

A special meeting of the Board of Calhoun County Road Commissioners was held on Wednesday, November 28, 2007 at 6:00 p.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 A. Brown, Member
Dennis Randolph, Managing Director
Kevin Henning, Finance Director
Pixie Coats, Human Resource Director
Steve Ball, Operations Manager

Also Present: Kate Segal, Calhoun County Board of Commissioners
Betty Arnquist, Calhoun County Board of Commissioners
Eusebio Solis, Calhoun County Board of Commissioners
Greg Moore, Calhoun County Board of Commissioners
Greg Purcell, Calhoun County Administrator
Wendee Woods, Calhoun County Assistant Administrator
Art Farmer, Lee Township Supervisor
Gene Hamaker, Marshall Township Supervisor
Darby Prater, Battle Creek Enquirer
Dave Veramay, Clarence Township Resident
John Sackrider, Emmett Township Resident
Doug Murch, City of Marshall
Robert Herwarth, Calhoun County Resident
Jim Russell, Calhoun County Resident
Hugh Coward, Calhoun County Resident
Wayne Kukuk, Calhoun County Resident
Eric Tobin, Calhoun County Resident
General Public

Chairman Chester Travis called the special meeting of the Board of Calhoun County Road Commissioners to order at 6:03 p.m.

WELCOME

Board of Calhoun County Road Commissioners Chairman Travis welcomed all present.

INTRODUCTION OF ROAD COMMISSION CANDIDATES

Calhoun County Board of Commissioners Chairwoman Kate Segal thanked the Board of Road Commissioners for hosting this meeting. She explained that there are two positions to fill on the Board of Road Commissioners and the County received 25 applications for these positions. Each application was evaluated by every County Commissioner and a vote was taken to narrow the field to five candidates for further evaluation. Tonight's meeting is an opportunity to meet the candidates and learn more about the responsibilities of a Road Commissioner. At the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners meeting on December 6,

2007, a Road Commission Workshop will be appointed to conduct the in-depth interviewing of the five candidates.

Chairwoman Segal introduced the five candidates as follows: Mr. Hugh Coward, Mr. Wayne Kukuk, Mr. Robert Herwarth, Mr. Jim Russell and Mr. Eric Tobin (not present at this time).

Mr. Greg Purcell, County Administrator, congratulated the candidates, thanked Chairwoman Segal for having this public forum and thanked the CCRC for hosting the meeting. He commented that he is looking forward to Mr. Randolph's presentation/orientation on the Road Commission, as he always does a really nice job.

WELCOME/ORIENTATION FROM DENNIS RANDOLPH, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Mr. Dennis Randolph provided background information on road commissions. He stated that they are public agencies that were first organized in Saginaw and Bay County in 1909. Road commissions operate under Act 51 and funding is distributed on a formula basis to the 83 counties in Michigan.

Road commissions can have three or five member boards that are either appointed or elected, based on population.

Mr. Randolph gave a brief history on roads and road surfaces in the United States. Road commissions do many things, but their main purpose is to provide reasonably safe and efficient roads to the motoring public. Our duties include gravel road maintenance, snow and ice removal, road signs, traffic signals, etc.

Current law and legal decisions state that road commissions are required to take care of the paved portion of the road. However, a large part of our work is on the roadsides and includes roadside mowing, ditching, tree cutting, debris and dead deer pick up.

Act 51 has set up three different road systems: city/village roads, county roads, and state highways. Each jurisdiction has responsibility for their roads, assumes the liability and pays the insurance for the roads. The hierarchy for jurisdictional overlap on decision-making for signs, signals, etc., is state highways, county roads and city/village roads.

Across Michigan there are 88,000 miles of county roads, 20,000 of city/village roads and 9,000+ of state roads for a total of 117,000 miles of public roads in the state of Michigan.

The majority of our funding comes from gas taxes (19¢ per gallon) and weight taxes. One-cent funds bridge repair and the other 18¢ is divided between state, county and city/village roads. This is a fixed rate and does not go up when the price of gas rises. Road commissions do not receive any funding through the sales tax, nor through the County General Fund. Funding is specified for primary and local roads in the county – primary roads receive more money per mile than local roads. Act 51 requires a 50% match for local road construction. Generally, this 50% match is provided by the township either through their general fund or by setting up an assessment district. CCRC works with the townships to improve their roads.

We receive federal aid dollars in two ways: 1) Urban funds - managed by BCATS (Battle Creek Area Transportation Study) and used throughout the county including cities and villages; and 2) Rural funds – shared among Rural Task Force #3 that is comprised of Calhoun, Barry, Branch, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph County.

