

REGULAR MEETING

The regular meeting of the Board of County Road Commissioners of Iron County was held on Tuesday, November 11, 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 Dan Germic, Jim Cihak, and Chuck Battan. Also, present: Superintendent/ Manager Brad Toivonen, Finance Director Michelle Johnson, HR-PR Administrator Emily Bieghler, Maintenance Foreman Rob Johnson, Construction Foreman Dylan LaMay, Bates Twp. Supervisor Mike Stafford, Mastodon Twp. Trustee Dave Smith, Attorney Mark Tousignant, Brian Schiavo, GEI, and County Commissioner Ean Bruette. Members of the public present: Patti and Ronjo Leonoff.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

MINUTES TO BE APPROVED

Moved by Commissioner Germic, supported by Battan, to approve the minutes of the October 14th, 2025, audit and regular meetings.

Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

DISBURSEMENTS TO BE APPROVED

a. Payrolls of:	\$ 140,161.01
b. Prepaid Claims of:	659,864.88
c. Accounts Payables of:	674,382.65
d. VOID Check #18264	(163.94)
Total:	\$1,474,244.60

Moved by Commissioner Battan, supported by Cihak, to approve the Audit Committee Report dated October 31st, 2025, covering the above disbursements.

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

SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT

Supt. Toivonen reviewed his report:

Building/Inventory:

Sand deliveries were completed last week. An advertisement will be in the paper this week to solicit bids, with a December due date. Bids for gravel will be going out this afternoon with a due date of January. The order of arch pipe for next year has been placed.

The salt delivery for Oss is expected to be this week.

Johnson Controls subcontracted out the work to correct the deficiencies found at the Oss fire suppression inspection and its repairs have been completed.

Primary Roads:

CR 424 PH 7/ Hagerman Lk. Rd.- Waiting to receive the final invoice on 424. Hagerman Lk Rd. has already been paid.

CR 424 PH 8/ Hagerman Lk. Rd. PH 2- Once the Rural Task Force has completed the final paperwork, the buyout with Houghton County will be completed. Scoping has been done.

CR 424 PH 9/ Hagerman Lk. Rd. PH 3- Houghton may be interested in a buyout for this as well, depending on their funding. MDOT buyouts may also be back on the table as well. Scoping has been done.

2023 Emergency Response Projects- All have been completed and a final visual inspection of all six will be done together with MDOT on Wednesday.

Local Roads:

Bates Twp: The township has put out two digital radar speed feedback signs, reflecting *advisory* speeds, and will be moving them to different locations within Bates. The 2026 project list consists of graveling parts of Little Finland, Forsberg and Rogers Ave.

Crystal Falls Twp: Township projects will tentatively consist of more graveling jobs, potentially starting with part of Premo Creek Rd.

Hematite Twp: There will be no 2026 projects for Hematite. Communication with MDOT shows they are looking at possible detour routes to do some culvert replacements over the Hemlock river in the next few years.

Iron River Twp: Estimates have been completed for two phases of Hamner Rd. The EGLE permit for Iron Lake Rd is under review, with concerns regarding the bottom elevation of the pipe.

Mastodon Twp: 2026 projects to consist of graveling on parts of Upper Dam, Horse Race Rapids, Treeline and Kalla Walla. 2025 projects have been completed and paid to the contractors.

Stambaugh Twp: 2026 projects to potentially include work on Brule River Rd, South Brule, Sunrise and Forestview.

Fleet / Equipment:

An Equipment Committee meeting will be set up to discuss 2026 equipment purchases. We are in serious need of several pieces of equipment.

The skid steer/ mower purchase invoice for \$145,209 has been received and paid today.

The first pair of John Deere graders will be delivered in January; the sale of the current two to Marquette RC will coincide with that.

Employment Items:

We are fully staffed for this year's snow season. MDOT night patrol will run Nov. 8th through April 11th.

Emily has introduced employee surveys for the probationary employees, as well as an annual one for full-time staff.

Bridges:

The FH-16 bridges were not selected for funding by the MDOT Local Bridge Program. Applications will again be submitted in April 2026. There is potential for grant assistance through the Federal Forest Service, but with the employees being furloughed, no new information has been provided.

Misc:

The deadline for appealing the Treeline Drive lawsuit is November 14th.

There are still a lot of unknowns about the new funding package. MTF payments for October-December 2025 will be short as the income tax transfer has been eliminated from the funding calculation. It is unclear when the Neighborhood Road Fund money would be received in 2026, as well as all the guidelines and restrictions on the usage. The hope is that a virtual meeting sometime in November will provide more information.

SAM Local Chapter meeting was held at the ICRC Office on Oct. 15th, with 20 people in attendance.

Highline crews are winding down. They are pulling fiber on US-2 and will then go back to wrap up the side roads for the season, including the replacement of several damaged culverts.

