnson called the regular meeting of the Board of County Road Commissioners to order at 9:00 a.m.

Clerk Joanna Johnson requested nominations for Board Chairman. Moved by Commissioner Monaweck and supported by Commissioner Brown to appoint Commissioner Travis as Board Chairman. Voice vote: Motion carried.

Clerk Joanna Johnson requested nominations for Board Vice-Chairman. Moved by Commissioner Brown and supported by Commissioner Travis to appoint Commissioner Monaweck as Board Vice-Chairman. Voice vote: Motion carried.

Clerk Joanna Johnson handed the meeting over to the Board Chairman, Commissioner

Travis.

Commissioner Travis stated there being no additions or corrections to the regular meeting minutes of December 20, 2006 they stand approved as printed and distributed.

COMMUNICATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Received a memo from Joanna Johnson, Assistant Managing Director recommending E. Niewoonder and Sons Inc. for the 2007-2009 Roadside Mowing of Local County Roads

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Travis introduced our new Commissioner, Scott Brown and welcomed him to the Board.

Moved by Commissioner Monaweck and supported by Commissioner Brown to the December 22, 2006 accounts payable for \$155,419.46. Voice vote: Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Monaweck and supported by Commissioner Brown to approve the December 19, 2006 payroll for \$30,486.28. Voice vote: Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Monaweck and supported by Commissioner Brown to approve the December 19, 2006 payroll for \$105,952.77. Voice vote: Motion carried.

Moved by Commissioner Monaweck and supported by Commissioner Brown to award the bid to E. Niewoonder and Sons Inc. for the 2007-2009 Roadside Mowing of Local County Roads. Voice vote: Motion carried.

MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Randolph provided the Board with the following information:

Maintenance update is as follows:

- Pot Hole Patching
- Ditching
- Shoulders
- Guardrail
- Gravel Roads
- Tar & Chip
- Drainage
- Infrared

Mr. Randolph discussed cost data and the information he uses to determine prices. He stated that it gives us a more accurate cost of our operations.

Mr. Randolph noted on January 18th at 6:30pm Calhoun County Road Commission will host a meeting inviting the townships for a review of information for the 2007 road program.

Mr. Randolph noted he has a list that shows work completed by location in each township last year.

Mr. Randolph noted our cash balance report shows that we are starting out the year in good shape.

Mr. Randolph noted that since October 1st, it has rained 60% of the time. Our pothole service requests increased. Mr. Randolph stated that just because it hasn't snowed doesn't mean that we are having a winter without road damage. We have had 30 days when it has cycled over the freeze thaw line and this causes problems for our roads.

Mr. Randolph said that in 2006 we have cut 290 trees down, and over the last five years we have cut over 1,200 all over the county.

Mr. Randolph commented about the amount of time each crew spends on each road maintenance activity. Mr. Randolph said that 31% of the time is spent on road surface maintenance, 21% of the time on roadside maintenance, deer pick up is also very high maintenance, and 10% of our time is spent on winter maintenance, which is one of the most expensive.

Mr. Randolph said that we have been looking at staffing and we are starting the year out with fewer people than we did last year. We have 8 less people in the field, but have maintained enough to cover the snow routes and to service the citizens of the county. We contract out over 30 different activities.

Mr. Randolph said that we are also working with fewer employees on the inside. In 1992 we employed 21 office staff employees including supervisors, clerks, engineers and others positions to support the rest of the employees. Out of those 21 office staff employees, 15 took cars or trucks home. Currently, only 4 take trucks home for emergency phone responsibilities.

Mr. Randolph stated he previously brought to the Board information on the Federal Aid projects for the next 5 years, however funding issues have changed the listing. At the Rural Task Force meeting one of the requirements is to insure the full task force is balanced. The problem arose when Kalamazoo County had submitted two projects that were close to three million dollars. The Michigan Department of Transportation approved the projects without them previously being part of the task force planning document. The result was projects being cut back for Branch, St. Joe, and Calhoun County. Mr. Randolph said that the Rural Task Force would not support any more projects for Kalamazoo County for the next five years and Barry County for the next three years. Mr. Randolph noted we are currently reorganizing our projects.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Monaweck stated that he noticed between 6 ½ and 6 Mile Road on B Drive South, they filled in the inside of the curve with asphalt and it was a big improvement.

Commissioner Monaweck stated that he feels that now is the time for our crews to be out cutting brush back because it's now dormant and we don't have any snow.