Other funding sources include: 1) Safety funds, such as the High Risk Rural Roads project where we received \$1 million this past year for improvements on N Drive North, B Drive South and Union City Road. We have two safety projects next year: McAllister/Pennfield Road and 12 intersections on the east side of the county where traffic improvements such as signs, pavement marking, etc., will be completed. 2) Economic Development funds; 3) Critical Bridge funds; 4) Small Urban funds, split up between cities that are not large enough to be considered metropolitan areas. Mr. Randolph noted that there are 5+ federal aid projects scheduled for next year.

Challenges we face include the following: 1) Less revenue - we are getting less revenue because as the cost of gasoline rises, people buy less gas; 2) Continued economic slow down in Calhoun County and rise in the unemployment rate; 3) Environmental impact on our operations.

In Calhoun County, the Road Commission has 489 centerline miles of primary roads (major, higher volume roads) and 827 centerline miles of local roads for a total of 1316 miles. We have the largest road system (by miles) and the largest fleet of public heavy equipment in the county. CCRC contracts with MDOT to maintain 459 lane miles of State roads including M-96, M-60, M-66, M-99, M-78 and I-69, but not I-94, M-89 or M-37.

CCRC employs three management staff, an operations manager, three garage supervisors, clerical support, solid waste department director, assistant engineer and 51 truck drivers and mechanics for a total of 67 employees. Through attrition and not filling vacated positions, the number of employees has decreased from a few years ago when CCRC employed 90+ employees.

Other duties of the Road Commission include: maintaining the three parks and canoe launches; soil erosion and sedimentation control, storm water projects and elimination of illicit discharge to our sewer systems, project coordination, and bonds through our public works system; solid waste services through a contract with the county; addressing services; project coordination with other agencies; storage of impounded vehicles; and an active service request system.

CANDIDATES

Chairwoman Segal introduced the candidates, in no particular order, as follows:

Eric Tobin: Expressed thanks for the opportunity tonight to learn more about the Road Commission and remarked that his interest in being a Road Commissioner stems from his belief in the importance of public service and giving back to the community. For 15 years, Mr. Tobin was employed in various fields including medical, environmental, financial

management, etc. Currently, he is a professional business consultant working with small businesses and is also involved in community development projects. Mr. Tobin believes he would have fresh ideas for new challenges and he would be honored to serve as a Road Commissioner.

Wayne Kukuk: Thanked the Board for inviting him tonight. Mr. Kukuk is a nearly 20 year resident of Leroy Township. He applied for the position because it sounded interesting and he believes he can bring his experience and expertise to the job, as well as give back to the community. Professionally, Mr. Kukuk holds degrees in Soil Science and Geology and has been employed with the Department of Environmental Quality Water Bureau for the past 10 years. He serves as a volunteer on the Leroy Township Water Resources Board and the City of Battle Creek Wellhead Protection Committee. Mr. Kukuk has worked in various phases of government and has experience working with the general public. If appointed to the Board of Road Commissioners, he looks forward to working with staff to plan, construct and maintain the roads and infrastructure in the county, from a personal safety as well as, environmental aspect.

Robert Herwarth: Mr. Herwarth stated that he thinks that the roads are in pretty good shape, but he is concerned with funding issues. He believes in accountability, communication, and the careful expenditure of funds. He has served on many boards including the Calhoun County Metropolitan Planning Commission, and has been involved with the township on a variety of issues. Mr. Herwarth stated that he has a good understanding of how county government works and the importance of fiscal responsibility, as well as making decisions for the right reasons. He understands that the Road Commission has many duties and one of them is oversight.

Hugh Coward: Thanked the Board for the opportunity to be here tonight. Mr. Coward was born and raised in Calhoun County and he resides in Bedford Township. He applied for the position because of the need to protect and preserve our roads, infrastructure, parks and public works, as they play a tremendous role in our quality of life and that of future generations. Mr. Coward is a member of the International Association of Metal Ironworkers and is very familiar with bridge and highway construction. He has worked in many areas of the trade on projects in and around Calhoun County.

Jim Russell: Mr. Russell stated that he worked for CCRC for over 38 years and retired last year. During his employment with the Road Commission, he went from truck driver to Superintendent. Mr. Russell stated that he knows roads and how the Road Commission works. He is a resident of Sheridan Township. He thanked the Board for this opportunity.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Road Commissioners thanked Chairwoman Segal and the Road Commission candidates for attending tonight's meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments were made.

There being no additional business before the Board, Chairman Travis adjourned the special meeting at 7:25 p.m. The reception continued until 8:15 p.m.

Chester E. Travis, Chairman

Pixie Ann Coats, Deputy Clerk