



February 2024 Board of Commissioners Activity Reports

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HIGHLIGHTS FOR FEBRUARY 2024

- 2024 Annual Borrowing Resolution** – Trisha Nesbitt, Van Buren County's Treasurer, has requested to borrow up to \$7.5 Million for the Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund. The Board approved this request during the February 13, 2024, BOC Meeting.
- Jail Medical Care Contract Renewal – Advanced Correctional Healthcare** – There was a request for the Board to process the contract renewal with Advanced Correctional Health Care to provide jail health care for the VBC Jail. This was approved during the February 13, 2024, BOC meeting.
- Use of County Property – Paw Paw Days 2024** - There was a request on behalf of the Paw Paw Area Chamber of Commerce to use the County Park and the County Administration building parking lot for the Paw Paw Days Classic Car & Truck Show. The Board of Commissioners approved this request during the February 27th, 2024, BOC meeting.
- ARPA – Update & Standard Allowance Election** – There was a request to recommend changing the County's ARPA's election of Loss Revenue "calculated method" to the \$10 million standard allowance. The Board approved the changing of the County's election from the calculated method to the standard allowance in the amount of up to \$10 million during the February 27, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 9-1-1 Local Surcharge Collection Continuation for 2024 -2025** - There was a request for the Board of Commissioners to approve the continuation of the 9-1-1 Local Surcharge. Pursuant to the Emergency 9-1-1 Service Enabling Act ("Enabling Act"), Public Act 32 of 1986, as amended, Van Buren County is authorized to impose a county surcharge upon telephonic service users within the county that can access 9-1-1. The Board approved of the continuation during the February 27, 2024, BOC meeting.
- January 2024 Claims** – Claims in the amount of \$3,929,764.85 for January 2024 were submitted, reviewed, and approved by the Board of Commissioners during the February 27th Board meeting.
- Purchase of two Detective Cars** - There was a request on behalf of the Sheriff's Department to purchase two Detective vehicles to replace two aging ones. The Board approved the purchase of the two Detective vehicles during the February 27th, 2024, BOC meeting.
- Auction of Detective Car** – There was a request on behalf of the Sheriff's Department for the Board to authorize the auction of a Detective vehicle. The Board approved the request during

the February 27, 2024, BOC Meeting.

9. **Public Transit Dispatcher – Full Time** – The Board approved the request to take on a current part-time Public Transit Dispatcher and make them full-time during the February 27, 2024, BOC meeting.
10. **Out of State Travel Request – Specialty Courts** – There was a request from the Specialty Courts Administrator to approve the Swift and Sure Case Manager to attend an out-of-state training/conference from 2/25/2024 – 2/28/2024. The Board approved the request during the February 13, 2024, BOC meeting.
11. **Van Buren Conservation District Resource Recovery Quarterly Report** – Emily Hickmott, the Executive Director, presented the Conservation District Resource Recovery Quarterly Report during the February 13, 2024, CoW meeting.
12. **Van Buren Road Commission Monthly Report** – Bret Witkowski, the Managing Director, presented the Road Commission’s monthly update to the Board during the February 27, 2024, CoW meeting.
13. **Veterans Services Bi-Monthly Update** – Veterans Services Director, David Krzycki, presented the Board with their Bi-Monthly update during the February 13, 2024, CoW meeting.

Appointment/Reappointment Requests

1. **SWMPC – Appointment of Roger Engle** – There was a request to approve the appointment of Roger Engle to the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission for a two-year term set to expire on December 21, 2025. Roger Engle’s appointment was approved during the February 13, 2024, BOC meeting.
2. **Van Buren Cass District Board of Health – Appointment of Janet Engle** – There was a request for the Board to approve of the appointment of Janet Engle to the Van Buren Cass District Board of Health for a three-year term set to expire on November 1st, 2026. Janet Engle’s appointment was approved during the February 13, 2024, BOC meeting.
3. **Re-Appointment of VBCMHA Board of Director Members** – There was a request for the Board to approve the re-appointment of two of their current members, Catherine Bolton and Angela Dickerson with terms set to expire on March 1, 2027. The Board approved this request during the February 27, 2024, BOC meeting.

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Watch us on our [YouTube page](#). 

All board meeting agendas and minutes can be found on the county website:

<https://www.vanburencountymi.gov/129/Agendas-Minutes>



Hours of Operation:

Monday - Thursday 8am - 5pm
Friday 8am - 2pm

Cass County

Immunizations
1st & 3rd Wednesdays

STI testing & treatment
Thursdays

Dental
Monday - Friday

Van Buren County

Immunizations
Thursdays

STI testing & treatment
Wednesdays

Dental
Monday - Friday

**Newsworthy
visit vbcassdhd.org/news**

As of January 27, 2024 Michigan was at 3.3% for Influenza-like activity (moderate range), a slight increase from 3.0% the previous week. Nationally, 65 influenza-associated pediatric deaths have been reported for the 2023-24 flu season.

“Be Alert for Measles” information went to all healthcare providers in the district as cases continue to rise in the U.S.

