

REGULAR MEETING

The regular meeting of the Board of County Road Commissioners of Iron County was held on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, 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 and Commissioners Jim Cihak, Chuck Battan and Dan Germic. Also, present: Superintendent/ Manager Brad Toivonen, Finance Director Michelle Johnson, HR-PR Administrator Emily Bieghler, Fill-In Shop Foreman Duane Porier, Maintenance Foreman Rob Johnson, Bates Twp. Supervisor Mike Stafford, Mastodon Twp. Trustee Dave Smith, Craig Richardson, Wickwire, and Brian Schiavo, GEI. Members of the public present: Bruce Beilfuss.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Supt. Toivonen requested the addition of 10. a. Resort Dr. agreement discussion and 11.b. S. Timberline Dr. Motion by Commissioner Frailing, support by Battan, to accept the agenda with the aforementioned additions. Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

MINUTES TO BE APPROVED

Moved by Commissioner Germic, supported by Battan, to approve the minutes of the September 16th, 2025, audit and regular meetings. Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

DISBURSEMENTS TO BE APPROVED

a. Payrolls of:	\$ 138,829.03
b. Prepaid Claims of:	95,947.09
c. Accounts Payables of:	324,735.11
Total:	\$ 559,511.23

Moved by Commissioner Battan, supported by Frailing, to approve the Audit Committee Report dated September 30th, 2025, covering the above disbursements.

Roll call vote: Ayes- Germic, Cihak, Battan, Frailing, Schmidt. Nays-None. Motion carried.

SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT

Supt. Toivonen reviewed his report:

Building/Inventory:

A request to Insight for a final contract extension will be sent out at the end of the month. If they are unable to extend the current bid pricing, advertisements for fuel bids will go out at the end of November.

Iron River has received approximately 6,500 tons of sand and deliveries were switched to Oss on Monday.

Bid docs for the next contract period will be out soon. The MDOT salt order for Oss has been confirmed and we are awaiting the actual delivery date.

Culverts will be ordered soon so they are here and ready for the spring.

UPEA has been working on the draft site plan for the Iron River salt. Met with the Bldg./Grounds Committee for a preliminary discussion and site visit.

Johnson Controls is looking at dates to schedule the work at Oss.

Primary Roads:

CR 424 PH 7/ Hagerman Lk. Rd.- Work both CR 424 PH7 and Hagerman Lake PH1 is complete. Hagerman Lake came in \$11,000 under bid. Invoicing for CR 424 will be sent once final quantities are agreed upon.

EGLE permit for Homer Rd.-Sunset Creek has been completed and submitted. The aluminum box culvert needed is approx. 18'x5', 54' long, at an estimated cost of \$90,000.

Lake Mary Rd was scarified by our crew as it was beyond patching.

Local and federal aid roads have all been rated and updates to the asset management plan are underway. All but one of the FHWA 2023 spring flood ER projects have been completed. Smokey Lake Rd. is expected to begin this week, and Bacco will need to resubmit an extension of time request with MDOT as their first request was denied.

Info on the FLAP grant for Ottawa Lk. Rd is on hold as the USFS employees are furloughed because of the federal government shut down.

Local Roads:

Three-year project lists have been received from Bates and Iron River Townships; Hematite will not have any 2026 projects.

Culverts have been replaced on Armstrong Lake Rd., Tobin-Alpha Rd., and 1st St. going into Alpha. The patchwork on these is being done today, as well as on Rainbow Trl. and Buck Lake Rd.

The Trybom Dr. culvert project is approximately \$80,000 so far. There is still a small amount of patchwork needed to complete the project 100%.

West Brule Lake paving started yesterday, with shoulder work still remaining.

A contact at MDOT relayed that the Escanaba & Lake Superior RxR is not looking to remove any crossings south of Ontonagon and is willing to consider improvements at the crossings in Amasa, which would require some participation from Hematite Township as a heavy maintenance project.

EGLE permit for Iron Lake Rd.-Sunset Creek has been completed and submitted. The aluminum box culvert needed is approx. 18'x5', 32' long, at an estimated cost of \$90,000.

Fleet / Equipment:

Paperwork has been signed for the second pair of John Deere graders, with a tentative delivery for next September. We will be meeting with Ross from Marquette CRC tomorrow to finalize the agreement for the sale for the first two of the four we are selling.

Employment Items:

Emily completed probationary period on October 7th, and she is doing very well. She has been working on a probationary employee survey with our recent hires, and it has been a positive experience. An annual survey is in the works, as well as an employee recognition award.

