

# **Regular Meeting Minutes**

## **Iron County Board of Commissioners**

### **April 14, 2026**

The regular meeting of the Board of County Road Commissioners of Iron County was held on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, 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 and Commissioners Jim Cihak, Dan Germic and Chuck Battan. Also, present: Finance Director Michelle Johnson, Construction Foreman Dylan LaMay, Shop Foreman Duane Poirier, Mastodon Twp. Trustee Dave Smith, Bates Twp. Supervisor Mike Stafford, Attorney Mark Tousignant, James Olson, GEI, and County Commissioner Ean Bruette. Members of the public present: Ronjo and Patti Leonoff, Ethan Amerson, Bruce Beilfuss, and Forester Brock VanOss. Superintendent Toivonen attended virtually via Teams.

#### **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Chairman Schmidt requested the addition 11.g-Update on the Forest Management Plan. Motion by Commissioner Cihak, support from Germic, to accept the agenda with the above addition. Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

#### **MINUTES TO BE APPROVED**

Moved by Commissioner Battan, supported by Germic, to approve the minutes of March 10, 2026, audit and regular meetings. Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

#### **DISBURSEMENTS TO BE APPROVED**

a. Payrolls of:	\$227,734.84
b. Prepaid Claims of:	\$143,552.94
c. Account Payables of:	\$410,501.30
d. VOID Checks/EFT's	-\$1,141.15
e. Total:	\$780,647.93

Moved by Commissioner Germic, supported by Cihak, to approve the Audit Committee Report dated March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026, covering the above disbursements.

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

#### **SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT**

Sup. Toivonen thanked the crew for the outstanding job they did plowing during the blizzard, and Michelle and Emily for helping to fill in at the office while he's been gone.

Supt. Toivonen reviewed his report:

##### **Building/Inventory:**

There were a couple of minor deficiencies found during the LARA inspections of the Oss fuel tank.

Corrections have been made and submitted; we are awaiting a response.

With the latest snow melt and rain, crews have been monitoring, marking and documenting flooding as well as addressing washout conditions. Frequent check-ins with the Emergency Manager have also been taking place.

Salt inventory is very low, with approximately 750 ton left across all three salt barns. Orders were placed a couple of months ago, but only a fraction was delivered. There is no salt available as the salt docks are empty, and we are hoping we have enough on hand.

A culvert order has been placed including the one for the Snuff Country/Hemlock River crossing as well as replenishing inventory of the smaller sizes.

MDOT should be reviewing the plans for the salt shed. There are some concerns about the timing of the bid

letting, which could push back the completion date.

#### Primary Roads:

CR 424 PH 6 (2024) has been closed out, and Brule Mountain Rd. PH 5 (2024) has been reviewed by MDOT and sent back to Coleman for minor deficiencies.

FHWA 2023 Spring Flood/ ER projects will remain open until restoration has grown in. There is some cracking occurring on the centerline of Warner Mine Rd., stemming from existing issues on each side that were there prior to the new construction. Looking to see if MDOT would approve using some of the savings from the ER projects overall toward corrective action at this site. Coleman estimates the cost to be approx.\$47,000.

Act 51 maps were submitted and approved on March 24<sup>th</sup>.

Doug has kept up his PASER certification and will be rating primary roads this summer with WUPPDR and MDOT. He will also inventory culverts as part of the asset management plan.

MDOT has reached out regarding a detour route for an upcoming culvert replacement on US-141 at the Hemlock River. Efforts are being made to cause the least disruption to residents possible, with the likely route being Cemetery and Parks Farm Rd. as a one-way southbound route, and Pine Street, River Lane and Spruce as a one-way northbound route. Detouring would include paving the route at MDOT's expense, with paving and construction in 2027. ICRC would do some brushing and culvert work, if necessary, while we are in the area working on the Snuff Country Rd. culvert repairs in 2026. Conversations with Hematite Township are underway.

#### Equipment:

The underbody for #296 was picked up from downstate and has been delivered to Peninsula Boom in Baraga for the truck build.

The auctions ended on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and neither of the John Deere graders were sold. The City of Bessemer expressed interest and was onsite March 27<sup>th</sup> to look at them. Their board approved the purchase of one of them and is working on the financing. An email will go out on the list-serv for the remaining grader, and a file with pictures and specs will be set up.

Duane got quotes to add an extended warranty to CAT grader #415, to get us through until the end of September, when the other CAT grader lease is up. At six months/ 500 hours and approximately \$2,000, the quote seemed reasonable and Duane will be getting the inspection done soon.

#### Employment:

Oss garage will be losing both an Operator and Mechanic and we are sad to see them go. Both positions have been internally posted, and the Mechanic opening has also been advertised.

Emily is representing the road commission at job fairs this week at both Forest Park and West Iron Schools, along with an operator from each garage. We have received only four applications for summer help this year, and the job posting has been extended to end after the job fair with hopes of getting a few more.

#### Bridges:

Applications were submitted to the Local Bridge Program on March 27<sup>th</sup> for both of the FH-16 bridges and the Resort Dr. bridge removal.

A public hearing was held by WisDot regarding construction on the Pentoga Rd. bridge.

#### General/Misc:

MDOT held the preconstruction meeting for the US-2 S project, which will be 3.65 miles of HMA crushing, shaping and resurfacing, drainage correction and guardrail, from the Wisconsin line to just north of the 424 intersection. Clearing has already begun in the area, with road work beginning around May 18<sup>th</sup>. Construction is anticipated to take all summer, so residents need to be aware and plan ahead or take an alternate route.

