

MINUTES
EMMET COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION
HARBOR SPRINGS, MICHIGAN

The Emmet County Board of Road Commissioners met in special session at the Levering building on October 2, 2024, for the purposes of discussing road issues with township officials from Bliss, Cross Village, Littlefield, and Center Township.

Commissioners Present:

Frank Zulski, Chairman Mark Hoffman, Vice-Chairman Wade Williams, Member

Staff Present:

Brent Shank – Engineer/Manager Travis Horrocks – Engineer Technician
Lisa Kleeman - Finance Director

Guests Present: None

Bliss Township Officials:

Supervisor – Phil Lechowicz Clerk - Debbie Prout

Cross Village Township Officials: None

Littlefield Township Officials:

Supervisor – Damien Henning Clerk – Sondra Festerling
Trustee – Katie Derrohn Trustee – Dean Morford

Center Township Officials:

Clerk – Rhea Dreffs Deputy Clerk – Mark Dreffs
Trustee – Susan St. Amour Trustee – Judy Van Avery

1. Chairman Zulski called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the pledge of allegiance.
2. Roll was called.
3. Bliss Township officials were welcomed at 6:01 p.m. with introductions of attendees.
 - a. Road Report – Distributed in August, no discussion.
 - b. Road Project Discussion – Shank clarified the process for project development. Once he receives a project request with the township’s budgeted amount to spend, an estimate is built and sent to the township with a contract. If the contract is approved, the project is put out for bids unless the work is done with road commission labor. If the bid comes in under estimate, it is recommended for approval. If the bids come in over estimate, the township is contacted for approval.
 - c. Review of 2024 Projects – Wedging project went well this year. Bosma inquired if the projects will get line painting and Shank replied this is planned for next year.

- d. 2025 Planned Projects:
 - i. Lechowicz is thinking they will do more wedging on Pleasantview Road but he would like to see wedging on Garber Road from Canby Road to Valley Road. He will get a budgeted amount to Shank for next year.
 - ii. Inquired about any work to be done around the Wycamp Lake, especially by Fritz's Landing.
- e. Maintenance Topics
 - i. Zulski let them know tree work requests can be given to Shank.
 - ii. Lechowicz requested West Bliss Road from Sturgeon Bay Trail south needs to be graded.
 - iii. Guardrail has been requested at Hersher Hill on Canby Road just south of Garber Road.
 - iv. Bosma discussed the letter received from the road commission and the amount the township has contributed. She discussed the lack of construction done in Bliss Township and specifically Lakeview Road's unsafe condition. A discussion ensued on road funding, choosing which roads to fix, current cost of trucks and road materials, and vehicle mileage changes over the years.
 - v. Tribal funding, future plans for Robinson Road, and other roads in the northern portion of the county were discussed.
- f. Other Topics:
 - i. Public Act 33, regarding setting speed limits, had a new clause added in 2024. Section 5 of MCL 257.628 states a speed limit may be set below the 85th percentile if an engineering and safety study demonstrates a situation with hazards to public safety; but must not be set below the 50th percentile. The township submits a formal request to the road commission and reimbursement for the required engineering and safety study would be the responsibility of the requesting party. Michigan State Police are still responsible for giving final approval on the change.
 - ii. Zulski suggested the township may want to send a letter of thanks to their county commissioner and county board regarding the match given to the township the past two years.

Bliss Township officials left the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

- 4. Cross Village Township did not attend.
- 5. Littlefield Township officials were welcomed at 6:48 p.m. with introduction of attendees.
 - a. Road Report – Shank distributed these reports in August, but they didn't receive them; he will resend tomorrow.
 - b. Road Project Discussion – Shank clarified the process for project development. Once he receives a project request with the township's budgeted amount to spend, an estimate is built and sent to the township with a contract. If the contract is approved, the project is put out for bids unless the work is done with road commission labor. If the bid comes in under

