

# County Road Commission Fields Requests, Questions From Township Representatives

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work on Brevort Lake Road "that was supposed to be done 20 years ago," and that other corners will also be cleared to make them clear vision areas. Commissioner Paul Amacher said he didn't know if he could approve the addition without knowing if that was what Mr. Luepnitz said.

Mr. Luepnitz said Mr. Livermore's suggested amendment does not represent exactly what he said. He said he wanted work done at the corner, but never would have ordered the work without a road commission vote. Mr. Kelso cited the May 3 article in *The St. Ignace News* that states Mr. Luepnitz "ordered" the work. As commissioners argued about who ordered the clearing and restoration work on 20 acres at the corner of Crystal and Brevort roads, Mr. Kelso produced an e-mail correspondence he sent East End Foreman Dale Williams explaining the work he said Mr. Luepnitz ordered, including cutting

brush and trees, chipping, removing stumps, and spreading grass seed and mulch. Mr. Luepnitz contended some of the work was Mr. Kelso's "goofy idea," and said he wanted the ditch cleaned out and trees cleared from the property.

"I'm not sure what the problem is," Mr. Luepnitz said. "I recommend that Craig do something, and he does the opposite. If I have to draw a picture, then I'll have to."

Commissioners ultimately approved Mr. Amacher motion to accept the minutes without changes, adding that "as far as this deal goes, that's between [Mr. Kelso and Mr. Luepnitz]."

Road commissioners fielded complaints, questions, and requests for road work from a number of unscheduled township representatives and took action on one request from Brevort Township Road Committee members Dave Craig and Warren Smith to grade Black Point Road between Nothelfer and Government roads. Commissioners unanimously elected to send a grad-

er the next day to Black Point Road.

Hudson Township Supervisor Al Garavaglia, who was on the agenda, recommended shoulder and surface work for Highway 40 in his township, among several maintenance and drainage improvement suggestions, and requested the road commission consider applying the cost of chip sealing H-40 to paving with bituminous asphalt instead. The paving project would cost roughly \$48,000, and Mr. Garavaglia must first get formal Hudson Township board approval to move forward with asphalt. Commissioners estimated a paving project could cost the township as much as \$30,000.

St. Ignace Township resident Joan Theut asked for repairs to Gamble Road, including drainage improvements, sub base, aggregate surface, road widening, and culvert replacement. Commissioners have discussed sharing the cost of improving Gamble Road with the Hiawatha National Forest Service, but have not come to any agreements. She also suggested improvements to a bumpy section of Mackinac Trail.

St. Ignace Township Supervisor

Dale Nelson complained that, after \$142,000 was spent last year on one mile of improvements to Belonga Road, the road surface still isn't ready for blacktop or chip seal. The road turns to "slop" when it gets wet, he said. Mr. Kelso wondered if it was caused by regular spring break-up.

"The road is ready for blacktop, but it needs some final work after spring break-up," Mr. Kelso said. "Roads always need preparation and grading before paving."

Mr. Nelson said the project was supposed to include ditching, but "there wasn't a ditch done on it."

"I don't think we're getting our bang for our buck, here," Mr. Nelson said.

Mr. Livermore suggested St. Ignace Township follow Moran Township's lead and get engineering bids from someone else. Mr. Amacher offered to "do something to make it right," but Mr. Kelso said he doesn't know what needs to be made right.

Mr. Nelson then requested the road commission give townships itemized lists of estimates. Other townships have also said they want

itemized estimates.

"Your estimates say nothing, and I've been asking for itemized estimates for years, and never had one," Mr. Nelson said.

The road commission only estimates time and general costs when it provides road work recommendations, commissioners explained.

In other discussion, Brevort Township Roads Committee members complained that Brevort Township always seems to be last on the priority list for road work and wondered why scheduled work wasn't completed on Black Point Road in the township. Commissioners were also asked to look into road work being completed by a contractor on Bois Blanc Island. Later in the meeting, Mr. Amacher said he wants to start getting work reports from the island.

Mr. Luepnitz proposed reducing the five-day, eight-hour work week to four 10-hour days to save money, and made a motion to that effect, but his motion died for lack of support. Both Mr. Amacher and Mr. Livermore said they think the five-day weeks are satisfactory.

Mr. Luepnitz reminded commis-

sioners and employees that the road commission has a disparagement clause that bars employees from making disparaging remarks against the road commission. He said workers have complained they do not know what happens at meetings, but they all get reminders of meetings and have the opportunity to attend, or can read the minutes.

Commissioners learned that the federal mileage compensation rate has been increased to 48.5¢ owing to the increasing price of gasoline.

A June 26 meeting with township supervisors will give them the opportunity to talk with the road commission about road contracts and estimates. The hearing will be at 6 p.m., before the 7 p.m. road commission meeting.

Mr. Kelso told commissioners the maintenance budget "is getting pretty close to zero." The money is used for dust control, mowing, and surface maintenance in the county. In April, Mr. Kelso had reported that approximately \$150,000 remained in the surface maintenance budget. There is now about \$100,000 in the budget, Mr. Kelso said, and all of that has been appropriated.

## Idea of County, Township Consolidation Is Withdrawn

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the state's budget problems, legislators are examining every cost-cutting measure they can, but upon closer examination, the two representatives did not find any financial gain in the township consolidation bill, he said.

Property assessments by townships would have been affected by the bill.

County control over assessing duties would not increase tax revenue, Mrs. Hudson said, because local assessors already follow state guidelines. If a township undercharges, the county equalization department notes this and orders the municipality to increase tax collection.

Another objection to the proposal was raised by Moran Township Supervisor Jim Durm. Since the consolidation bill would not affect village or city governments, elimi-

nating township powers would lead to unequal representation, he said.

In a letter to Mr. McDowell and State Senator Jason Allen, Mr. Durm wrote, "The Moran Township Board of Trustees would like to convey our disapproval of proposed reforms that would deny our township residents the same rights of representation enjoyed by residents of cities within Michigan."

Mr. Condino originally hoped to reduce state expenditures by reducing revenue sharing aid to local municipalities. Some townships receive both statutory revenue sharing and constitutional revenue sharing.

Many townships, including Moran and Clark, no longer receive statutory revenue sharing aid, said their supervisors.

The state has reduced revenue sharing for townships from \$90 million to \$20 million since the 2001-2002 fiscal year, MTA reported.

## Shannon Earns Dental School Degree

Dr. Thomas Patrick Shannon, son of Patrick and MaryAnne Shannon of Sault Ste. Marie and Mackinac Island, was graduated from the University of Michigan Dental School Friday, May 4.

A 2000 graduate of Sault Area Public Schools, he attended Hillsdale College, where he earned

varsity letters in cross country and track. While at University of Michigan, he was inducted into Omicron Kappa Epsilon, the university's Dental Honor Society.

Dr. Shannon has accepted a dental residency at the University of North Carolina Dental School in Chapel Hill.

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