

Meeting Minutes for the April 24, 2025 – Board Meeting

3536 S. US Highway 27, St. Johns, MI 48879 @ 9:00am



Attendees: Gail Watkins, Michael Frederick; Karla Gurski; Kevin Holt; Douglas Steffen
Guest Present: Kim Kellogg, Gayla Phillips, Theresa Owen, Roderiell Steinal, Tim Beck
Absent: Marc Trotter, & Brian Hurtekant

Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda as presented.

Move: Commissioner Frederick, Second: Commissioner Holt, Status: Passed

Approval of March 14, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the March 14, 2025, meeting minutes, as presented.

Move: Commissioner Holt, Second: Commissioner Frederick, Status: Passed

Communications

Motion to receive the communications and place them on file.

Move: Commissioner Frederick, Second: Commissioner Holt, Status: Passed

Information from Commissioner Brian Hurtekant

Commissioner Hurtekant was unable to attend.

Public Comments

Commissioner Watkins asked if there were any public comment. He discussed the guidelines for participating in the meeting and the way to conduct public testimony.

- Kim Kellogg (Greenbush Township resident) spoke to the board, voicing concern about the deteriorating communication and relationship between the township and the road commission.
- Gayla Phillips (Greenbush Township resident) shared her hope that the township and road commission could rebuild their previously strong and effective working relationship.
- Jan Motz (Greenbush Township resident) acknowledged the township officials' dedication to road improvements but emphasized that managing specific road project details is the responsibility of the road commission. She urged for reconciliation to avoid negatively impacting township residents.
- Tim Beck (Greenbush Township resident) criticized the letter sent by the road commission, calling it inappropriate.
- Theresa Owen (Greenbush Township resident) raised concerns about the poor condition of Scott Road, stating it either needs to be properly repaired or the township should be reimbursed.
- Art Wainwright (Greenbush Township resident) questioned the board about who holds responsibility for maintaining Business 27 and M-21.

The Clerk took note of the public comments and Commissioner Watkins thanked the residents for their participation.

Greenbush Township - Township Supervisor

Mr. Thelen addressed the Board regarding the letter dated April 1, 2025, and requested written responses to three questions:

- He asked for clarification on the process and requirements for the township to receive cost share funds after road work has been completed and inspected.
- He expressed confusion about the concept of "paper money" and the maintenance work conducted within the township, questioning how the reported amount of up to \$448,000 would function to ensure the township receives its appropriate share.
- He requested an update on the progress and planned repairs for Scott Road, noting that the township is open to seeking reimbursement for the project. He also referenced a third-party report from DTH that outlined what went wrong with the road work.

Engineering Report

Mr. Steffen reported on behalf of Mr. Trotter:

Road Project Updates:

Grange Road: Emergency culvert replacement is underway following a washout. Delivery of materials is scheduled for May 5th, with construction to begin by May 30th. The project involves a 10-gauge corrugated pipe and is estimated at around \$100,000. Coordination with the Drain Office and consultants is ongoing. TL Contracting responded promptly, arriving the next day, and communication has been excellent.

Webster Road (Bath Township): Construction has been underway for approximately three weeks as part of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project. Sidewalk work is currently in progress and should be completed next month. Webster Road will be closed at I-69 during construction and is expected to remain closed through August. Emergency access will be maintained.

DeWitt Road Project (M-21 to Kinley): Work began in late April. Crews are currently focused on culvert installation and tree removal, with ditch work scheduled over the next month. The road will be closed for two miles at a time, starting from M-21 toward Kinley. Additional chloride treatments will be applied to detour roads during construction.

County Paving Projects:

Most contractor agreements have been received.

In DeWitt Township, a major project is underway at Saffron Hills near Stoll and DeWitt Roads, with tree work and prep work taking place this week.

Mailings have been sent to residents with project information. Construction is set to begin May 5th. Colony to Wright Road to Forest Hill: Culvert work has started, followed by a crush-and-shape process for the roadway.

Francis Road (Pratt to Price): Repairs are being designed for a section with failed/mucky soil conditions, using geotextile materials for stabilization. This project is currently in the design phase.

Chandler Road (Bath Township):

Drainage improvements will reconstruct three drains and include sidewalk upgrades.

Permit applications have been submitted to EGLE.

Project design is complete, but construction is delayed, likely until 2026 unless only road work proceeds earlier.