- estimate, it is recommended for approval. If the bids come in over estimate, the township is contacted for approval.
- c. Review of 2024 Projects:
 - i. McCarthy Road gravel came in at budget.
 - ii. Moore Road turned out well especially with the tree removal. There was discussion on the estimate, bid, and actual costs of Moore Road project. Shank commented on getting the bids out early in the season gets better prices and more bidders.
 - d. 2025 Planned Projects:
 - i. Henning discussed Smith Road between Banwell Road and Lakeview Road; the best option being to pulverize and add 4" of gravel. Shank expects an 10% increase next year in gravel costs.
 - ii. Shank also discussed alternative projects such as a two-course overlay instead of a reconstruction project; the life span may be shorter but roads will get preserved for a good amount of time for less money. Ellsworth Road is a good example of this.
 - e. Maintenance Topics:
 - i. Morford would like shoulder gravel near the projects that have been recently completed.
 - ii. Festerling discussed areas on Crump Road that are crumbling in the center portion past the second curve and where the car caught on fire. Horrocks will take a look and get it on the list for crack seal or mastic.
 - iii. Henning discussed engineering consultation with the Habitat for Humanity project on Lakeview Road and the road commission paying a portion of this. Shank responded he believes the Board would consider sharing in this cost when a good recommendation and evaluation is received.
 - iv. Derrohn inquired about Lake Street by the locks. Henning and Shank responded this is under the jurisdiction of the Village of Alanson.
 - f. Other Topics:
 - i. Public Act 33, regarding setting speed limits, had a new clause added in 2024. Section 5 of MCL 257.628 states a speed limit may be set below the 85th percentile if an engineering and safety study demonstrates a situation with hazards to public safety; but must not be set below the 50th percentile. The township submits a formal request to the road commission and reimbursement for the required engineering and safety study would be the responsibility of the requesting party. Michigan State Police are still responsible for giving final approval on the change. Powers Road at the Luce Street intersection was specifically discussed. Shank discussed the possibility of a safety grant application for this area. Derrohn inquired about vegetation removal at this intersection; Shank stated the owners of the gravel pit would have to give permission.
 - ii. Zulski suggested the township may want to send a letter of thanks to their county commissioner and the county board regarding the match given to the township the past two years. Henning discussed the three projects that were completed this year due to project savings and ARPA funding combined.

- iii. Henning discussed the Oden Safety Group that met with MDOT at the township meeting last night.

Littlefield Township officials left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

6. Center Township officials were welcomed at 7:33 p.m.
 - a. Road Report – Distributed in August, no discussion.
 - b. Road Project Discussion – Shank clarified the process for project development. Once he receives a project request with the township’s budgeted amount to spend, an estimate is built and sent to the township with a contract. If the contract is approved, the project is put out for bids unless the work is done with road commission labor. If the bid comes in under estimate, it is recommended for approval. If the bids come in over estimate, the township is contacted for approval.
 - c. Review of 2024 Projects – Rhea Dreffs stated she appreciated how quickly Shank responded to get a project done this year.
 - d. 2025 Planned Projects:
 - i. Rhea Dreffs relayed that the township board will be all new except for Avery. She requested a bill soon for Van Road and Pleasantview Road so she can get it paid within the next six weeks and work with the county on the ARPA funds. Kleeman will send a bill shortly.
 - e. Maintenance Topics:
 - i. Rhea Dreffs appreciated the extra work done by the township hall.
 - ii. Rhea Dreffs requested the lilac bush continued to be maintained near the township hall for site distance.
 - iii. Mark Dreffs stated mowing back the ditches has really helped.
 - iv. St. Amour inquired how often roadside mowing is done during the year and Shank responded usually at least once on a local road, some years a second round will get done. Brush mowing is usually done once every three to five years.
 - v. Mark Dreffs inquired if the road commission has an employee that can go around and mark the dead trees as there are a lot of trees that need to be removed. Zulski stated to contact Ed Zmikly on dead trees that need to be removed.
 - f. Other Topics:
 - i. Public Act 33, regarding setting speed limits, had a new clause added in 2024. Section 5 of MCL 257.628 states a speed limit may be set below the 85th percentile if an engineering and safety study demonstrates a situation with hazards to public safety; but must not be set below the 50th percentile. The township submits a formal request to the road commission and reimbursement for the required engineering and safety study would be the responsibility of the requesting party. Michigan State Police are still responsible for giving final approval on the change. A flyer was given to the township on this subject that Rhea Dreffs plan to take to the next meeting.

- ii. Zulski suggested the township may want to send a letter of thanks to their county commissioner and county board regarding the match given to the township the past two years.

Center Township officials left the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

- 7. Public Comment: None
- 8. Chairman Zulski adjourned the meeting at 7:53 p.m.



Lisa Kleeman – Finance Director/Clerk of the Board



Date