

The regular meeting of the Board of County Road Commissioners of the County of Kalamazoo was held at the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) office at 4400 S 26<sup>th</sup> Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan, on Tuesday, January 13, 2026. Commissioner Pawloski called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Present: David C. Pawloski, Larry Stehouwer, Randy Thompson, Andy Davis, Toni Kennedy

Also attending: Managing Director Travis Bartholomew, Finance Director Kim Bodnar, Public Relations Director Mark Worden, Human Resources (HR) Director Debbie Hill, County Engineer Ryan Minkus, Assistant County Engineer Jim Hoekstra, Assistant General Superintendent Rusty McClain, Communications Administrator Sarah Phillips, and Administrative Assistant Selena Rider.

#### Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Pawloski shared that the goal of the Board of County Road Commissioners of the County of Kalamazoo is to use our expertise, energy, and funds to provide the safest and most convenient road system possible, and to contribute to economic development and a high quality of life throughout the county. Our goal is to maintain a county road system that is safe and convenient for public travel and to manage the roadside environment, with a view toward preservation.

Commissioner Kennedy moved, and it was seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

Carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pawloski, Stehouwer, Thompson, Davis, Kennedy

Supervisor Sorenson reported that the Cooper Township Board approved its five-year draft Master Plan for roads at its meeting the previous evening. He expressed enthusiasm about continued collaboration with the Road Commission on upcoming projects and noted that additional neighborhood road funding is anticipated next year. Supervisor Sorenson also thanked County Engineer Minkus for delivering a clear and effective presentation explaining the distinction between private and public roads, including why the Road Commission does not accept private roads and has not done so for many years. They discussed what could potentially be changed in the future. Approximately forty (40) residents attended the meeting, providing a strong turnout and a valuable opportunity for community discussion.

Mr. Dave Nobel, 10295 N. 19th Street, stated that the collapse of N. 19th Street is a known issue. He noted that the property directly across the street has been sold and is now owned by a company identified as BB Incorporated or BB Limited. The previous owner allowed buses to turn around in the driveway; however, Mr. Nobel is uncertain whether the new owner will continue to permit this use. He explained that buses, trucks, dump trucks, and plows currently use the driveway for turnarounds and observed that the dirt driveway is becoming increasingly rutted, raising concerns that vehicles could become stuck during frost conditions. Mr. Nobel requested that the Road Commission consider installing a hammerhead or other turnaround along N. 19th Street. He noted that his own property does not meet the criteria for such an installation but stated he would be willing to provide the necessary land if it did.

Commissioner Davis moved, and it was seconded to correct the December 30, 2026, regular Board meeting minutes as presented. During closing comments, Commissioner Stehouwer noted that the minutes should be corrected to reflect that he, along with Commissioner Thompson, Managing Director Bartholomew, and Public Relations Director Worden, attended the Township Supervisors' meeting rather than the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) meeting.

Carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pawloski, Stehouwer, Thompson, Davis, Kennedy

Administrative Assistant Rider reviewed public meeting guidelines.

Commissioner Stehouwer moved, and it was seconded to approve the payroll and vendor accounts as presented.

Payroll Account: \$ 223,101.43

Vendor Account: \$ 693,883.28

Carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pawloski, Stehouwer, Thompson, Davis, Kennedy

Commissioner Thompson moved, and it was seconded to approve the expense reports of Commissioners Pawloski and Stehouwer as presented.

Carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pawloski, Stehouwer, Thompson, Davis, Kennedy

County Engineer Minkus presented a PowerPoint presentation titled “The Weight of the Seasons: Keeping Michigan Roads Alive.” He explained how potholes form and why Michigan implements spring seasonal weight restrictions, noting that these restrictions help preserve road infrastructure and save taxpayer dollars. He referenced the Michigan Vehicle Code (MVC), Act 300 of 1949, which governs seasonal weight restrictions, also known as Frost Laws. These restrictions reduce allowable axle weights by approximately 25–35 percent, with many farm-related activities exempt. He stated that the law does not require signs or maps to be posted; however, the Road Commission does post signage and maintains a weight restriction map on its website. The Road Commission is required to post the effective dates of restrictions and a list of affected roads. He noted that the Road Commission employs two permit agents, Brian Franklin and Jon Fitzsimmons, who patrol the county to enforce restrictions. Fines are assessed on a graduated scale based on the amount by which a vehicle exceeds the restricted weight limits. On average, weighmasters conduct over 100 stops during the seasonal weight restriction period, issue approximately five citations annually, and the average fine is \$1,200. He explained that several tools are used to determine when to implement weight restrictions, including staff experience; field observations from the City of Kalamazoo Water Department, utility contractors, and farmers; Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) frost tubes; the Minnesota Department of Transportation Freeze/Thaw Index; Michigan Thaw-caster (in use since 2018); and communication with neighboring road commissions and MDOT. He also provided a brief history of weight restrictions and noted that information regarding when restrictions are in effect is made available to the public through the RCKC website, social media, a dedicated phone line, and RCKC Connect notifications.