The Iron-Baraga Soil Conservation District is dissolving their participation as the Part 91 Iron County Coordinator. The County Board is mandated by statute to have someone to administer SESC practices and a meeting is being held on December 5th between the parties to determine how to move forward. Brad will be attending.

Drain Commissioner:

Boards on all dams were pulled early due to beaver activity, and we will continue to clear the dams out until the beaver have left for the season.

DELEGATIONS

Mike Stafford, Bates Twp. Supervisor has questions about where the gravel for the local township projects comes from and opinions on how the new funding should be spent.

Dave Smith, Mastodon Twp. Trustee expressed gratitude for shoulder work on 424. Additionally, he asked for information about getting fire station signs on the highway and to be more involved in what is bid out for local projects. Supt. Toivonen also detailed that the road commission is not involved in anything to do with the green belt township zoning, as the township's policy defines it as starting outside the road right of way.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Iron County Commissioner Bruette relayed that Zach Hautala will keep the road commission informed with progress on the Heritage Trail.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

OLD BUSINESS**RESORT DR. BRIDGE AGREEMENT-DISCUSSION**

Following discussing about the additional language to be added to the agreement, and without having received a revised version from the township, it was moved by Commissioner Frailing, with support from Cihak, to table discussion until more information has been received from Crystal Falls Twp.

Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

S. TIMBERLINE TRAIL

Discussion was had regarding the need for a survey on the unplatted road, possible revisions to the ICRC Minimum Construction Standards policy, and the necessity of the township to approve the addition of roads to the local road system before anything else was done, it was moved by Commissioner Germic, with support from Battan, to table further discussion until more information has been received.

Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS**2025-2027 STATE AUDIT CONTRACT RENEWAL**

Moved by Commissioner Cihak, support by Frailing, to renew the 2025-2027 State Audit Contract for an amount not to exceed \$18,000 per year.

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

SALE OF GRADERS TO MCRC

Motion by Commissioner Battan, with support from Frailing to approve the sale of the two John Deere graders, with wings, to Marquette County Road Commission for the price of \$172,100.50 each.

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

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT 80/20 EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE HEALTH CARE COSTS-PA 152

Motion by Commissioner Frailing, supported by Germic, to adopt the 80/20% option for the medical benefit plan coverage year January 1-December 31, 2026.

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

SET DATES: 2026 BUDGET HEARING, EOY SPECIAL MTG, 2026 REORGANIZATIONAL MTG

Meetings are set as follows:

- 2026 budget hearing-December 9th, 2025, within the regular meeting.
- EOY Special meeting -December 29, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.
- 2026 reorganizational meeting-January 5th, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.


ATTORNEYS REPORT

Attorney Tousignant offered the easement request on Stager Lake Rd. should be a revocable license, not a permanent easement. The road commission does not do permanent easements.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

None.

At 10:26 a.m. with no further business to come before the Board, it was motioned by Cihak, supported by Battan, to adjourn.


Ernie Schmidt, Chairman
Michelle Johnson, Clerk of the Board

Board of County Road Commissioners Of IRON COUNTY

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Ron Frailing, Vice Chairman
Chuck Battan, Member
Dan Germic, Member
Jim Cihak, Member

Bradley P. Toivonen
Superintendent/Manager

Michelle Johnson
Finance Director/Clerk

Emily Biehler,
HR-PR/Assist. Finance Director

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT 80%/20% EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE HEALTH CARE COST OPTION AS SET FORTH IN 2011 PUBLIC ACT 152, THE PUBLICLY FUNDED HEALTH INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION ACT

WHEREAS, 2011 Public Act 152 (the "Act") was passed by the State Legislature and signed by the Governor on September 24, 2011; and

WHEREAS, the Act contains three options for complying with the requirements of the Act; and

WHEREAS, the three options are as follows:

- 1) Section 3 - "Hard Caps" Option - limits a public employer's total annual health care costs for employees based on coverage levels, as defined in the Act;
- 2) Section 4 - "80%/20%" Option - limits a public employer's share of total annual health care costs to not more than 80%. This option requires an annual majority vote of the governing body;
- 3) Section 8 - "Exemption" Option - a local unit of government, as defined in the Act, may exempt itself from the requirements of the Act by an annual 2/3 vote of the governing body;

WHEREAS, the Iron County Road Commission has decided to adopt the 80%/20% option as its choice of compliance under the Act;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of County Road Commissioners of the Iron County elects to comply with the requirements of 2011 Public Act 152, the Publicly Funded Health Insurance Contribution Act, by adopting the 80%/20% option for the medical benefit plan coverage year January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

On a roll call vote:

Ayes: Battan, Cihak, Frailing, Germic, Schmidt

Nays: None

Motion carried.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution offered and duly adopted by the Board of County Road Commissioners of Iron County at the meeting held this 11th day of November 2025.

Signed: 

Michelle Johnson, Finance Director/Clerk

Equal Opportunity Provider & Employer



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