

## REGULAR MEETING

The regular meeting of the Board of County Road Commissioners of Iron County was held on Tuesday, April 9, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. in the Road Commission office at 800 W. Franklin Street, Iron River, Michigan.

Chairman Schmidt led the Pledge of Allegiance and opened the meeting.

Present for the roll call were Chairman Ernie Schmidt, Vice-Chairman Ron Frailing, Commissioners Jim Cihak and Chuck Battan. Commissioner Germic was absent. Also, present were Interim Supr./ Mngr. Brad Toivonen, Finance Director Michelle Johnson, HR-PR Administrator Patti Leonoff, Foremen Dean Stolberg , Iron County Commissioner Ean Bruette, Dave Smith, Mastodon Twp., and Attorney Mark Tousignant. Additionally, Bruce Moore, Bethany Leiter, and Jake Stedman from Highline were present, as well as Brian Schiavo, GEI Consultants, and Ryan Dennis, Iron County resident.

### ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Finance Director Johnson requested one addition: New Business f.) Set the date/time for the public hearing: partial abandonment of Treeline Dr.

Accepted the agenda, with the requested addition in a motion from Commissioner Battan, supported by Frailing.

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Motion carried.

### MINUTES TO BE APPROVED

The following minutes were presented: Audit and Regular of March 12, 2024

A motion by Commissioner Cihak, supported by Battan to accept the above minutes.

Ayes: Battan, Cihak, Schmidt

Nays: None

Abstain: Commissioner Frailing

Motion carried.

### DISBURSEMENTS TO BE APPROVED

The disbursements to be approved included:

a. Payrolls of:	\$ 153,353.45
b. Prepaid Claims of:	76,474.96
c. Accounts Payables of:	323,146.92
d. VOIDED Check #17477	(580.00)
Total:	\$ 552,395.33

Motion by Commissioner Battan, supported by Frailing, to approve the Audit Committee Report dated March 31, 2024, covering the above disbursements.

Roll call vote: Ayes- Cihak, Battan, Frailing, Schmidt

Nays: None

Motion carried.

### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Interim Supr. Toivonen reviewed his report:

Fuel Update- Oss fuel delivery on 3/28/24. We will be waiting until after May 1<sup>st</sup> to order fuel for IR as that is when the terminals switch from winter to summer gas.

Salt- IR received another 500 tons of salt 3/28-4/2/24; Escanaba docks are unloading salt from the docks.

Iron River Shop-A request for estimates was sent out to two companies in Iron Mountain for roof repairs and building upgrades needed.

Oss Garage-Wall lights in wash bay are being changed out for LED lighting.

#### Primary Roads:

Phase 6-Bids received with Payne & Dolan coming in with the low bid of \$467,782. This is 5.7% below the Engineer's Estimate-a \$28,000 bid savings. This, together with the savings from the Brule Mountain project, might be able to go toward a County wide MDOT letting primary road system pavement marking project for 2025.

Hagerman Lake PH2-2026-Let Steve Purri, CRA, know we will be looking to do a federal aid buyout.

Tunnel Vision- Will be getting estimates for culvert linings for FFH-16 for 2025.

FHWA-ER Program 2023 Flooding-The Preliminary Engineering was not originally included in the submission for Smokey Lake Rd. The \$80,712 was added, submitted, and has received approval from FHWA. It will be covered 80/20. UPEA should be completing survey work this week and begin rough designing in the next couple weeks for all sites.

#### Local Roads:

2024 Local Projects-Received all agreements except Hematite Township for Townline Rd.

Legislative Appropriations-Ernie, Dan and Brad met with Senator McBroom and Representative Markkanen in Lansing last week at the Legislative Banquet and were told there is not money available to help the six counties with flood damages.

Section 19 Funding-Nothing new but will be attending the Iron County Emergency Management Teams meeting next week.

Equipment: Delivery still expected in July for both chassis. The Board had previously requested quotes for painting the quads, when the new boxes were installed this spring; the bids were received and came in between 8-10,000 per truck (cabs only) as an estimate for paint only, no body work, and without physically seeing the trucks. Dean has been working on buffing them and Chairman Schmidt requested Commissioner Battan from the Equipment Committee go to the garage and see how the buffing turned out, with the possibility of painting them in-house.