Commissioner Kennedy inquired about the distribution of fines. County Engineer Minkus explained that the funds are collected by the county in which the violation occurs and are therefore directed to Kalamazoo County. By statute, 25 percent of those funds must be allocated to libraries or law libraries within the county where the fines are collected.

Commissioner Davis asked about weighmaster safety protocols. County Engineer Minkus stated that the permit agents have not received specific safety training; however, both wear body armor when approaching vehicles. He noted that the Road Commission has fortunately not experienced any safety incidents. If a permit agent feels threatened, the vehicle is released and law enforcement is contacted.

Commissioner Pawloski asked whether seasonally restricted roads are being converted to all-season roads. County Engineer Minkus responded that the Road Commission is monitoring this and noted that state funding is available for such conversions. He explained that eligible roads must be shown on a state-accessible map. Typically, this map is updated every few years to reflect the current all-season network as well as future planned connections. As long as roads are identified on the map, the Road Commission may apply annual state funding toward those improvements.

Commissioner Davis also inquired about the cost difference between an all-season road and a vulnerable road. County Engineer Minkus explained that achieving all-season status typically requires an additional layer of asphalt, resulting in approximately a 30 percent increase in cost.

Managing Director Bartholomew expressed his appreciation to County Engineer Minkus for stepping in to assist the Permit Agents. He noted that five road commissions have implemented seasonal weight restrictions and asked what factors led those agencies to do so when the remainder of the state had not. County Engineer Minkus explained that the statute allows each road agency to independently implement seasonal weight restrictions, and that agencies may do so at different times. He stated that road commissions generally attempt to coordinate

regionally and take a countywide approach. The counties that enacted restrictions evaluated their road systems and made determinations based on weather forecasts and observed conditions on their county roads, concluding that it was necessary to implement restrictions. He also noted that implementation does not have to be a single on-and-off event, as agencies may enact restrictions more than once in a season, although efforts are made to avoid doing so.

Commissioner Davis moved, and it was seconded to approve the purchase of two (2) 2025 John Deere 644P Wheel Loaders, one (1) slide fork attachment, two (2) grapple buckets, two (2) 4.5-yard buckets, and extended warranties from AIS Construction Equipment Corporation utilizing the MiDEAL purchasing program which also includes a John Deere Customer Loyalty Discount and trade-in value for a total cost of \$590,020. Managing Director Bartholomew shared that the 2026 Budget Capital Outlay includes the planned replacement of two (2) wheel loaders currently in service at RCKC. Both units have been in continuous service since November 2015 and have reached a point where increased depreciation, maintenance costs, and repair frequency are anticipated due to age and operating/physical condition. Wheel loaders are critical to RCKC operations and contractor support throughout the year. They are used daily to load trucks with salt, sand, aggregate, cold patch, topsoil, rip-rap, and other materials. These machines also play a key role in emergency response, including storm cleanup, debris removal, and support for snow operations at our facilities and clearing cul-de-sacs within residential areas.

RCKC solicited quotes from multiple vendors, including those participating in the Sourcwell and MiDEAL government purchasing programs, for the purchase of two (2) wheel loaders. Based on the submitted quotations and discussions with the vendors, RCKC has determined that procuring two (2) wheel loaders through the MiDEAL purchasing program represents the most cost-effective option.

All quotes include comparable machines with attachments, including: two (2) 4.5-yard buckets, one (1) fork attachment, two (2) grapple buckets, and trade-in values.

