



MINUTES

Public Hearing Meeting

7:00 PM - Thursday, April 2, 2026

People's Building 171 N. State Street, Caro, MI 48723

Commissioner Vaughan called the Public Hearing of the Public Hearing of the County of Tuscola, Michigan, held at the People's Building 171 N. State Street, Caro, MI 48723, on Thursday, April 2, 2026, to order at 7:00 PM local time.

Prayer - Commissioner Bardwell

Pledge of Allegiance - Commissioner Barrios

Roll Call - Clerk Fetting

Commissioners Present In-Person: Thomas Bardwell, Kim Vaughan, Bill Lutz, Matt Koch

Commissioners Absent: None

Others Present In-Person: Clerk Jodi Fetting, Eean Lee, Steve Anderson, Mike Miller, Lyle Curry, Bob Catherwood, Pennie Rienas, Suzy Rockwell, Laura Boyke-Hawes, Gregg Campbell, Mark Zmierski, Bob Mantey, Mike Day, Marlene Forbes, Rick Boylan, Ken Dunton, Darcy Guello, Jeff LeValley, Monica LeValley, Brent Dankert, Julie Matuszak, Jason Root, Tom Gilchrist, Ed Hunt, Jody Hunt, Amy Prill, Brian Schriber, Bonnie Hergenreder, Noah Putman, Billy Putman, Jen Putman, Isabella Putman, Ricke Russell, Isaac White, Bunny Porter, Dennis Porter, Matt Hewitt, Martha Swartz, Stephanie Spencer, Bob Eschenbacher, Amy Huizar, Heather Gearhart, Brianna Krueger, Jamie LeValley, Mitchell Holmes, Joanna Samuelson, Gary Shreeves, Kelly Shreeves, John Flikkie, Rich Slyvester, Dan Grimshaw, Bob Worth, Emily Butterfield, Mark Kusnow, Lisa Britt, Emery Close, Krystal Cole, Mike Lagos

Also Present Virtual: Renee King, Debbie Babich, Tracy Violet, Jim LeValley, Erica Dibble, Betsy McHugh, Rob Wrona, Shari Hadaway, Steve Anderson, Nancy Laskowski, Marlene Carley, Amy Campbell, Richard Shaver, Keith Aeder, Bonnie Fackler, Brandon Bertram, Eric Warsinskey, Jeffrey Yorke, Marlene Carley, Laura Kent-Tuckey, Maran Kelly, Stephanie DuSute, Trace Lopez, Julie Gohsman, Steve Root, Reneae King, Alecia Little, Connie Keinath, Dakota Brill, Greg Rynearson, Guthery Laurie, Joan Spry, Julie Harnson, Kim Michalski, Mary Drier, Shannon Beach, Tom McLane, Tyler Bennett, Ashley Gaudett, Cindy Slack, Katie Robinson, Tom Allen, Jodi Barrons, Brian Holmes, Chad Tumblin, Steven Crosby, Debbie Conley, Stacy Thrasher, Kenny Justice, Debbie Conley, Julie Gohsman, Mark Spencer, Kayla Millot, Bobbie Sopian

At 7:52 p.m., there were a total of 53 participants attending the meeting virtually.

Opening Comments - Board Chair

1. Commissioner Vaughan opened the public hearing with welcoming all of those in attendance in-person and virtually. In April 2010, the Road Commission Board was transitioned from an appointed Board to an elected Board. He would be in support of an elected Road Commission Board if the Board was elected by District rather than county-wide. The Road Commission Accountability Act is what allows the Board of Commissioners to take over the functions of the Road Commission. He stated that the intent is not to go after any employee compensation.

Commissioner Vaughan then opened the floor to public comments for the public hearing.

Road Commission Discussion

Public Input -

1. Ken Dunton, Land Surveyor -
Addressed the Board of Commissioners to their knowledge of how to run the County Road Commission.
2. Matt Hewitt, Bay City -
Addressed the Board of Commissioners regarding the FOIA that he submitted. The proposed proposal does not fix the road issues. Traffic signs must conform to the law.
3. Commissioner Vaughan -
Stated the question here tonight is whether the public is satisfied with the structure of the Road Commission Board.
4. Martha Swartz, Millington -
Shared her experience of being involved in a serious vehicle accident. Birch Run Road has had numerous accidents.
5. Isabella Putman, Ellington Township -
Addressed the issue of the Road Commission not installing requested stop signs and the lack of duty.
6. Bob Catherwood, Caro -
The Road Commission Board creates a separation of power and budget.
7. Stephanie Spencer, Caro -
Addressed the time and costs it would take to complete a road study. She supports disbanding the Road Commission Board.
8. Nancy Laskowski, Juniata Township -
78 of the 83 Counties have a Road Commission Board with 43 appointed member Boards and 35 elected member Boards. Expressed concerns of the Road Commissions' finances and pensions not being fully funded. Enhancement to current signs are being asked for, not for new signs.