Commissioner Monaweck inquired about the cost process for the gallons and tonnage of material we use. He asked Mr. Randolph if he comes up with a production cost to compare methods of operation. Mr. Randolph said yes, and we are able to tell which combination of worker has which kind of production rate.

Mr. Henning stated that our tar and chip process is our most cost effective and provides the best fix for potholes.

Commissioner Monaweck asked about the cost process for the infrared machine. Mr. Henning noted that we look at the type of situation to decide if the infrared machine is the correct fix.

SUPERVISOR'S & PUBLIC OFFICIAL'S TIME

Mr. Hamaker said he is very interested in the January 18th meeting and will be attending.

Mr. Frank asked if the Road Commission has ever checked into a compost center for the deer carcasses. Mr. Randolph stated that he is having Mrs. Eichorst look into it.

Mr. Frank inquired about the increase in the fee schedule. Mr. Henning said that up until 2006 the fee schedule had not been increased for 5 years. He said that to make up the deficit in the fee schedule the Road Commission needed to increase it but didn't want to raise it by 70% all in one year. It was decided to raise it 35% in 2007 and the Road Commission would absorb the costs and will increase it again in 2008.

Mr. Frank asked when the resolutions needed to be in. Mrs. Johnson said that the deadline is March 1st and we will be sending out the letters to the townships with all the information needed to help the township make the best road work decisions.

Mr. Manke stated that they have a problem with the intersection of L Drive South and 22 Mile Road. He stated that there was a vision problem and would like someone to look at it.

CITIZEN'S TIME

Mr. Bramble said that the Road Commission cut a big elm tree on N Drive and when they brought it down the limbs went everywhere. He said our crews did a nice job of

cleaning it up. He said that tree cutting is very expensive for the Road Commission and very time consuming because it also includes the clean up work. Mr. Bramble asked if we could come back to 17 ½ Mile Road where a big branch is hanging down.

Mr. Chapman read the following letter of concern to the Board:

Dear Mr. Travis,

How could a 19-year Road Commission employee with 14 years of supervisory experience suddenly lose his job before the holidays? Was it because of the job he was qualified and available for and that management wants someone else less qualified but more supportive of the current management style to fill it, or was it because it ruffled the feathers of one person that would stop at nothing to see him gone.

I doubt we will ever know the real truth behind it. The removal of this employee on December 19th was nothing short of a modern day Salem witch-hunt. Dave Fuller was a dedicated employee who gave a lot to CCRC organization. It's not everyday when an organization gets dedicated employees that give extra time and effort to their job.

The micro managing and nit-picking by the current management has created a very hostile work environment and it is not productive. Because of this condition, many productive and dedicated employees have either resigned, retired or are currently seeking other employment. There have been at least eight (8) individuals with professional position that have left the organization in the past three (3) years. Does that not speak for itself?

The current management has made many mistakes over the few years but none bigger than letting go of an employee's who have been productive, dedicated and who have extensive experience in road construction. This is the biggest lose to the Road Commission. The extensive knowledge that these individual contain in regards to their jobs.

Just think of the investment the organization made into that individual and now what was lost.

In closing, I would like to say to the Board that I hope you take a serious look at the current management style. Really good employees are leaving for other jobs, valued employees are being removed so that other employees with less experience and qualification can assume their positions.

In the last four years the management style has changed drastically and not for the better. We need to change the style of upper management.

Thank you.

Mr. Doug Chapman

Mrs. Fuller stated that she had a few questions that she would like to ask Mr. Randolph. Mrs. Fuller stated that Mr. Randolph talked about balancing the budget. Is termination of employees part of the plan to balance your budget? Mr. Randolph said No;

our plan is when positions come open we review them before we fill them. Mr. Randolph stated that our plan is not to eliminate staffing and that is nothing we talked to the Board about or anyone else. Mr. Randolph said that he couldn't talk about personnel items.

Mrs. Fuller stated that the Road Commission has always been an employer that supports their employees and their families. This is not the way your organization is currently being handled. Where do you personally stand on the termination of my husband and were you aware of the events leading up to that termination? Mr. Randolph said that in terms of the operation, the Board has hired him as the Managing Director and he responsible for what goes on. When we take personnel actions, he knows about every personnel action that is taken. He said that he personally approves them and that is his responsibility. Mr. Randolph stated that he knows a lot of people go around saying that he doesn't know what's going on. Mr. Randolph said that he does know what is going on and he is here every day to make sure he knows what is going on.