RCKC recommends the purchase for two (2) John Deere 644P Wheel Loaders from AIS Construction Equipment Corporation based on proven equipment performance, reliability, quality of maintenance, strong customer and parts support, long service life, and favorable trade-in or resale value. Replacing the existing wheel loaders with two new John Deere 644P units will improve reliability, safety, operational efficiency, and emergency response capability while reducing the risk of escalating maintenance costs and downtime. Based on RCKC's experience with the current John Deere 624K, the 644P offers similar operator comfort and visibility while providing increased lifting capacity, a larger engine, and improved attachment performance. These units are well-suited for road maintenance, construction support, and emergency operations and are expected to meet RCKC's operational needs for the next 10 years.

Commissioner Davis asked what would be done with the old units. Managing Director Bartholomew explained that the purchase would include trading in the existing units. Commissioner Davis noted that the addition of heated mirrors would be a benefit. Commissioner Stehouwer asked when the new units would be available, and Assistant General Superintendent McClain responded that they are expected to be available around February. Commissioner Pawloski added that when equipment is not traded in, it is typically sold to other surrounding road commissions.

Carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pawloski, Stehouwer, Thompson, Davis, Kennedy

Managing Director Bartholomew reported that the Career Connect Campus at the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA) requested that the Road Commission bring a plow truck to its facility for a class the following morning. Staff will provide an overview of the unit and explain its operation, including its role in winter maintenance. He announced several upcoming events, including the County Road Association (CRA) Highway Conference scheduled for March 24–27, the Township Supervisors' Meeting to be held January 21 at the Road Commission facility, the CRA "Commissioners in the Classroom" event on February 17 in Mount Pleasant, and the Southwest Council Meeting on February 9 in Barry County. He also shared that he contacted Oshtemo Township Supervisor Cheri Bell to discuss a potential joint meeting. The Road Commission offered to host, and staff are working through the details. Possible dates include March, April, or May, potentially in conjunction with a Board meeting. Oshtemo Township will provide agenda items and questions in advance to assist with preparation. He further reported that in April 2025, the Board approved the purchase of two international trucks scheduled for delivery in late 2025. While delivery has been delayed, the units have completed engineering review but do not yet

have a scheduled build date. Staff remain hopeful the trucks will be delivered before spring for use during the construction season as semi-tractors. He noted that the Western Star trucks approved by the Board in September 2025 were delivered ahead of schedule and are now available for Board viewing.

Commissioner Kennedy reported that she attended the Pavilion Township Board meeting, where township officials expressed satisfaction with the Road Commission's work. They also complimented the presentation provided by Public Relations Director Worden. She congratulated County Commissioner Jen Strebs on her re-election as County Commission Chair, County Commissioner John Taylor as Vice Chair, and County Commissioner Heppler as Pro Tem. She reminded attendees that park passes are available for veterans through the Veterans Services Office located off Alcott Street. She also noted that June 12 is Women Veterans Recognition Day and emphasized the importance of recognizing and celebrating veterans.

Commissioner Davis noted that, during these times of social strife, it is important to remember that Martin Luther King Jr. Day will be observed on Monday, January 19.

Commissioner Thompson attended the Cooper Township Board meeting last night. He complimented County Engineer Minkus on his presentation to the Board. The 19<sup>th</sup> Street turnaround was discussed. Both he and County Engineer Minkus met with Mr. Nobel who spoke today during public comments about the 19<sup>th</sup> Street situation and possible turnaround location. He had a couple citizens express concerns about plowing and their roads being "pretty messed up". He advised them to submit a service request. He also agreed to mention their concerns at the Road Commission meeting. He mentioned the next Board of Public Works meeting is scheduled for January 15<sup>th</sup> and he plans to attend the Schoolcraft Township Board meeting tonight.

Commissioner Stehouwer attended the Parks Commission meeting last Thursday and will be unable to attend the next meeting scheduled for February 5. He is hopeful that Commissioner Kennedy will be able to attend on his behalf. He also attended the Comstock Township Board meeting on January 5<sup>th</sup>. He drove through Ross Township, specifically the Gull Lake area, in response to service requests regarding slippery roads. While residents were advised to submit service requests, he personally reviewed the conditions and observed snowpack, hills, narrow roads, and garbage trucks experiencing difficulty on the hills. He stopped at the Township Hall, where he was provided with a resident call to follow up on. Otherwise, township staff reported no additional complaints. He may attend the Oshtemo Township Board meeting tonight and potentially the Ross Township Board meeting next week.