9. Amy Huizar, Road Commission employee -
Shared concerns of the current direction, struggles and duties of the Board of Commissioners. A series of questions were asked regarding what steps and what direction would be taken if the transition was approved.
10. Keith Aeder, Gilford Township Supervisor -
Read a letter from Pat Sheridan who was a former appointed and elected Road Commissioner. In 2010, the Road Commission Board went from 3 appointed members to 5 elected members. The letter mentioned the finance budget shortfalls of the County Board.
11. Heather Gearhart -
Addressed the Board requesting more open transparency and conversations between the Board of Commissioners and the Road Commissioners.
12. Bob Catherwood, Caro -
Asked if there was a County Commissioner liaison between the two boards. He is not in favor of the Board of Commissioners overseeing both.
13. Bob Eschenbacher, Caro -
The Road Commissioners answer to the voters. Put the question on the ballot.
14. Lyle Curry, Wells Township -
Semi-truck traffic goes too fast down the county roads. There needs to be more police officers on the roads. Board of Commissioners should not take care of roads.
15. Brianna Krueger -
Addressed the Board on how it would look if the Board of Commissioners took over. Traffic studies do take time. Asked how the change would make it better.
16. Commissioner Vaughan -
Stated this is just the beginning steps. If it is decided to place on the ballot, then a plan will be put in place.
17. Ed Hunt, Arebela Township -
The separation of the Board of Commissioners and the Road Commission Board prevents favoritism of repairing roads. Asked what the plan is if this moves forward.
18. Bob Mantey, Denmark Township -
Read a letter and addressed the elimination of elected Road Commissioners. The previously appointed Road Commission Board did not act independently and showed favoritism. It was a positive change when changed to county-wide elected Road Commissioners and gave a democratic process.
19. Brent Dankert, Koylton Township -
He has been a civil engineer for 25 years. The Road Commissioners are dedicated to the people of Tuscola County. In 2010, the positions were transferred to voted by the people and that is being considered to be taken away.

20. Julie Matuszak, Ellington Township -
Reviewed the length of service and background of each of the Road Commissioners. Addressed that the Road Commission is financially sound with the pension plan 90% funded. The Road Commissioners are concerned with all of the roads, not just a particular district.
21. Joanna Samuelson -
Stated to place the matter on the ballot and let the voters decide. Addressed the transparency of the Road Commission meetings as no virtual connection is available.
22. Noah Putman, Ellington Township -
Asked for a road study to be completed with no false promises.
23. Gary Shreeves, Millington -
Addressed the Board of Commissioners as to what plan is in place for if the transition were to happen. That needs to be in place before a decision is made in order to understand the processes.
24. Marlene Forbes, Caro -
Board of Commissioners are faced with a difficult decision. There are many unanswered questions that the public hearings may start the dialogue to get those answers. Can place on the ballot to see what the voters want.
25. John Flikkie, Wells Township -
Hurds Corner Road is an issue as trucks use that as an alternative route to using the main roads. In favor of rumble strips. In favor of placing the matter on the ballot.
26. Rich Slyvester, Gilford Township -
Tuscola County roads are in better condition than neighboring counties. Has dealt with the Road Commission Board as appointed and as elected. He would prefer the Road Commissioners be elected.
27. Pennie Rienas, Novesta Township -
Addressed dissolving the Road Commission Board. (Commissioner Vaughan stated restructuring.) Requested the Road Commissioners to be more communicative.
28. Billy Putman, Ellington Township -
Asked the Road Commissioners for rumble strips to be installed. The Sheriff's Department and Michigan State Police are doing what they can with a thin budget. Road Commission should seek financial approval from the Board of Commissioners. Superintendent Green and Brent Dankert both do a good job.
29. Bob Worth, Millington -
Explained steps that had to be dealt with years ago due to the high number of serious accidents at Millington and Sheridan Roads.
30. Darcy Guello, Cass City -
Expected there to be an explanation as to what the Road Commission has and has not done. If answers could be given, Road Commissioners should stay as elected.

31. Emily Butterfield, Wells Township -
Every opinion matters and the discussions are getting people involved. In favor of placing the matter on the ballot in August.
32. Kent Houghtaling, Gilford Township -
He wishes the studies could be completed faster. In favor of the Road Commissioners being elected.
33. Martin Cousineau, Genesee County Commissioner -
Genesee County is having issues with their Road Commission and was in attendance to listen.
34. Commissioner Vaughan -
Would prefer the Road Commissioners to be elected by Districts. The next public hearing is April 7, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.
35. Isaac White, Cass City -
There have been improvements seen in the number of accidents in neighboring counties with 4-way stops and rumble strips being installed. If a neighboring county can implement them, why can't Tuscola County?
36. Laura Boyke-Hawes, Ellington Township -
Road Commissioners sit with their backs to attendees at their meetings. In support of placing the matter on the ballot.
37. Lisa Britt, Deford -
Has seen drivers running stop signs at various intersections. Townships have offered to pay for the purchase of necessary equipment. Better communication is needed.
38. Commissioner Bardwell -
Extended appreciation on behalf of the Board of Commissioners to everyone who attended and to those who expressed their concerns. Safety of the residents of Tuscola County is the common concern. Of the people that spoke, it was about 50/50 to place on the ballot or to not to transition from elected to appointed.
39. Julie Matuszak, Road Commission Chair -
Extended the offer for 2 of the members of the Road Commission Board to meet with 2 of the members of the Board of Commissioners.

Closing Comments - Board Chair

- There was no further public comment offered.
- Commissioner Vaughan expressed appreciation for all of those in attendance.

Adjournment

Motion by Lutz, seconded by Koch to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Motion Carried.

Jodi Fetting
Tuscola County Clerk, MCCO