GPS Tracking-Feedback from other road commissions has been coming in on different companies that provide GPS tracking, with the intent of using it for insurance and safety issues. A meeting with Samsara is scheduled for April 10.

Employment: HEOP-Application review was April 8; once the rankings are compiled, Michelle will be setting up interviews for April 15. MDOT night patrol has been extended one week. The Mechanic interviews were conducted, and the job offer was accepted. Nine applications for summer help were received and assigned to the shops. The HR-PR Administrator/Asst. Finance Dir. Position has been posted in the Reporter, Chamber website and the ICRC website, with a deadline of May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

#### Bridges:

Idlewild Rd.-Fortune Cr.-Bridge program application submitted on March 28<sup>th</sup> for 2027 construction. When beginning design work, UPEA determined the bridge span could be less than originally thought, which would keep this bridge in the smaller bridge category within the bridge program, increasing the chances of receiving funding. The design plans have gone as far as they can until funding is determined.

FH-16 N & S. Branches Paint River-Bridge program applications submitted March 28<sup>th</sup> for 2027 construction.

Wild Rivers-Iron River Culvert Crossing- Working with Bette Premo in submitting another grant.

Biennial Bridge Inspections-One bid received: agenda item.

Winslow Lk. Rd.- Winslow Creek-There have been many phone calls about the 15-ton load rating of the bridge, including a logging company inquiring about putting a structure over the existing bridge in hopes log trucks could then cross. This brings concerns not only about finding, but also engineering, damaging what is currently there, insurance and liability. There is very little bridge funding in the State and there is little the road commission can do at this time.

Miscellaneous:

MDOT work items-Brad, Michelle, and Andy Illieff, MDOT, to discuss possibility of a new salt shed in Iron River in 2026.

Regional Task Force- Meeting on April 11, at which the County-wide pavement marking project will be brought up for voting and approval.

MCRCSIP- Five-year building appraisals will be taking place. We will be taking the opportunity to ask questions about the building contents and insurance. Safety training will be done during the week of May 6<sup>th</sup>.

Treeline Dr.-Received abandonment request on April 2<sup>nd</sup>; MCRCSIP is walking us through the process. In review of the petition and request, there were some questions and we met with Bill Henn on April 8<sup>th</sup>. Agenda item.

County Road Assoc. -CRA put out a second media release, highlighting a mileage-based user fee as one possible solution for Michigan's severely underfunded road and bridge network.

Seasonal Weight Restrictions: Restrictions are still on. The earliest they have ever been taken off is April 22<sup>nd</sup> and there are no signs of them coming off before then this year.

Fiber Optic: Approved the first permit, for New Bristol Rd., with four more permits being received for the Crystal Falls Twp. area. Seasonal road restrictions will temporarily affect some of the permitting process. Discussion is ongoing with JSI on the permitting and inspections for their fiber optic project; seasonal road restrictions will affect them as well.

County-Wide Road Millage-Chairman Schmidt and Interim Supt. Toivonen will be attending the County Board meeting today at 4:00 p.m. for the approval of the ballot language.

Fahrner Emulsion Demo-Fahrner is willing to do a test strip at their cost of incorporating emulsion into a gravel road for dust control. More details to come.

Drain Commissioner- Chairman Schmidt and Interim Supt. Toivonen will be attending the County Board meeting today at 4:00 p.m. to discuss moving drain commission duties back to the County. Due to the low run-off from this winter, there is a possibility of putting boards into dams earlier this year.