Commissioner Pawloski reported that he will attend the Township Supervisors' Meeting on January 21 at the Road Commission. He announced that he is not available to attend the Southwest Council Meeting. He also stated that he plans to attend the County Road Association (CRA) Highway Conference following the Board meeting. He thanked County Commissioner John Gisler for inviting the Road Commission to speak at a meeting of Kalamazoo Citizens for Responsible Government, where Public Relations Director Worden and Managing Director Bartholomew provided a presentation. Topics included the Road Commission's future plans and anticipated funding for the coming year. He noted that County Commissioner Gisler complimented Administrative Assistant Rider on how she runs the Road Commission. He acknowledged that the first snowfall of the season was challenging and praised Road Commission crews for their hard work in clearing the roads, expressing appreciation for their efforts. He also informed Board members that anyone interested in riding in a snowplow may contact Managing Director Bartholomew.

Commissioner Thompson moved, and it was seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pawloski, Stehouwer, Thompson, Davis, Kennedy

The meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

Attest: Meredith Place, County Clerk

January 13, 2026 – Board Meeting

Chair Int'l \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk Int'l \_\_\_\_\_

By \_\_\_\_\_, Chair \_\_\_\_\_, Deputy Clerk

The regular meeting of the Board of County Road Commissioners of the County of Kalamazoo was held at the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) office at 4400 S 26<sup>th</sup> Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan, on Tuesday, January 27, 2026. Commissioner Pawloski called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Present: David C. Pawloski, Larry Stehouwer, Randy Thompson, Andy Davis, Toni Kennedy

Also attending: Managing Director Travis Bartholomew, Finance Director Kim Bodnar, Public Relations Director Mark Worden, Human Resources (HR) Director Debbie Hill, Assistant HR Director Jaycie Callaway, County Engineer Ryan Minkus, Assistant County Engineer Jim Hoekstra, Assistant General Superintendent Rusty McClain, Communications Administrator Sarah Phillips, and Administrative Assistant Selena Rider.

Administrative Assistant Rider reviewed public meeting guidelines.

#### Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Pawloski shared that the goal of the Board of County Road Commissioners of the County of Kalamazoo is to use our expertise, energy, and funds to provide the safest and most convenient road system possible, and to contribute to economic development and a high quality of life throughout the county. Our goal is to maintain a county road system that is safe and convenient for public travel and to manage the roadside environment, with a view toward preservation.

Commissioner Kennedy moved, and it was seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

Carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pawloski, Stehouwer, Thompson, Davis, Kennedy

Commissioner Thompson moved, and it was seconded to approve the January 13, 2026, regular Board meeting minutes as presented. Carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pawloski, Stehouwer, Thompson, Davis, Kennedy

Commissioner Stehouwer moved, and it was seconded to approve the payroll and vendor accounts as presented.

Payroll Account: \$ 244,978.63

Vendor Account: \$ 1,005,908.50

Carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pawloski, Stehouwer, Thompson, Davis, Kennedy

Ms. Jane Ghosh, President and CEO of Discover Kalamazoo, explained that Discover Kalamazoo serves as the Convention and Visitors Bureau for Kalamazoo County. Its mission is to attract out-of-town visitors whose spending supports local amenities such as restaurants, attractions, and performing arts venues. Discover Kalamazoo operates on behalf of Kalamazoo County under a management agreement.

A significant portion of visitors come for sports tournaments. Kalamazoo County currently hosts events in ice hockey, figure skating, wrestling, soccer, and tennis due to having appropriate facilities. While basketball and volleyball are popular locally, the county does not host tournaments for those sports because it lacks suitable facilities. To address this gap, Discover Kalamazoo worked with the county to develop an ordinance allowing hotels to impose an incremental assessment to fund a new sports facility. Hotels voted on a proposed 4% assessment on hotel stays, with one vote per room. The measure passed overwhelmingly, with 82% approval, and the assessment is now being collected.

A site selection process identified a location near the intersection of West Main Street and US-131, within the City of Kalamazoo and surrounded by Oshtemo Township. An ad hoc county committee selected the site, and the Kalamazoo County Event Center Assessment District was established by the county and city to collect and manage the revenue. The Assessment District Board has been working closely with the City of Kalamazoo and Oshtemo

Township to advance the project. County Engineer Minkus has been meeting biweekly with a cross-functional group to keep the project on track.

