



M-205: Northrup (Great Lakes Chloride) asked why his offer to do a test strip on M-205 with his company's winterization product for ice control was not accepted. Csokasy explained that the CCRC has previously tested the product on M-205 and knows its capabilities.

Krempec said that he also went out and drove the roads and said VanBuren County did not send any crews out to plow over the holidays. CCRC crews doing a great job per Krempec.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Powers moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of 12-17-09 and the special meeting of 12-22-09. Poehlman seconded and the motion was carried.

**SPECIAL MEETINGS & MILEAGE**

The Commissioners had no additional meetings nor mileage to report.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Celie reported that the finance committee will meet before the second Board meeting of the month. Each week a list of payables for the current period is emailed to the committee by Terri Wyman and reviewed. Bowser asked if the emails were being received by the other commissioners and they said yes.

**POLICY COMMITTEE**

Powers said that the committee has not met but did receive a draft policy regarding credit card use. Per Powers, it looks like it follows legal statutes. The credit card policy will have a final review and presented to the Board at the January 21 meeting.

Krempec said that there are some legal policy requirements. Said it would be good if department heads review and make recommendations to the committee.

**SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Janssen reported that due to the weather, the normal meeting was postponed and the committee will meet this Monday.

**COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION**

Krempec reported that the Commission met on December 17<sup>th</sup> and said he feels that the Commission is moving forward. Projects are being prioritized with the demolition of the old garage at Lawless Park and construction of a new equipment shed is set as the next major project.

Winter Nights: Many people are using the park for sledding and cross county skiing on the groomed trails. Noted that liability coverages will be looked into as it relates to public activities in the park.

**DON COY**

A moment of silence was observed for Don Coy, long time parks' supporter and member of the County Parks' Commission.

**MANAGER'S UPDATE**

Manager Csokasy said the holiday weather did not cooperate and crews were called out to plow on January 2, 2010. By the end of the year four hundred and fifty tons of salt have been used.

**NON UNION REVIEW:** Manager Csokasy met with each non union employee for review and wage recommendations. Each employee was instructed to set three to five work goals for the upcoming year.

Commissioner Bickel asked what the increases were and Manager Csokasy said the average was 2.7% with individual amounts ranging from 0 to 7%. Csokasy reminded there had been many decreases in the salaried benefit package over the course of the year.

**AUDIT:** Process continues and there has been minimal request from the auditors for additional information. Preliminary audit close is in process and will be completed ahead of last year's March audit completion date.

**UNION:** The Teamster's Union representatives have sent official notice of intent to negotiate a union employee contract. The current contract expires in July.

**BUDGET:** Cash budget balance is ahead \$168,000. driven by the project work done at the end of the year. MTF: Funds received in January were \$339,900 compared to a budget estimate of \$319,000. The December ending cash flow balance was \$268,000.

**OPERATIONS**

Road Superintendent Janssen said that due to the large amount of snow that was received, keeping the roads plowed has been the priority. The outlying garages are being utilized and Janssen said the crews have been working some extended shifts and were called in on January 2.

Employees continue to report the good job that the three new wing plows are doing with snow removal revamping the current snow routes to make better use of equipment is continuing.

**ENGINEER'S UPDATE**

Bellina said that a local RTF meeting will be held here on Tuesday to begin the planning for upcoming projects and cost estimates. An extension of the Federal Stimulus Program (ARRA) is on the Senate agenda and is expected to be passed. Per Bellina, he has heard the same level of funding as last year is expected.

**DNR:** Bellina has been in contact with Rollie Johnson (DNR) about interest in constructing a canoe launch at the Redfield Bridge location. Bellina said the costs of the launch could not be included in the state critical bridge funds. Bellina said that determination of who would be responsible for maintenance of the canoe site would have to be determined.

**CAD System:** System hardware and components have been set with the provider.

**Safety Projects:** Bellina and Csokasy have been looking into funding available to the road commission for bridge and road safety projects. Bellina said that he will find out about eligibility requirements and any available grant money.

If these safety projects are approved, there would be an increased work load for the Engineering Department and hiring an advanced engineering intern may be a consideration. Bellina plans to talk to the City of Dowagiac about a cooperative agreement to share the intern's services for the summer.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS****DISCUSSION ON RETIREE HEALTH BENEFITS**

Manager Csokasy continued previous discussions on proposed revisions to CCRC retiree health benefits. A list of proposed recommendations was distributed to the Board for their review and consideration for a determination at the next Board meeting.

