

FEBRUARY 20, 2008

The Board of County Road Commissioners for Montcalm County held a meeting at its office located in Stanton, Michigan at 3:00 p.m. on February 20, 2008.

Present: Commissioners Dale Linton, Robert Brundage and Donald McCracken; Randy Stearns, Managing Director; Mark Christensen, Superintendent; and Karen Swan, Finance Director-Clerk.

Moved by Brundage, seconded by McCracken, to approve the minutes of February 6, 2008 as presented. Motion carried.

Moved by Brundage, seconded by McCracken, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Mr. Lou Jones came before the Board to discuss the intersection of Bale Road at Tamarack Road in Cato Township. Mr. Jones's wife and daughter died in an accident at this intersection last winter when their car slid past the stop sign into the path of an oncoming westbound vehicle during a snowstorm when the road was snow-covered. Mr. Jones stated that it is a "bad corner and always has been". He also stated that he understands that there have not been many accidents at this location but there have been numerous near misses because people don't stop at the stop sign. Mr. Jones stated that he would like to see the intersection made a three-way stop. At the request of the Managing Director, Sergeant Doug Roesler of the Michigan State Police attended the meeting. Sergeant Roesler, who does accident reconstruction and traffic safety studies, advised Mr. Jones and the Board that he and Randy Stearns have made two on-site inspections of the site and that he has looked at it two other times. He stated that while the intersection is not ideal, it does not meet the criteria for a three-way stop. In checking the MALI reports, he found that over the last eight years there have been three accidents at this intersection—Mr. Jones wife and daughter last winter and two accidents in 2002. One of those accidents was a minor accident caused by a semi-truck turning off Tamarack onto Bale causing a vehicle stopped at the stop sign on Bale to back up into another vehicle. The other accident was a vehicle that pulled off of Bale Road into oncoming traffic on Tamarack Road. Sergeant Roesler stated that there is no history of correctable crashes to warrant an all-way stop—in order to warrant an all-way stop there would have to be five or more correctable accidents in a 12-month period—at this location there have been two in the last eight years. In addition, the traffic count does not meet the criteria and there are no lengthy waits for someone to pull out onto Tamarack Road. Dale Linton asked about a hedge to the west of the intersection and a tree to the east of the intersection—should these be removed? Mark Christensen stated that the hedge really doesn't pose a problem but the tree may be in the right-of-way. Sergeant Roesler stated that if a driver stops at the stop sign and then pulls up just a bit—and it is not necessary to pull up into the westbound lane of Tamarack—there is adequate sight distance to see oncoming traffic from both directions. Sergeant Roesler stated that stop signs do not control the speed of vehicles and by placing them in an area such as this where it doesn't meet the various criteria, drivers become complacent and after a while they don't stop—as evidenced by a letter from Mr. and Mrs. Larry Wagner requesting the stop sign on Bale Road, which has been there for many years, be changed to a three-way stop at this intersection. Mr. and Mrs. Wagner stated in their letter "cars are still turning right off Bale Road without stopping..." Sergeant Roesler stated that even if it was posted as an all-way stop there is no guarantee that an accident would not happen and normally what does happen is that more rear-end accidents occur. Sergeant Roesler stated that it is more of an enforcement issue. Mark Christensen stated that he would talk to Sheriff Barnwell and Commander Rains of the Lakeview State Police Post to see if they could be more or a presence in the area; Sergeant Roesler stated he would be meeting with Commander Rains tomorrow and would talk to him. Dale Linton advised Mr. Jones that the Road Commission would look to see if the hedgerow to the west and/or the tree to the east are in the right-of-way and if so, see if they need to be removed to provide more sight distance. Lastly, Mr. Jones asked why a four-way stop was installed at the Fleck Road-Holland Road intersection, and Randy Stearns stated that he would have to check into that and that he would contact Mr. Jones after doing so.

Moved by Brundage, seconded by McCracken, to approve the following township contracts. Motion carried.

Cato Township

- One application of chloride on local roads at a rate of 2,000 gpm - \$15,721.
- Two applications of chloride on local roads at a rate of 1,000 gpm - \$15,721.

Moved by McCracken, seconded by Brundage, to move for adoption of the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of County Road Commissioners of Montcalm County hereby approves Contract No. 08-5010, for the removal and replacement of structure B01 of 59-05-11, which carries Sloan Road over Fish Creek, Sections 19 and 20, T10N, R5W, Crystal Township; the reconstruction of the approaches to the structure for approximately 374 feet southerly and 372 feet northerly of the structure; and all together with necessary related work; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Dale Linton, Chairman, and Karen Swan, Finance Director-Clerk, are hereby authorized to sign said contract.

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Motion carried. Roll call: Yes-McCracken, Brundage, Linton.

Manager's Report

- The crew is busy with snow removal and patching potholes. They've been putting in a lot of long, hard hours and are really tired, but they keep doing a super job.
- Will be meeting next week with Cal Yonker from MDOT about the Greenville salt shed.
- Availability of salt is becoming an issue all over the state; hopefully we will be able to get enough to make it to spring.
- Had electrical problems again with two of the AutoShift10 transmissions; they are fixed and back on the road. Third one went down today.

Superintendent's Report

- Spoke at last night's MTA meeting. Explained the financial situation facing road commissions with four years of declining revenues and ever-increasing costs. Also discussed the annual transfer of primary road funds to the local road system to cover annual deficits on the local road system due to chronic under-funding of the local roads from Lansing. Discussed the new gravel program and that the townships will now have to pay for local road gravel in excess of each township's allotted annual amount.

Moved by McCracken, seconded by Brundage, to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign the year-ending December 31, 2007 county road certification maps as presented. Motion carried. Roll call: Yes-McCracken, Brundage, Linton.

Moved by McCracken, seconded by Brundage, to approve the 2/20/08 bills totaling \$117,872.91 and Payroll #4 totaling \$118,593.87. Motion carried. Roll call: Yes-McCracken, Brundage, Linton.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Chairman