

Regular Meeting Minutes

Iron County Board of Commissioners

May 19, 2026

The regular meeting of the Board of County Road Commissioners of Iron County was held on Tuesday, May 19, 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 Dan Germic, Chuck Battan, Ron Frailing, and Jim Cihak. Also, present: Superintendent Brad Toivonen, Finance Director Michelle Johnson, Construction Foreman Dylon LaMay, Shop Foreman Duane Porier, Maintenance Foreman Rob Johnson, Mastodon Twp. Trustee Dave Smith, Bates Twp. Supervisor Mike Stafford, Attorney Mark Tousignant, Brian Schiavo, GEI, and Brenda Drayton, Michigan Dept. of Treasury. Members of the public present: Patti Leonoff and Ethan Amerson.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Supt. Toivonen requested the following additions to New Business: d. MDOT Engineering Reimbursement, e. Coleman Engineering-Disaster Assessment, f. UPEA FH-16 Design Engineering and to move New Business a. Audit Presentation to occur after the approval of disbursements.

Motion by Commissioner Frailing, support from Germic, to accept the agenda with the above additions. Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

MINUTES TO BE APPROVED

Moved by Commissioner Battan, supported by Germic, to approve the minutes of April 14, 2026, audit and regular meetings.

Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

DISBURSEMENTS TO BE APPROVED

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| a. Payrolls of: | \$192,199.62 |
| b. Prepaid Claims of: | \$93,035.49 |
| c. Account Payables of: | \$216,807.34 |
| d. Total: | \$502,042.45 |

Moved by Commissioner Battan, supported by Frailing, to approve the Audit Committee Report dated April 30th, 2026, covering the above disbursements.

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

AUDIT PRESENTATION

Brenda Drayton, Michigan Department of Treasury, presented the 2025 Road Commission Financial Audit Report to the Board, focusing on changes in revenue and expenses from 2024 to 2025 and the status of funding and liabilities for both the pension and OPEB plans. There was no audit deficiencies found.

SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT

Supt. Toivonen reviewed his report:

Building/Inventory:

Bids have gone out for hauling winter sand and are due June 4th.

Our MDOT Program Engineer for the Iron River Salt shed has retired, and they have not yet filled his position. There was a miscommunication regarding submitting the plans to MDOT and it has not been done. Looking to submit in time for January/ February 2027 letting for better pricing as the contractors will already be booked for 2026. There may also be a change with the dirt work part of the project, possibly bidding that out as well.

Primary Roads:

Brule Mountain Rd. PH 5 (2024)-all paperwork is complete and all paperwork has been signed off.

Hagerman Lake Rd. PH 2 Buyout-Project is scheduled to begin mid to late June.

Pavement Marking-PK began pavement marking last Friday and will continue today, weather permitting.

Centerline only: Bates-Gaastra Rd., Caspian Cut-off, a portion of CR424, West of the Village. Centerline and edge line: Stager Lake Rd., Bates-Amasa Rd., Gibbs City Rd.

FHWA 2023 Spring Flood/ ER- There has not been a response from MDOT regarding the request to use some of the savings from the ER projects overall toward corrective action at Warner-Mine Rd. Coleman estimates the cost to be approx.\$47,000.

Local Roads:

The Rogers Ave. project in Bates will be starting today, with paving done on Friday.

MDOT is checking the project costs on the 2027 US 141 culvert replacements, with the possibility of close to \$600,000 worth of work and paving being done on the proposed detour. Upgrading the railroad crossings in Amasa is still in conversation between ELS, ICRC and MDOT. The paving of the US 141 detour could make it more desirable for ELS to take advantage of the better pricing and schedule the railroad crossing work at the same time. There is a chance ELS may simply remove the crossings all together. Cataldo Rd., Stambaugh Twp., is scheduled to begin just after Memorial Day. W. Brule and Forest View do not have solid start dates at this time.

Equipment:

The portable traffic signals were delivered and were demonstrated at the SAM Chapter meeting last week.

They will be a huge benefit for projects like the CR 424 cross culvert replacements in July, where the road cannot be completely closed. The lights can be left out with one lane closed overnight, allowing work in the opposite lane to be done on the second day.

Tablets for pre-trip inspections and timekeeping are here and set up, to be implemented this summer.

Grader #416 is on the county road commission list- serve and our website for sale.

Employment:

With the Mechanic and HEOP positions open at the Crystal Falls garage, there was some shuffling around of employees. One of the current operators at Crystal Falls transferred back into the Mechanic position and an operator from Iron River transferred to the Crystal Falls garage. We also hired a previous employee that had left the area but recently returned as an operator in Iron River. Applications for operators are being accepted until May 26th, and we have had a good response to the job posting. Six summer college workers have been hired this year, but there are still available positions if more applications come in.