The preconstruction meeting for a second MDOT project on US-2 in Crystal Falls was also held. The project consists of 1.64 miles of microtextured pavement milling, surface seal and correction of drainage structures and will run from US-141, through Crystal Falls, ending at Urban Ave.

Tom Bucek held a CPR training course for ICRC at the Crystal Falls firehall, certifying our newest crew members.

Mike Phillips, MCRCSIP, will be holding a regional drug and alcohol suspicion training for Foremen and Superintendent/Managers on 4/30 at the ICRC business office. He will also be holding the regional work zone safety training at Oss on 5/21.

A staff meeting was held last Friday and will be held once or twice a week while Brad is working from home. Road restrictions are still in effect. Frost was out of M189 3/23 and M73 4/8. Michelle briefly summarized the Neighborhood Roads Funding, adding that there is a second lawsuit against the taxation on marijuana. This is one of the two funding sources for the NRF funding and MDOT anticipates the NRF funding being distributed to road commissions near the end of 2026 at the earliest. If either or both of the lawsuits win, and monies are distributed, it will have to be repaid. The annual financial audit has been completed and should be finalized soon. Fiber Optic- Highline is pulling in crews to get fiber in before the MDOT projects on US-2 begin. Permit requests have been received for areas surrounding Alpha and along the east end of 424. No permits will be issued for seasonally restricted roads. Drain Commission- Survey loop for Sunset Lake is tentatively scheduled for June.

### **DELEGATIONS**

Mike Smith, Bates Twp. Supervisor, inquired about the status of his road agreements being sent for approval. Dave Smith, Mastodon Twp. Trustee had some questions about the pipeline coming through Alpha, the US-2 project detours, the guidelines on weekend plowing, and asked to be updated on summer maintenance in the township. Commissioner Bruette shared that the Veterans office will remain where it currently is, thanks to the generosity of the new owner of the building.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **OPEB ACTUARIAL/ TRUST PAYMENT**

Finance Director Johnson presented the OPEB report for FY 2025. In alignment with the MERS RHFV Resolution of 2024, the annual contribution will be based on the actuary for the previous year. Motion by Commissioner Cihak, support by Battan, to pay the normal cost liability of \$16,323 as of December 31, 2025, into the trust. Roll call vote: Ayes-Germic, Battan, Cihak, Schmidt. Nays-None. Motion carried.

#### **2025 ACT 51 DRAFT APPROVAL AND ATTEST FORM**

Finance Director presented the DRAFT version of the 2025 Act 51, touching on differences in revenues and expenses from 2024 to 2025. Once the financial audit is finalized, the Act 51 report can be submitted. No changes from what was presented are expected. Motion by Commissioner Battan, support by Germic, to approve the FY2025 Act 51 report as presented and authorize the Chairman to sign the Attest form for submission. Roll call vote: Ayes- Cihak, Battan, Germic, Schmidt. Nays-None. Motion carried.

#### **ACT 51 TRANSFER FROM PRIMARY TO LOCAL**

Finance Director Johnson reviewed the changes in fund balance for 2025 and requested the necessary transfer of \$900,000 from the primary road fund to the local road fund. Motion by Commissioner Cihak, with support from Germic, to approve the transfer of \$900,000 from the primary to local road fund. Roll call vote: Germic, Battan, Cihak, Schmidt. Nays-None. Motion carried.

#### **POLICY NO.10, AMENDMENT NO.1-FOIA**

Finance Director Johnson explained that the FOIA forms in use were never approved by the Board with the

previous policy, so it was reformatted and the forms were re-done, all using templates recommended by MCRCSIP. Additionally, the new format will make it easier to be ADA compliant in conjunction with the website updating.

Motion by Commissioner Germic, support by Cihak, approving Amendment No.1 to Policy No. 10-FOIA. Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

**REAFFIRMATION OF POLICIES NO.4, NO.7 AND NO. 29.**

Finance Director Johnson explained to the Board that because the policies were approved in the late 90's and early 2000's, reaffirming the polices ensures they are still relevant. The new format also helps in making them ADA compliant when posted online.

Motion by Commissioner Battan, support by Cihak to approve and reaffirm the following policies:

- Policy No. 4 Mailbox Replacement
- Policy No. 29 Roadside Signs
- Policy No. 27, Amendment No. 1 Political Signs

Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

**DISCUSSION: RURAL ROAD ALLIANCE**

Supt. Toivonen gave the Board information regarding all sides of the Rural Road Alliance that is being formed by some of the road commissions in the U.P. and northern, lower Michigan. Letters from the Alliance, CRA, a handful of House Representatives and Senator McBroom were provided and discussed. No action was taken at this time.

**UPDATE-FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Forester VanOss gave information about the progress of the county and road commission forest management plans. Peninsula Title is still reconciling deeds between the county and ICRC and once finished a more in-depth update will be provided.

**ATTORNEYS REPORT**

The Stager Lake pit issue is resolving itself through the new owner.

**COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

None.

At 10:24 a.m. with no further business to come before the Board, it was motioned by Cihak, supported by Cihak, to adjourn.

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Ernie Schmidt, Chairman

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Michelle Johnson, Clerk of the Board