The project is now approaching the Road Commission to request approval for extending Maple Hill Drive north from West Main Street to serve the facility. Two exceptions will be requested:

1. **Safety accommodations**, including a safe road-crossing design and the extension of non-motorized paths from Croyden, as well as an additional non-motorized path on the west side of Maple Hill Drive.
2. **On-street parking**, due to insufficient parking on-site. The proposed design includes a 32-foot-wide roadway with two travel lanes and one on-street parking lane. As future development occurs, the on-street parking would be removed and replaced with a center turn lane.

Ms. Ghosh emphasized that safety is the first priority in all aspects of the road and facility design.

Public Relations Director Worden presented an overview of federal, state, and local road funding, recent legislative changes, and anticipated impacts to the Road Commission and township partners. He reviewed federal funding, noting that the federal gas tax of 18.4 cents per gallon generates approximately \$1.5 billion annually, with 75% distributed to MDOT and 25% to villages and county road commissions. He noted that while road commissions maintain approximately 66% of county road miles, they receive only a portion of the 25% allocation.

State funding through the Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF) was discussed. As of October 1, 2025, MTF revenues are derived from gas tax (40%), vehicle registrations (41%), general fund contributions (17%), marijuana revenue (1%), and interest (1%). He explained the conversion of the former 6% sales tax on fuel to a flat 21-cent-per-gallon gas tax, generating an estimated \$1.1 billion annually. MTF distributions allocate 39% to county road commissions, 39% to MDOT, and 22% to cities and villages, despite road commissions maintaining the majority of road mileage. He outlined the three components of the new road funding legislation:

- Gas tax conversion generates approximately \$1.1 billion annually.
- Corporate income tax revenue totaling \$688 million, with road funding prioritized after allocations to the state general fund and housing.
- A \$420 million marijuana wholesale tax, currently subject to legal challenge.

The Neighborhood Road Fund (NRF) was discussed, funded by combined corporate income and marijuana tax revenues totaling approximately \$1.1 billion. After statutory deductions for bridges, the Comprehensive Transportation Fund, and railroads, remaining funds are distributed as 52% to county road commissions, 20% to MDOT, and 28% to cities and villages. NRF funds do not require a township match.

Cash flow challenges were also reviewed. He reported that general fund support ended in October 2025, while gas tax collections did not begin until January 1, 2026, with revenues not reaching the Road Commission until March 2026. Corporate income tax revenues are not expected until September or October 2026, and marijuana tax revenue timing remains uncertain. These delays result in an estimated six-month cash shortfall of approximately \$1.2 million.

Impacts to townships were outlined. While townships lost revenue sharing due to the sales tax conversion, they are projected to receive net gains through NRF funding. An example was provided showing Brady Township losing \$10,188 in revenue sharing but gaining approximately \$141,000 in road funding. Staff proposed distributing \$2.5 million in NRF funds to townships based on local road mileage, with no match required. All townships have committed to continuing PAR fund matching.

Public Relations Director Worden noted that while the new funding is beneficial, MDOT estimates a \$4 billion annual statewide need, compared to the \$1.6 billion ultimately enacted. The County Road Association (CRA) recommends not adjusting budgets until funds are received due to ongoing uncertainty. Commissioner Davis confirmed all townships have committed to matching PAR funds for 2026. He responded to questions from the Board following the presentation.

Commissioner Thompson moved, and it was seconded to accept the extension of Cowley Court (358.87 feet or 0.07 miles) in the Gilmore Farms No. 2 – Phase 4B located in Section 15 of Richland Township into the public road system for certification. Managing Director Bartholomew shared on November 19, 2024, the Board approved the preliminary plans for the site condominium extension of Gilmore Farms No. 2 – Phase 4B. This development features 15 new condominium units and extension of 358.87' of Cowley Court, including a permanent cul-de-sac, within the development. The development is a site condominium located south of M-89, east of 30th Street in Richland