Bridges:

Statewide, there were 280 applications submitted to the Local Bridge Program, totaling \$450 million dollars.

The Superior Region received 33 applications, totaling \$36 million. Available State funding is \$150 million.

UPEA has a few more adjustments to make to the plans for Idlewild bridge. The plans will then be submitted to MDOT for grade inspection in the next couple of weeks. The project letting will probably be in January.

Spoil boring started last week for the Pentoga Rd.-Brule River bridge but is taking longer than planned due to the amount of rock they are hitting.

General/Misc:

Discussion is still ongoing within various road commissions regarding the Rural Road Alliance, with many not in support. It is anticipated that the conversations will continue at Summer Road Builders.

A brief summary of the April flooding was provided by Supt. Toivonen, and the Damage Assessment report was made available to the Board. In order to be eligible to be included in the Federal Declaration of Emergency, a damage cost threshold of approx. \$56,000 for Iron County, and \$19.1 million statewide is required. The "return to pre-disaster condition" estimate submitted for Iron was approx. \$378,000. Statewide damages were estimated at over \$38 million prior to the submission deadline.

In addition to the local flooding, the Iron County Emergency Manager notified us that the Way Dam Reservoir had reached near capacity due to the rapid snow melt and with the anticipated rain extra water needed to be

released. The concern then was that water level of the Michigamme could get high enough to touch the bottom of the M-69 bridge and very possibly flow over the deck; there were no structural concerns at this time. An emergency detour was set up, and the water levels were strictly monitored over the weekend. Fortunately, the anticipated rain did not come, and the gates on the reservoir were able to be opened in way that the bridge did not have to be closed.

Mike Phillips, MCRCSIP, will be holding a training session at the ICRC business office on 5/20, covering how to deal with difficult people, and flagging in a construction zone.

Seasonal weight restrictions went into effect on March 5th and were all lifted as of May 15th.

The SAM local chapter meeting was held here last Thursday, with 17 Foremen in attendance.

Another certified letter was received from EGLE regarding the Urban Ave. property. It has been forwarded to TriMedia.

Fiber Optic- Brian Schiavo reported that there are several crews working to wrap up work in areas that had already been started before moving onto new areas. There are three culverts that still need to be replaced from last year, as well as some restoration.

Michelle is working with Marla Bradley on getting our website ADA compliant.

Drain Commission-The boards were placed at both Stager Lake and Fortune Lake on May 4th. Beaver activity is high at all three sites.

DELEGATIONS

Mike Smith, Bates Twp. Supervisor, asked if Forsberg and Little Finland would be done by June end of month, as the township will be doing chloride in July.

Dave Smith, Mastodon Twp. Trustee asked about pulling gravel back into the roads from the edge, maintenance work the past month and crack sealing plans for the summer.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

SALE OF GRADER #419

Motion by Commissioner Battann, support from Frailing to approve the sale of grader #419, with the wing, to the City of Bessemer for \$172,000.

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

Chairman Schmidt suggested approving the sale price #416, with the wing, as we are selling it as well.

Motion by Commissioner Cihak, support by Germic, to approve selling grader #416, with the wing, for \$172,000.

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

RESOLUTION-MDOT CONTRACT 26-5207

Motion by Commissioner Frailing, support by Germic, to approve the resolution authorizing the signing of MDOT contract 26-5207, an amendment of MDOT contract 25-5158, for Category D funding on CR 424.

Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

MDOT ENGINEERING REIMBURSEMENT

Motion by Commissioner Battan, support from Cihak, to request the engineering reimbursement from MDOT for the period of 7/1/2025-6/30/2026 in the amount of \$10,000.

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

COLEMAN ENGINEERING-DISASTER ASSESSMENT

Supt. Toivonen explained that because we already have an agreement in place with Coleman, he had them do the site inspection and damage assessment report for the April flood and put everything together to meet the short deadline for submission to the state.

Motion by Commissioner Germic, support by Cihak, to utilize Coleman Engineering for the April flood damage inspections and assessments.

Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

UPEA FH-16 DESIGN ENGINEERING

Motion by Commissioner Battan, support from Frailing, to accept the proposal for design engineering on the FH-16 JN 226858/ FLAP grant project for \$23,750.

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

ATTORNEYS REPORT

None.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Chairman Schmidt requested we look into roof repair and insulation for the Iron River garage for next year.

At 9:53 a.m. with no further business to come before the Board, it was motioned by Germic, supported by Cihak, to adjourn.

Ernie Schmidt, Chairman

Michelle Johnson, Clerk of the Board