All winter seasonal positions have been filled. Crystal Falls will have a new person doing the weeknight patrol.

Bridges:

We have not been notified of any of our applications being selected. The rehabilitation of the FH-16 bridges will be resubmitted in April, as well as the Resort Dr. bridge for removal. Spring Rosales, USFS, was looking at a submission for grant funding on Cooks Run; they may be able to assist with funding for the FH-16 bridges as they are a higher priority.

The annual bridge inspections have been completed, including the addition of the crossings at Premo Dam Rd. (Little Hemlock), West Pine St.(Hemlock) and Maki Rd. (Hemlock) as they would qualify for funding through the local bridge program. West Brule Lake Rd (Pendelton Creek) has also been added as it meets the minimum span requirements.

MDOT has gone out for proposals on the SNBI requirements, so we will not have to pay the \$7,000 to have it completed this year.

Misc:

The Treeline Dr. lawsuit was dismissed by the Judge on September 30th.

Mike Phillips, MCRCSIP was here and the 2nd. Annual Roadeo safety training was held on October 9th. There were 44 attendees, consisting of employees from Iron, Gogebic, Ontonagon, Menominee and Baraga County. The SAM local chapter meeting is being held here tomorrow, with five or so other counties in attendance.

SAM has requested that Brad join the CRA Disaster/ Emergency Response Committee and he has accepted. The Michigan budget has passed and CRA is working hard to work out the details on what the funds can be used for and how the distribution will work.

A second kickoff meeting was held last week with a new contractor for Highline. The contractor is having some issues with how the permits were drawn up by Highline and the inaccuracy of the drawings in relation to the utilities, due to the locates not being done prior to the permits being drawn up. Discussions are still ongoing about when permits are necessary for drops to homes. Rawnick Rd. repairs are complete, and it will be graded next week to wrap up the project. All funds from the agreement have been used up. Michigan Broadband has completed their work.

Drain Commissioner:

Stager Lake and Fortune Lake are still experiencing heavy beaver activity. Maintenance costs are down from last year, maybe attributed to the cameras being installed.

DELEGATIONS

Mike Stafford, Bates Twp. Supervisor has questions about how Act 51 money is designated for local vs. primary roads.

Dave Smith, Mastodon Twp. Trustee expressed gratitude for patchwork being done today on Mastodon Twp. roads. He additionally had questions about shoulder work that may yet be done this year, the Greenbelt zoning designation and the berms on gravel roads in their township.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Building & Grounds: Commissioner Germic briefly recapped the preliminary meeting and walk-around at the Iron River salt shed site.

Park & Rec: Commissioner Germic relayed a meeting was held on September 22nd, with discussion focused mostly on Cooks Run.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

OLD BUSINESS

RESORT DR. BRIDGE AGREEMENT-DISCUSSION

Superintendent Toivonen reviewed the draft proposal supplied by Crystal Falls Township. After discussion, further clarification on the 5% grant match required as part of the local bridge program needs to be addressed in the agreement. The location of the barricades must also be adjusted to ensure ORV's cannot access the bridge for it to be a non-motorized bike path. Road Commission Counsel needs to be consulted further as well.

Moved by Commissioner Cihak with support from Germic, to table further action on the Resort Dr. bridge at this time.

Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

CRA ANNUAL DUES

Finance Director Johnson presented invoice #25260034, representing the annual County Road Association dues.

Moved by Commissioner Germic, support by Battan, to pay invoice #25260034 in the amount of \$10,322.79 to CRA for annual dues.

Roll call vote: Ayes-Battan, Cihak, Frailing, Germic, Schmidt. Nays-none. Motion carried.

S. TIMBERLINE TRL.-DISCUSSION

Superintendent Toivonen explained that there is a section at the end S. Timberline Trail that is not a county road. Landowners there are looking to have to Road Commission accept it into our road system. While it was built to our standards, it would also need to be paved in order to be considered. The pavement specs as written in our policy are geared more towards primary roads than local ones, i.e. the thickness of the pavement. Additionally, the policy does not reference any Township involvement in the decision, and they would be participating in heavy maintenance on that road going forward if the road were accepted. Counsel did not recommend granting variances of policies but rather revising the policy overall.

Motion by Commissioner Germic, with support from Frailing to table action on S. Timberline Trail until the November 2025 board meeting.
Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

ATTORNEYS REPORT

None.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

None.

At 10:04 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