



CALHOUN COUNTY

Road Commission Task Force

Minutes
May 3, 2012

Law Library
Conference
Room
315 W. Green St.
Marshall, MI
49068
(269)781-0966

1. Call to Order

Present: Members Sweet, VanSickle, Frisbie, Kale and Calhoun
County Administrator/Controller Kelli Scott, Corporation Counsel
Richard Lindsey and Deputy Clerk Chris McComb

Absent: Member Behnke

2. Approval of Minutes

“Moved Member VanSickle, supported by Member Sweet to
approve the minutes of the April 18, 2012 Road Commission Task
Force meeting as presented.”

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED.

“Moved Member VanSickle, supported by Member Sweet to
approve the agenda of the May 3, 2012 Road Commission Task
Force as presented.”

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED.

3. Public Comment

“Moved Member Sweet, supported by Member VanSickle, the
Road Commission Task Force will follow the Calhoun County Board
of Commissioners’ board rule for public comment – “Any person
shall be permitted to address a meeting of the Board open to the
public pursuant to the Open Meetings Act. Public comment shall
be governed by the following protocol: During Citizens’ Time, the
Board Chairperson shall recognize any person wishing to address
the Board. A person recognized by the Chairperson shall approach
the podium and state his/her name and community of residence. A

Dick Sweet

Rob Behnke

*Blaine
VanSickle*

Steve Frisbie

Art Kale

person may address the Board only once on the same matter during each period set aside for Citizens' Time on the agenda and only on matters that are relevant to County government. The Chairperson shall control the length of time each person shall be allowed to speak, which shall not exceed five (5) minutes and shall not allow negative personal comments. "

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED.

Jim Olds, owner of a heating & air conditioning business and farm in Ceresco, stated he didn't know the difference between the Road and County Commission and he didn't know what had been going on with Road Commission but he worked in 5 or 6 counties and he could always tell what county his trucks were in by their condition because the roads were so bad in Calhoun County. He stated they needed to be fixed and if the Road Commission couldn't handle it, he was fully in favor of dissolving them.

Pat Dougherty, 287 South Wattles, stated he was concerned that the task force hadn't gotten a lot of information out to the public so people weren't clear what the effect of dissolving the Road Commission Board would be. He believed when these type of decisions were made there needed to be information out there on what the effect was. He stated the roads were terrible and as a supervisor, he didn't know what to do. He stated the staff of the Calhoun County Road Commission had been very helpful any time he had contacted them. He hoped the task force would get the word out so people are more informed about what the Task Force was doing.

Charles Letts, a Lee Township Trustee who had lived in the township for 47 years, believed the roads had taken a backward turn in the last 15 year and a lot of things needed to be done. He stated he was not sure if removing the Road Commission was the right answer but felt the matter did need to be studied. He stated one of the things he has noticed in recent years was that he didn't see Road Commissioners out studying the roads. He wondered if there was a task force to see about improving what we already had.

Nick Collier, owner of Marshall Tire and Albion Tire, stated he was not getting paid by the Road Commission for services rendered. He stated he worked hard to get the Road Commission account and now they were 90 days past due to him and he believed that was a fundamental problem. He stated if they were not paying him, a small business, that was a fundamental problem and there had to be bigger problems. He wondered if they couldn't pay their bills, how could they fix the roads.

Jim Arney had lived in Calhoun County all his life and he had never seen all the roads resurfaced like they should be. He stated he didn't see anyone coming up with solutions. He stated the Road Commission talked about working with a budget but no one seemed to be trying to make it work well for them so the task force needed to look for better ways for them to do things.

Sheldon Redfield stated the County needed to get back to when we had good roads. He stated he had seen Road Commission employees mowing beside the roadway in October when they should be out there in the summer when the grass is growing and needed to be cut. He stated it went back to leadership and they need to see what's happening.

Dale Jenks, employee of the Road Commission commented on the Road Commission's poor money management and spoke about the employee Union giving wage concessions two years ago and then right after that, management bought new four wheel drive super cab pick-up trucks. He also gave an example of poor job planning by management. He believed there was an urgency to get something done because the tension among employees was scary and there were rumors being spread.

Kevin Patrick of Marshall told about two county road patchers that were out fixing state roads and didn't understand why County equipment was fixing State roads and furthermore pointed out that he felt there was a severe safety hazard. He stated he knew workers were doing what they were told to do. He stated he once attended a Board meeting and he thought it was chaos so he offered to do free job training for them. He believed the Road Commission would never get anything done the way they were doing it, they were incompetent of how roads work and there were better procedures out there than what they were doing.

4. Distribution and Review of Information Binders

The Task Force received binders prepared by Road Commission Administration.

Administrator/Controller Scott stated she had asked the Road Commission for about forty items in oversight, management, operations and so far received the nine items in oversight. She stated the Road Commission Administration prepared the binders, they were very cooperative, they were working on the rest of the information and it would be supplied soon. She stated the Road Commission indicated they did not have Commissioner job descriptions or a business plan/model for oversight. She noted the Managing Director's employment contract expired June 30. She stated they were still in the fact finding stage and in order to do analysis or review, there needed to be more context. Scott stated there was a lot more work to be done because they needed to take the information they receive and turn it into something meaningful. She clarified the Board of Commissioners was not looking at eliminating the Road Commission's operations or functions, just the Road Commission Board. She also stated she had talked to the County auditors, Rehmann Robson and they didn't have finalized audits yet but they had been asked by another county to do a financial analysis of their Road Commission compared to other Road Commissions. She stated that was an option for the Task Force and it would probably cost a few thousand dollars.

Member Sweet inquired as to the timeline for receiving the rest of the information from the Road Commission.

Scott stated they should have it in the next week so the Task Force members may receive it before the next meeting.

"Member VanSickle moved, supported by Member Sweet to approve County Administration acquiring a quote from Rehmann Robson to do a financial analysis of the Calhoun County Road Commission compared to other counties."

On a voice vote, Motion CARRIED.

Scott stated the Road Commission staff was very cooperative when asked to supply information for the task force.

Corporation Counsel Lindsey stated any information that had been requested was subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

5. Discussion of Next Steps

Scott stated the Road Commission offered to send out a survey to former Road Commissioners and Road Commission employees that would come directly back to the Task Force to offer employees some anonymity.

Member Kale reminded everyone that this was the first step in addressing concerns about the Road Commission and the Task Force was in the early stages of gathering information. He stated they were trying to be very direct in gathering information; they had just gotten the binders at this meeting so they would spend time reviewing before the next meeting.

Sweet stated he appreciated the public comment. He wondered how the Task Force would advise anyone who would like to speak out but was afraid of retribution.

Lindsey stated he represented the County not the Road Commission but employees should be protected by the Whistleblower Act, which states employees can't be punished or fired by reporting things to a governmental body. He stated it was up to the Road Commission what action they take and cautioned the Road Commission against action against employees who believed they were helping the Task Force to make an informed decision and he hoped everyone cooperated.

Scott stated Road Commission Policy #11 dealt with harassment and stated they "would not tolerate any conduct that creates hostile or intimidating work place" so that should provide employees protection as well.

6. Set Meeting Schedule

The next meeting of the Calhoun County Road Commission Task Force will meet on Thursday, May 17, 2012 at 7:30 a.m. in the Board of Commission Chambers.

A further meeting schedule will be determined at that time.

7. Adjourn

The May 3, 2012 meeting of the Calhoun County Road Commission Task Force adjourned at 8:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris McComb
Deputy Clerk