Airport Road (Herbison to Grand River):

This is a multi-year project; design work is complete and ready for bidding.

Consumers Energy is installing a 16-inch gas main along the route, and road construction will be coordinated with their work.

Paving is expected next year unless utility work is completed faster than anticipated.

Planning and Maintenance Items:

EGLE MS4 Permit Compliance: Updates are being made to sampling methods and outfall monitoring. Street sweeping and catch basin maintenance must now be documented and submitted to the State per EGLE requirements.

Right-of-Way (ROW) Permit Development:

Frontier Communications is actively working on broadband expansion throughout the county. While Frontier has been responsive to residents, issues have arisen in the Meadows subdivision, where shallow boring for broadband installation has caused road humps on recently paved streets.

Director of Finance Report

Ms. Gurski reported:

- MTF for April, which is February fuel, was \$1,257,758.15.
- The auditors completed their work last week and plan to attend our May meeting to present to the 2024 financials to the board.
- I registered for the CRA Finance & HR Conference in May, which will be held at Treetops in Gaylord this year.
- I have submitted the requested information to MDOT for the 2023 Trunkline audit.
- Following the auditor's recommendation, we increased our Employee Fidelity coverage through MCRCSIP for additional protection.
- I have included the 2024 ACT 51 financial report, which is on the agenda for approval later. As the report shows, we used approximately \$764,000 of the fund balance.
- Lastly, I have begun working on the 2024 Annual Report.

Motion to receive the financials and place on file.

Move: Commissioner Holt Second: Commissioner Frederick Status: Passed

Approval of Vouchers:

Payroll: #92557- #92567 including advices

Vouchers: #68874- #68901 including ACH

Total: \$2,323,541.87

Motion to approve the vouchers as presented.

Move: Commissioner Frederick Second: Commissioner Holt Status: Passed

Managing Director Report

Mr. Steffen reported:

- Most contracts are in place; gravel hauling is scheduled to begin next week, with berm preparation completed last week.
- Brine applications are starting in the townships.
- Potential road funding packages may be available. The priority is to clearly communicate how the funds will be used, including mileage usage and project details, with assistance from CRA on messaging.
- The annual legislative breakfast with local legislators is scheduled for Monday, April 18th.
- Administrative staff recently completed training.
- Our facility hosted the Lansing Chamber of Commerce yesterday; the event was well attended.
- Today from 3:30–6:30 p.m., Greenway Collaborative will hold a meeting at the office to discuss regional trail development, including a possible connection from the DeWitt area to the CIS Trail; discussions are in the preliminary stages.
- The Annual "Bring Your Child to Work Day" event was held today, featuring activities for children and offering a great opportunity for them to experience their parents' work environment.

Approval of the ACT 51 Financial Report

Motion to accept and authorize the signature and submittal of the Annual Financial Report of the Board of County Road Commissioners (ACT 51) for year ending December 31, 2024.

Move: Commissioner Frederick Second: Commissioner Holt Status: Passed

Commissioner Comments

- The Commissioners expressed appreciation for residents attending and emphasized the desire for strong working relationships with all townships.
- The current issue with Greenbush Township stems from concerns over inappropriate behavior by some township officials toward road commission staff and vendors, not from road conditions alone.
- The Commissioners stressed the importance of professional conduct and reaffirmed their commitment to fulfilling statutory duties while addressing operational concerns.
- The Scott Road project was discussed extensively: the double chip seal applied was not ideal, and while efforts were made to save costs, the material did not perform as expected. The road commission acknowledged mistakes and committed to making necessary repairs, although no long-term warranty can be provided.
- Alternative solutions, including potential use of crushed asphalt, were discussed; collaboration with the township on next steps was encouraged.
- It was noted that verbal agreements will no longer be relied upon; formal written agreements will be required going forward.
- The Commissioners reaffirmed their broader goal of cooperative relationships with all townships, acknowledging past successes and learning from current challenges.
- An operational meeting will be scheduled to develop a written plan for Scott Road repairs, aiming to have documentation ready before the May 19th meeting.
- Overall, the commissioners emphasized collaboration, accountability, and ongoing service to township residents despite the challenges.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:18 a.m.

Move: Commissioner Frederick Second: Commissioner Holt Status: Passed

Karla Gurski, Finance Director/Clerk