Csokasy said that because of the existing road commission financial situation, the high rate increases from Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and reductions made to current salaried employees, reconsideration of the current retirees' benefit package should be made. He noted the health benefits for retirees' spouses and prescription drugs were a major expense.

Retiree Steve Northrup spoke against any changes being made to the existing benefits. He said that he began working at the road commission for less salary that was available from private businesses because of the benefits and security the road commission offered. Northrup said he and the other retirees considered these benefits as part of their wages and expected them to continue into retirement based on the 2005 Salaried Employee Policy.

Csokasy said that as a group, the retirees feel these benefits were earned and he respects their opinion but disagrees with it. He expressed his full respect of the CCRC retiree group, and benefit changes would only be done due to finances. Csokasy said that fairness also needs to be a consideration because in some respects retiree benefits are better than current salaried employees. If honoring the retirees' years of service is a consideration, then the same consideration should be given to the current salaried employees.

The conclusion was that each Board member should take all of the provided information home to study, do any further research they feel is necessary on their own and come back to the next meeting with some firm ideas and recommendations of what they think should be done. Krempec said this issue needs to go forward.

**NEW BUSINESS****AUTHORIZE BIDS**

Commissioner Powers moved to authorize the Manager to seek bids and set opening dates and times as follows:

Boom Mowers (3)	2-04-10 10:00 a.m.
Brush Trimming Equip	2-04-10 10:10 a.m.
Compact Track Loader with Forestry Head	
Farmland Lease (Lagrange)	2-04-10 10:20 a.m.
Culverts & Bridge Materials	3-04-10 10:00 a.m.
Aggregate Materials	3-04-10 10:10 a.m.
Liq Cal Chor/Brine Mix/DC app	3-04-10 10:20 a.m.
Asphalt Materials	3-04-10 10:30 a.m.
Pavement Marking App	3-04-10 10:40 a.m.
Countywide Roadside Spraying Program	3-04-10 10:50 a.m.

Commissioner Poehlman seconded and the motion was carried.

**QUARTERLY SAFETY AWARDS**

The Board drew the following four names to receive a \$50.00 savings bond: Jerry Waldo, Bob West, Joe Bellina and Shawn West.

**PERMITS**

Commissioners reviewed the following permits. Janssen reported no problems on the permits.

**Driveway**

10-09-09-1053	Harold Ct.	Ontwa	Tammy Kaczor/Curtis Exc.
10-06-11-1058	Tharp Lk	Mason	Joshua Cloud

**Utilities**

10-01-06-1054	Lake St	Calvin	Semco
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**Annual Permits**

10-04-25-1057	All Cass County Roads	Verizon-Svc Connections
10-04-25-1059	“ “	Comcast-Maint & Repair
10-04-25-1060	“ “	AEP-Maint & Repair
10-04-25-1061	“ “	AEP-Svc Connections
10-04-25-1062	“ “	AEP-Tree Trimming

**LEGAL SERVICES RETAINER AGREEMENT**

The one year retainer agreement for legal services with Attorney Eugene Smith has expired and Smith contacted the road commission to discuss extension of the agreement. Csokasy said that per the original \$20,000 retainer, any unused balance would not be returned to the road commission.

The Board discussed several options including: a refundable retainer agreement with Smith, using Smith on an as needed basis, using a local attorney as needed or a combination of these options.

The Board praised Smith’s experience and knowledge of road commission matters especially concerning abandonments, road endings and the Eagle Lake litigation.

**MOTION**

Commissioner Powers moved to offer Attorney Smith a \$10,000 retainer agreement on the premise that at the end of the year, any unused retainer will be returned to the CCRC. Poehlman seconded. Roll call votes: Powers-yes, Poehlman-yes, Bowser-no, Celie-no and Krempec-no. The motion is not carried.

**OTHER/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioners discussed various weather related road condition issues.

Csokasy said that twenty-three of the twenty-five people who came in to get replacement mail boxes were pleased with the CCRC policy. It was asked if possibly the new wing plows are responsible for more mailboxes being damaged. Csokasy said that he would look into where most of the damage occurs and compare to the wing plow’s route.

Bickel asked what was the status of the CCRC property sale and Csokasy informed him that the sale closing is set for tomorrow.

01-07-10

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 11:00 A.M., Bowser moved to adjourn the meeting. Powers seconded and the motion was carried.

CLERK Grace Chester

CHAIRMAN Leroy R. Krempec

01-21-10 Minutes approved by Board as presented.