Township. It is made up of a mix of both public and private roadways. The Cowley Court extension is the only public roadway as part of the current phase; approximately 620 feet of private roadway were also built in Gilmore Farms No. 2. This section of Cowley Court was designed to be public because it extends an existing public road and terminates in a cul-de-sac. As part of the development, RCKC also issued a separate permit for the developer to install a roundabout at the nearby intersection of Banting Road and Strutevant Avenue. The roundabout was intended to help clearly communicate the transition from a public roadway to private roadways within the development. Similar situations have caused resident and motorist confusion in the past, and RCKC staff worked with the developer to implement this alternative approach. Construction plans were approved in March of 2025, and construction began shortly thereafter. The development utilizes a private drainage retention pond located immediately south of the site, which is maintained by the condo association. Storm and sanitary sewer infrastructure had been constructed during previous phases of this development, and the water main had previously been stubbed for future extension. During the construction of this phase, several failed sections of the existing storm sewer system were identified and required replacement. The development is now complete, and all final acceptance documentation has been submitted including, as-built drawings, benchmarks, and right-of-way and centerline survey documents. All punch list items have been completed.

Commissioner Stehouwer asked whether the new section of public road is adjacent to or connected to the existing public road system. Assistant County Engineer Hoekstra explained that Cowley Court extends off Banting Road. The road was originally stubbed to the north with a cul-de-sac, and the current project is simply an extension to the south that ties into the public road network. He noted that previous road construction primarily occurred west of Strutevant Road to complete a loop; however, those roads are private and not part of the public system.

Commissioner Stehouwer asked whether developers install signage for private roads. Assistant County Engineer Hoekstra confirmed that signage is installed to designate private roads, though it can cause public confusion. A roundabout was constructed in part to help clarify which roads are public. Commissioner Stehouwer asked whether the roundabout is public, and Assistant County Engineer Hoekstra confirmed that it is. Commissioner Stehouwer also asked whether we snowplow private roads. Assistant County Engineer Hoekstra stated we do not plow private roads.

Commissioner Davis inquired about the costs associated with extending a public roadway and asked what additional costs would be incurred for the 652-foot extension. County Engineer Minkus provided context, noting that a comparable 800-foot public road in Texas Township generates approximately \$800 per year in revenue, which does not fully offset maintenance costs. He explained that the shorter roadway would generate less revenue, though it would still receive some level of reimbursement.

Commissioner Davis also asked about the impact of the steep grade on roadway maintenance. Assistant County Engineer Hoekstra confirmed that the roadway meets all applicable design standards and is not expected to create maintenance issues.

Carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pawloski, Stehouwer, Thompson, Davis, Kennedy

Oshtemo Township Public Works Director Anna Horner provided public comments regarding Public Relations Director Worden's presentation on road funding. She expressed appreciation for the Road Commission's cautious approach in navigating new funding sources, acknowledging the legal, logistical, and operational challenges, as well as the learning curve involved. She appreciated RCKC staff being careful not to commit to a specific funding formula until revenues and implications are better understood. She suggested broader engagement with townships to better understand roadway and non-motorized infrastructure priorities identified in township master plans. She also questioned whether neighborhood road funds could be used for non-motorized infrastructure and safety improvements, noting that such investments could provide a strong return on investment for communities. She expressed willingness to assist with the process, looked forward to continued discussion, and conveyed confidence that creative policy solutions could be developed to align funding with constituent needs and allow the funds to be used in multiple beneficial ways.

Managing Director Bartholomew provided an update on local road contracts, noting that staff worked closely with townships and that this year's contracts will differ from prior years. Contracts will no longer list individual projects; instead, they will reference each township's 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The goal is to



align township plans with the Road Commission's overall contracts to maximize work completed during each construction year and reduce the need for contingency contracts. He explained that contract language specifies the order of funding use: PAR funds with township match first, followed by additional township dollars, and then NRF dollars. Any unspent NRF funds will be carried forward to the following year, while any overages will be recaptured from the next year's NRF allocation. Contracts are currently being sent to townships, with several expected to be returned in time for the next Board meeting.

He also shared an update on a new solar farm project anticipated to move forward in Richland Township. The Liberty Farms Solar Project, is being developed in partnership with Consumers Energy, will include approximately 1,200 acres of solar panels and is expected to span two years. Staff are working with Consumers Energy to better understand construction needs in the area, particularly given the extensive road network that will be utilized. A land use agreement with Consumers Energy is being explored. A meeting scheduled for the following day has been postponed by two weeks. He noted coordination is ongoing with Richland Township, the Drain Office, MDOT—as the primary entrance is off M-43/M-89—and potentially Barry County, as one of the project entrances may be from the north.

