

A special meeting of the Board of Calhoun County Road Commissioners was held on Monday, January 7, 2008 at 5:00 p.m. in their office located at 13300 Fifteen Mile Road, Marshall, Michigan.

Present: Commissioner Scott A. Brown, Chairman
Commissioner Hugh T. Coward, Vice-Chairman
Commissioner Chester E. Travis, Member
Commissioner Charles E. Monaweck, Member
Commissioner Eric J. Tobin, Member
Kevin Henning, Interim Managing Director/Finance Director
Pixie Coats, Board Clerk and Human Resource Director
Steve Ball, Operations Manager
Mary Jo Crumpton, Secretarial Clerk

Also Present: Hershel Stacy, Calhoun County Road Commission
Paul Adams, Calhoun County Road Commission
Robert Volkmer, Calhoun County Road Commission
General Public

Chairman Scott Brown called the special meeting of the Board of Calhoun County Road Commissioners to order at 5:00 p.m. and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ELECTED AND APPOINTED COUNTY OFFICIAL COMMENTS

County Commissioner Mike Rae congratulated the Board on changing their regular meeting time from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. to afford the public the opportunity to attend meetings. He represents District #4 which includes Bedford, Pennfield and Convis Township and he received several complaint calls regarding the poor snowplowing service, especially at intersections. Commissioner Rae stated that he understands that the CCRC Board is wrestling with and trying to resolve issues with snowplowing, but if the local road subcontractor cannot take care of the roads, he would like to see CCRC take the local roads back. Also, he has been asked by school superintendents throughout the county to express their concern with the lack of communication between CCRC and the schools throughout the county. Commissioner Rae believes CCRC should reach out to this group to improve communication.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments included the following:

- Chad & Dad are not doing their job. The roads are a mess as they are only making a couple of passes down the center of the road and they do not come back. The slush is 2 1/2 " deep and was left on the road for many days. When their plows do come down the road, the snowplow blade is not even touching the road.
- Chad & Dad stated that they are dispatched by CCRC. Complaints are also being called in for roads other than their residential road routes and the public doesn't

always know who is responsible for snowplowing. They are working through issues they have encountered so far this winter season. All of their drivers have detailed maps of all routes. They are providing a loader at the Battle Creek garage to load salt from there to improve their response time.

Chad & Dad stated that they have four vehicles specifically dedicated for their residential road routes and they have since added a fifth vehicle full time. They are not amateurs and their equipment and staff are capable. There have been some problems with communication between CCRC and Township Supervisors, but this has since been resolved. The main focus of CCRC is the high volume, high priority roads and this is one reason that the residential roads were contracted out - to provide better and faster service to these residential roads. In some areas, CCRC equipment is too large.

At previous meetings, Chad & Dad were told they were doing a good job, improving and working through the issues they had encountered. The media has impacted this issue and articles have not always been factual. Have the Road Commissioners spoken with CCRC management staff regarding Chad & Dad's performance or checked the work done by Chad & Dad? Decisions should be made based on performance, not politics. If the contract is pulled, these residential roads will go from first to fourth priority.

Chad & Dad informed everyone that their equipment is currently in the parking lot and open for inspection by the public.

INTERIM MANAGING DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Kevin Henning, Interim Managing Director, reported on the following:

- CCRC has 43 snow routes, each taking 6-8 hours to complete.
- CCRC has 43 countywide truck drivers.
- Prioritizing for snow removal is based on traffic volumes, speed and funding as follows: State trunklines, Primary roads, Local roads, subdivision/residential roads
- The reason for subcontracting subdivision/residential roads was to increase the response time and level of service.
- CCRC equipment includes 1997 Volvo Tri Axle Trucks, 1995-2000 International Tandem Trucks, and 1980 Series GMC Brigadier Single Axle Trucks.

Mr. Henning explained that due to retirement and attrition, our driver workforce has been declining. These drivers have not been replaced because of declining MTF revenues and subcontracting services such as snow removal for our local subdivision/residential roads. Chad & Dad was awarded the Winter Operations Bid on October 17, 2007.

Our reasons for subcontracting include:

- To provide a higher level of service. Mr. Henning reiterated that CCRC does not consider subdivision/residential roads priority routes. They are local roads with reduced speed limits.

- To decrease the amount of overtime. By utilizing a reduced workforce, additional labor hours would be needed to try and clear the entire county in a single workday.
- Our equipment fleet has been “downsized”, as the number of drivers has been “downsized” – additional drivers would require additional equipment.

Recommendation: Mr. Henning stated that he believes that Chad & Dad has been very responsive to the concerns regarding the winter maintenance contract and he applauds them for attending these meetings to address the public directly. He referenced reports that track citizen calls/service requests that also show improved service.

He stated that he has reviewed the snow routes and spoken with the Operations Manager and Supervisors. The current contract with Chad & Dad is for a total of 96.8 miles in Bedford, Emmett, Newton and Pennfield Township.

After a detailed analysis, Mr. Henning is recommending to the Board of Calhoun County Road Commissioners that we give Chad & Dad a 30-day notice that we will be changing our contract agreement with them to exclude Bedford Township and part of Pennfield Township. This would allow management/CCRC leadership time to reevaluate CCRC snow routes with these additional 30 miles. Discussion continued.