### **DELEGATIONS**

Mastodon Township: Dave Smith, Trustee, wanted to thank the crew for the beautiful job they did chipping.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

d. Equipment- Commissioner Battan inquired as to what repairs were being done to the quad at Michigan Spring.

g. Drain Commission-Commissioner Frailing announced the first meeting of the year will be April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Sunset Lake resident Ryan Dennis expressed concerns about the lake level and requested serious consideration into putting the boards into the dam. Interim Supt. Toivonen will be checking the level this week with the possibly of putting the lower board in to maintain the mandated level of the lake.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **RESOLUTION: CR424 PH6- MDOT CONTRACT**

The resolution for signing of the CR424 PH6 MDOT contract 24-5102 was adopted in a motion by Commissioner Frailing with support by Cihak.

Roll call vote: Ayes-Battan, Cihak, Frailing, Schmidt

Nays: None.

Motion carried.

### **POLICY #16-FUNDING OF LOCAL ROAD HEAVY MAINTENANCE PROJECTS, AMENDMENT #6**

Interim Supt. Toivonen explained that the amendment was to make the waiving of engineering oversite costs policy for local road projects funded by the Townships and eliminate the Board having to vote each year.

A motion by Frailing, supported by Cihak, to approve Amendment #6 to Policy #16, waiving the engineering oversight costs for Township funded, local road heavy maintenance projects.

Roll call vote: Ayes- Cihak, Frailing, Battan, Schmidt

Nays: None

Motion carried.

### **2024 BRIDGE INSPECTION BID AWARD**

Only one bid was received in the RFP for 2024 the biennial bridge inspections.

A motion by Commissioner Cihak, supported by Battan, to award the bridge inspection contract to Ayers Associates Inc. for 2024.

Roll call vote: Ayes- Frailing, Cihak, Battan, Schmidt

Nays: None

Motion carried.

### **IRON RIVER SHOP/OFFICE PROPERTY SURVEY BID AWARD**

Two bids were received in response to the RFP to perform a survey of the Iron River shop and office property. Interim. Supt. Toivonen's recommendation was to accept the low bid, received from Gary Pisoni, in the amount of \$850.00.

Moved by Commissioner Battan, support by Cihak, to award the survey contract to Gary Pisoni for \$850.00.

Roll call vote: Ayes-Frailing, Battan, Cihak, Frailing

Nays: None

Motion carried.

### **HIGHLINE FIBER OPTIC 2024 UPDATE**

Bruce Moore, Bethany Leiter, and Jake Stedman made a presentation to the Board with goals and expectations for fiber optic internet service within Iron County for 2024 as well as to entertain questions.

Points of Interest:

- Highline won a 180-million-dollar grant, of which 162 million will be spent in the U.P.
- 1,600 miles of fiber will be put into the U.P; 439 miles of which will be in Iron County, providing access to 5,382 households.
- Lessons learned from earlier projects in other counties is that there were mistakes made out in the field by contractors; Bruce assures that these have been corrected and will not be an issue going forward.
- GEI has been contracted as a Third-Party Inspector for fiber optic installation in Iron County done by AEG. Highline has also hired additional personnel to oversee the work.
- Highline and the Road Commission will continue to work together to streamline the permitting process and get the fiber laid as correctly and efficiently as possible. The more accurate the permits, the better the job will go.

**SET DATE/ TIME FOR PUBLIC HEARING: PARTIAL ABANDONMENT OF TREELINE DR.**

Following discussion about the time constraints for the hearing and required notices, Interim Supt. Toivonen recommended May 14, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., following the regular meeting.

Moved by Commissioner Cihak, supported by Battan, to set the date and time for the Public Hearing regarding the partial abandonment of Treeline Dr. for May 14, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Motion carried.

**ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

Attorney Tousignant wanted to make two points regarding the fiber optic install:

1. Townships should not assume that their underground infrastructure (Water/Sewer lines) is protected by permits issued by the road commission.
2. All Municipalities within the County should receive digital as-built drawings of the lines when the install is complete.

**COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS**

Commissioner Schmidt shared an interesting product they saw at the Road Show in Lansing last month that is intended to be used on gravel roads. Brad may reach out to the company about getting a test strip done in Iron County.

At 10:41 a.m. with no further business to come before the Board, it was motioned by Battan, supported by Cihak to adjourn.

---

Ernie Schmidt, Chairman

---

Michelle Johnson, Clerk of the Board