Mrs. Fuller said so you did know of the events leading up to the termination of David Fuller. Mrs. Johnson interjected that this being a personnel matter and Mr. Fuller is part of a collective bargaining agreement, therefore, all of this is subject to a grievance proceeding. Mrs. Johnson stated that the contract is there to deal with these types of issues. I think it best, since this is a personnel related matter, which is subject to the collective bargaining agreement.

Mrs. Fuller commented that no matter whether it's being grieved or not grieved, she just wanted to know where Mr. Randolph sits on the termination, because he has not been any part of it as far as she knows. Mr. Randolph said that he is responsible for what goes on and more than just responsible for what his people do. When personnel matters are dealt with, he gives the final approval. Mr. Randolph stated that he has been dealing with union contracts for thirty five (35) years. Mr. Randolph said that he has a certification in personnel management. Mr. Randolph confirmed that he is aware of all the activities that go on and he gives his approval to them. Mr. Randolph stated that we try to deal with our employees as the contract specifies. He said that we deal with the union face to face and it is up to the union to be an advocate for their employees. Mr. Randolph said that he feels very strongly about the contract. It is the law. He stated that his biggest problem is when people try to circumvent our contracts. It has happened at the County Commission level and a number of other levels. The fact remains, a contract is a contract and we follow the contract.

Mrs. Fuller stated that she would like the Board to make themselves more aware of the detail of this situation, if you're not already doing so. She said that she would like the Board to be aware of the specific detail leading up to this situation. Commissioner Travis said okay.

Mr. Walter stated that he lives on the corner of N Drive and McAllister Road. He said that on the 22nd of December he noticed that the bridge at the Battle Creek River between Pennfield Road and Bellevue Road had some aluminum tubing missing from the bridge so he called the Sheriff's Department and they called him back. They told him that

the Road Commission took it off. Mr. Walter said that a few days later he noticed that the Road Commission was cutting off the superstructure. He then asked the Board if the removal of the superstructure was ever brought up at the Board meeting.

Commissioner Travis said that it was but it was nothing that needed to be voted on. Mr. Randolph said that it meets state code. Mr. Walter said that when the crew cut off the superstructure that they put zinc in the river. Mr. Randolph said that he received a call from the DEQ saying the crews were throwing the rails into the river. Mr. Randolph said this was not a true statement. The road commission talked with the MDEQ, they did not have a problem with what we were doing or the amount of materials that fell into the river. Mrs. Johnson stated that she followed up with the DEQ and asked what the Road Commission could have done differently. The DEQ said we couldn't have done anything differently and that we did all we could and we just need to continue our best management practices. Mr. Walter stated that tearing up the bridge was uncalled for. Mr. Randolph said that he wanted to make it clear that they did not tear bridge up. The bridge belongs to the Road Commissions and the rail was not a proper rail. Mr. Walter asked for the proper dimensions for the bridge. Mrs. Kline stated that each bridge is different but she has a document that will give him the information. Mrs. Kline said that she would go out and check the height of the rail.

Mrs. Godde stated that she lives near the bridge as well and she feels it is very dangerous. She said that kids go fishing on that bridge. Without the rail on it, they can fall off very easily. Mrs. Godde noted that she received a card from the Road Commission about Gorsline Road at the end of Bellevue Road and the patching is coming out.

Mrs. Walter stated that she has grandchildren that go on that bridge and has concerns for their safety. She would like someone to go back to the bridge and look at it.

Mr. Berezonsky asked how many bids the Road Commission received for the Roadside Mowing bid. Mrs. Johnson said we received 5 bids back. Mr. Berezonsky asked if the bridge on 21 Mile Road over Rice Creek was on any agenda. Mr. Randolph said that it is not on the list for replacement because structurally it is sound. Half the money needs to come from the township for the bridge. Mr. Berezonsky asked if there were any bonuses given out this year to management. Mrs. Johnson said that yes, they were given out and it was on the agenda at the last Board meeting. Mrs. Johnson said the bonuses were contractual.

The next meeting of the Calhoun County Road Commission Board will be Wednesday, January 17, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. There being no additional business before the Board, Chairman Travis adjourned the meeting at 10:43 a.m.

Chester E. Travis, Chairman

Pixie Ann Coats, Deputy Clerk