Chairman Brown clarified the attachments to the recommendation as areas currently contracted with Chad & Dad and those proposed with the deletion of Bedford Township and portions of Pennfield Township.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioners asked how CCRC plans to deal with the additional routes/miles. Mr. Henning responded that the 43 current routes would have to be reviewed to deal with the increased mileage and additional overtime is expected.

Commissioner Monaweck inquired about the other bidders for the winter maintenance contract for subdivisions. Mr. Henning replied that the other bidder for this contract did not bid the Bedford Township subdivisions. Commissioner Monaweck asked if another subcontractor should be sought to handle these 30 miles, as many road commissions have multiple contract holders. Mr. Henning noted that the other bidder did not bid Bedford Township or portions of Pennfield Township – Chad & Dad was the only bidder that included all areas that were specified in the bid. Commissioner Monaweck noted that any new venture has problems and we should work together to address them. Also, he does not believe that with the additional miles and current workforce, CCRC can give residents the level of service they want. He believes we have been doing a pretty good job.

Chairman Brown inquired if CCRC could afford to take these 30 miles of subdivision roads back? Mr. Henning replied that we could. Will we be able to provide an acceptable level of service? Mr. Henning replied that we would. Chairman Brown believes that while we all had good intentions, the residents deserve better service and he is favor of the recommendation.

Commissioner Travis stated that he expects his road to be plowed later than others since it is a local road. Also, plowing was made difficult because of all the traffic that packs the

snow onto the road. He would like to give Chad & Dad another opportunity before excluding these 30 miles from the contract and putting additional miles on CCRC drivers.

Commissioner Tobin inquired about the level of service if the subdivisions had not been contracted out. Mr. Henning replied that subcontracting was put into motion when drivers were not replaced. At that time, we put ourselves in the position of 43 drivers for 43 routes, knowing that we would subcontract. Commissioner Tobin asked if the poor condition of the roads was due to the snowfall or lack of service. Mr. Steve Ball, Operations Manager, responded that the last snowfall was a different snow that adhered to the pavement, making snowplowing more difficult.

Commissioner Coward asked for opinions on this issue from Mr. Ball and the truck drivers that were present at the meeting. He is a resident of Bedford Township and his area is serviced by Chad & Dad. While he was not overly impressed with the service, he agrees that this was a different snow and a lot of it. He stressed that he does not want to trade one problem for another if CCRC is not able to take on the additional 30 miles. Mr. Ball stated that subdivision roads in Bedford off of Michigan Avenue have always been the last on the list to be plowed. Sometimes, subdivisions are picked up along the way on driver routes. He stated that he is not in favor of CCRC taking the routes back, but if we do, he will work with staff to ensure they are maintained.

Commissioner Coward commented that he had concerns with Chad & Dad's equipment and the level of service provided. Was Chad & Dad called out soon enough or was that part of the problem? Mr. Ball responded that they were called out soon enough for the second snow event, but not the first. Adjustments have been made to address the call out issue.

Chairman Brown emphasized that he is not questioning Chad & Dad's ability to do the job, but the proposed decrease in miles would allow them to focus on a certain area. For a first year trial, this may be too much too fast. Chad Bischoff responded that Chad & Dad would like communication with the Board, as well as CCRC management, on performance and timeliness and asked for clarification on the outcome of any action taken tonight. Chairman Brown responded that he could give no guarantees that the routes would go back to Chad & Dad if the recommendation to exclude Bedford and portions of Pennfield Township were approved. Discussion continued. Commissioner Travis asked if Chad & Dad would still be interested in the contract if the recommendation to exclude 30 miles were approved. They responded that it puts a crimp in their business as they have purchased equipment to do the job; however, they would continue with the contract.

Moved by Commissioner Brown and supported by Commissioner Coward to approve the Interim Managing Director's recommendation to give Chad & Dad a 30-day notice that we will be changing our contract agreement with them to exclude Bedford Township and part of Pennfield Township. Roll Call Vote: Coward-YES; Brown-YES; Travis-NO; Tobin-YES; Monaweck-NO. Motion carried 3-2.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments included the following:

- A Marshall Township local road resident noted that the subdivisions would take even longer to snowplow if the recommendation to add 30 miles to CCRC routes is approved.
- A Pennfield Township local road resident commented that he believes the number of complaints decreased after the second large snow event because the County Board and Township officials told residents that the poor service issue would be handled.
- A Marshall Township local road resident stated that he agrees with the prioritization for snowplowing roads and expects his local road to be a low priority.
- A Bedford Township local road resident stated that the contractor snowplows are not putting their blades down.
- An Emmett Township resident commented that he and other residents in the Beadle Lake area are satisfied with the service they are receiving from the contractor.
- A Leroy Township resident stated that miscommunication and misinformation that has been printed in the newspapers has caused the public a lot of confusion.
- A Leroy Township resident noted that both snow events occurred around the holidays and Calhoun County roads were better than Kalamazoo County roads.

There being no additional business before the Board, Chairman Brown adjourned the special meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Scott A. Brown, Chairman

Mary Jo Crumpton, Secretarial Clerk