

MENOMINEE COUNTY CHAPTER OF MICHIGAN TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION

MINUTES December 2, 2023

Chair, Bob Desjarlais called the meeting to order at 6PM at Belgiumtown Restaurant in Stephenson.

Roll call: Cedarville 0, Daggett 0, Faithorn 1, Gourley 0, Harris 3, Holmes 2, Ingallston 0, Lake 3, Mellen 0, Menominee 0, Meyer 0, Nadeau 3, Spalding 0, Stephenson 4.

Other guests in attendance were Commissioners Jeff Carlson and Patricia Mueller, County Treasurer Barb Parrett, MCRC Darrell Cass, Ken Bower, and John Olsen, City of Stephenson Mayor John Starzynski, Dale Parrett and Amy Larson, Dick Peterson and Wally Majkrzak.

Guest Speaker – Darrell Cass, Menominee County Road Commission Engineer, introduced his wife Alex and Road Commission Commissioner Ken Bower and his wife and John Olsen, Finance Director.

Darrell announced that the Road Commission 2024 Annual Meetings are tentatively scheduled for January 23, 24 and 25th. He encourages the Townships to spread the word and invite the public to join them during the meetings.

The Road Commission has three facilities, Stephenson, Powers and Menominee covering 1,128 miles of County Roads. We are the third in the UP with Chippewa County first. In the winter we are serviced by a fleet of 24 plow trucks. New plow trucks are now \$330,000 each. Our 571 miles of gravels roads are maintained by a fleet of 6 graders.

Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has a maintenance contract with the MCRC for 197 lane miles of state highway. There are 71 bridge structures in Menominee County, 2nd to Marquette County, of which 62 are in good to fair condition. The cost of replacing a failed bridge is \$600,000 to \$1.5 M or closing the road.

We have two types of road in Menominee County – Primary/Federal Aid System and the Local System of which 60% are in poor condition.

Funding is Federal/State Aid, \$1,000,000 with a 20% match from the Road Commission. Operating dollars are \$6.5 M from the Michigan Transportation Funds (MTF). The MTF funds are expected to drop (40% of MTF comes from gas and is

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split between 683 municipalities) with 30 MPG expected by 2030; with the cars getting more MPG people are not purchasing as much gas and with the electric cars (EV) that has affected the balance. At this time there is minimal EV contribution.

Services provided by the MCRC are winter maintenance, snow and ice \$1,000,000 and summer maintenance – drainage, patching, grading and dust control. Addressing safety concerns that affect you the motoring public. Our goal is a safe transportation network.

Cost to resurface paved roads is \$250,000 per mile, cost to preserve roads (chip seal) is \$60,000 per mile and cost to resurface gravel roads is \$20,000 per mile. Expected cost increases has a construction cost drop from \$1 - 3 years ago to \$.65 now. Materials have increase 30 to 40% since COVID and labor cost are affected by the cost of living and inflation.

Contrary to popular belief, property taxes do not go toward the roads. Millages are implemented in other counties, 11 out of 15 have 3 or more townships with road Millage or they have a county Millage for roads. An example of a county or local millage at 1 mil; if your home is assessed at \$200,000 with a taxable value of \$100,000 at 1mil would cost you \$100 per year. Current funding levels and the expected drop will result in roads and bridges continuing to get worse. Increased funding would improve County Roads and bridges which would give us safer roads. Some townships set aside dollars for road maintenance, Daggett Township and Mellon Township have dedicated Millages in Menominee County.

Darrell stated his current goal is to maintain status quo along with preserving pavements by implementing Chip Seal programs.

Jeff Carlson said the EV Vehicles have lowered the gas consumption by 30%.

Kathy Branz said the ARPA Funds, \$750,000 that was used over a 3 year period really helped the improvement in roads. That would be \$250,000 per a year if it could be re-implemented. Everyone was in agreement.

Darrell asked if there was any chance of continuing the 3-way road program and was informed the County won't consider it.

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Mackinaw County passed a Bonding Proposal that raised enough money for road improvement and upkeep. This would be another way of paying back the dollars to the bond purchasers.

Pete Kleiman said an “Ax the Tax” to remove all the property taxes in Michigan is being proposed. The meeting regarding this is scheduled for December 15, 2023.

Jeff Carlson said he was unaware that Menominee County did not have a millage for Roads.

Patricia Mueller will look into seeing what can be done to implement dollars for roads.

Submitted by Kathy Branz, Secretary