He mentioned that he will be speaking at the Climax Rotary regarding the new road package, similar to the presentation referenced earlier by Public Relations Director Worden. He shared the Southwest Council meeting is scheduled for February 9, hosted by Barry County. The quarterly liaison meeting with County Board Representatives is scheduled for February 10. A joint meeting with Osthemo Township is scheduled for April 7, immediately following the regular Board meeting at the Road Commission. Osthemo Township will be providing questions in advance for staff review, and Board members were encouraged to submit any questions for Osthemo Township to Managing Director Bartholomew so they can be forwarded accordingly. He also reported that a letter was received from Osthemo Township thanking the Road Commission for its collaboration on the Fruit Belt Rail Trail.

Commissioner Stehouwer asked for an update on winter operations, including how the increased snow removal efforts are going and whether adequate salt and sand supplies remain. Managing Director Bartholomew reported that this has been a record year for winter maintenance, with approximately \$3.5 million spent last year, and winter operations continuing heavily into the current year. Crews have been working long hours. Colder temperatures have helped limit salt usage somewhat; however, more salt and sand has already been used this season than in a typical winter. Salt and sand piles have been replenished to levels anticipated to be sufficient for next year, but the department is already drawing from those reserves. While a fair amount of salt remains on hand, the decision was made to proceed with the order for next year, which is currently being delivered.

Commissioner Davis asked how the crews are holding up. Managing Director Bartholomew shared that staff are understandably ready for the snow season to end, having worked extended hours week after week, including weekends. Appreciation was expressed for the continued dedication and hard work of the crew.

Commissioner Kennedy stated that she appreciates Managing Director Bartholomew sharing with staff that the Board is aware of the long hours and hard work being done in the field and that their efforts are greatly appreciated.

Commissioner Davis had no report.

Commissioner Thompson attended the Schoolcraft Township Board meeting where they seemed to be happy with everything. He echoed earlier sentiments thanking staff for snowplowing efforts.

Commissioner Stehouwer shared that he will be away the following week and noted that Commissioner Kennedy will attend the Parks Commission meeting on Thursday in his absence. He mentioned that Managing Director Bartholomew has offered Commissioners the opportunity to ride along in a snowplow and strongly encouraged participation. He shared that he has ridden in a snowplow several times in the past and described it as a valuable experience that provides insight into winter operations. He reported that he attended the Osthemo Township Board meeting on January 13 and the Township Supervisors meeting on January 21, along with Public Relations Director Worden. He highlighted that the new Western Michigan University (WMU) President attended the Township Supervisors meeting and described the interaction as impressive, noting the mutual respect among participants. He expressed appreciation for hearing about township challenges, including solar fields, battery storage,

and data centers, and noted that the Township Supervisors meeting was valuable in broadening his understanding of the issues facing townships. He also shared that he was considering attending the Oshtemo Township Board meeting later that evening, weather permitting. He concluded by thanking Oshtemo Township for tuning in virtually to the Road Commission meeting.

Commissioner Pawloski reported that he will be absent from the February 24 meeting and that Commissioner Stehouwer will preside in his absence. He expressed appreciation to Road Commission crews for their continued hard work during the challenging winter season, noting that snow accumulations are increasing and temperatures are becoming colder. He encouraged crews to keep up the good work. He asked fellow Commissioners to email any questions or comments intended for the County Commissioners in advance of the February 10 liaison meeting. He emphasized that the intent of the legislation is that NRF funding should not require a township match, and that the funding is meant to be in addition to, not in place of, existing efforts. He noted that the overarching goal is to maintain the county road network, so it remains among the best in the state. He acknowledged Wakeshma Township Supervisor Jason Gatlin and Oshtemo Township Supervisor Cheri Bell, who joined the meeting virtually, and Cooper Township Supervisor Jeff Sorenson, who attended in person, expressing appreciation for their feedback and input. He also thanked the Western Michigan University President for attending the Township Supervisors meeting and noted the strong collaboration. He further thanked Discover Kalamazoo for their presentation and expressed anticipation for future collaboration with both organizations.

Commissioner Davis moved, and it was seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pawloski, Stehouwer, Thompson, Davis, Kennedy

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Attest: Meredith Place, County Clerk

By \_\_\_\_\_, Chair \_\_\_\_\_, Deputy Clerk