Medical Director/Nursing

- 3,481 hearing and vision screenings were provided in our schools, daycares, and GSRP and Head Start programs October-December.
- In quick response, nursing team members planned and executed a COVID-19 outreach clinic for a nursing & rehab facility on-site vaccinating 41 people.
- The State of MI reclassified our counties from “high incidence” HIV counties to “low incidence”, resulting in a decrease in funding for partner services (linking persons with STIs and/or HIV and their partners to testing, treatment, and prevention interventions).
- Our nurse case management team for elevated blood lead in children were trained on the new MICLEAR database. This team follows up on children that have an elevated venous blood lead level of 3.5 or higher as identified by their healthcare provider.
- Communicable Disease nurses have been busy providing education and guidance to long-term care and assisted living facilities for gastrointestinal outbreaks, influenza-like outbreaks, and COVID-19 outbreaks this month. They’ve continued following up on immigrant/refugee TB assessments.
- Immunization nurses have completed their Immunization Quality Improvement Plan training and will be starting provider site visits soon.
- Immunization Reminder/Recall letters and messages are being sent to community members, encouraging the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine among others. As Measles begins rearing it’s head again, it’s important we increase and maintain herd immunity.

Community Health

- The community health team has been developing and carrying out a *Partners for Vaccine Equity (Flu/COVID) media campaign* with King Media and WSJM. The campaign aims to address common misconceptions, encourage vaccine uptake, and build trust in public health through education and engagement.

- University of Michigan Masters of Public Health Students in collaboration with our team are beginning a project with the mission to create a database of available health resources in our jurisdiction.
 - The team continues to engage in a variety of community groups and initiatives. Notable this month is the collaboration with Marcellus First 10 (a group focused on educational & health needs of children age 10 and under), SWMI Aging Network (focused on all aspects of the aging population health, wellness, safety & security), and Coordinating the Van Buren Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) Council.
 - We are partnering with Van Buren District libraries on a story walk and story time at 5 branches in February, themed around Children's Dental Health Month.
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Environmental Health

- In the month of January, the department reports:
 - 23 septic permits
 - 13 septic final inspections
 - 36 well permits
 - 30 final well inspections
 - 51 routine restaurant inspections
 - 18 restaurant follow-up inspections
 - 1 temporary food license inspections
 - 6 body art facility routine inspections
 - 57 Radon Test Kits given out for "Radon Awareness Month"
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Dental Clinic & Outreach

- Dowagiac Dental Clinic
 - served 365 patients in the month of January
 - booked through September 2024 for treatment
 - booked through February 2025 for regular hygiene (cleanings)
- Lawrence Dental Clinic
 - served 459 patients in the month of January
 - booked through mid-October 2024 for treatment
 - booked through April 2025 for regular hygiene (cleanings)



Van Buren Conservation District February 2024 Program Update

Submitted by Emily Hickmott, Executive Director

Spring seems to be upon us early this year, which is as disorienting as the date on my calendar! District staff is hard at work planning this year's events and outreach, so keep an eye on our calendar and news posts at www.VanBurenCD.org as we're updating nearly weekly now. Our annual reports have arrived and should be delivered to you soon, if they haven't been already. Please share these with your community members and clients! Recycling collections kick off **April 22** and details have been posted at <https://vanburencd.org/van-buren-county-recycling-collections/>.

Our annual Tree Seedling Sale is open for one more month; pre-orders will be accepted **January 1st through March 31st** with early April pick up. Find more details on our website: www.VanBurenCD.org/Shop

If you missed it, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources posted their recent Recreation Grant webinar. Applications are due **April 1**, so you still have some time if your community has a project in mind. [2024 DNR Recreation Grant Application Workshop \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2024DNRRecreationGrantApplicationWorkshop) If you have any questions, please reach out to the appropriate grants management staff: [Recreation Grant Coordinator – Regional Map \(michigan.gov\)](mailto:RecreationGrantCoordinator@Michigan.gov)

As always, if there is a service, information, or event that you're hoping to see from the District, please don't hesitate to reach out and share your ideas and questions. Have a great final month of official winter!

Program Updates:

- **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects** (*Erin Fuller, Colleen Forestieri, Carlie Southland*) – January is a great time to reflect on successes and challenges of the previous year. In 2023, with grant support, the Ag & Water Quality Team helped local farmers install over 3,300 acres of cover crops. These cover crops prevented 333 tons of sediment runoff to our lakes and streams. We provided \$105,000 in cost-share dollars to help farmers try conservation practices.
- **SWxSW Corner CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) Team** (*Abbie Bristol, Alex Florian, Jena Johnson*) – The CISMA started off the New Year by reconnecting with new and old partners and establishing our foundation for the field season. At the annual Michigan Invasive Species Coalition (MISC) meeting, we shared space and ideas with fellow CISMA coordinators – grounding ourselves for the year. The field season has already begun to take shape as we complete the required permitting and begin scheduling events!
- **Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)** (*Kyle Mead*) – Winter is the meeting and tradeshow season. The specialist is gearing up for speaking engagements at various meetings, webinars and trade shows in SW Michigan. He is also setting up farmers for Verifications as far out as March when some return from warmer climates. In addition, the specialist is working with two other technicians to finalize an Envirothon competition for this year, the first since 2018. There is a lot of interest in Envirothon from teachers and youth leaders that have had teams in the past.
- **National Association of Conservation Districts (NRCS) Technical Assistance** (*Lucas Hartman, Gabriel Francisco*) – Kicking off 2024 has been a whirlwind for Lucas and Gabe. A large number of EQIP, ACT-Now, and High-Tunnel applications have been submitted by area residents and now we



Van Buren Conservation District February 2024 Program Update

Submitted by Emily Hickmott, Executive Director

face the task of getting them properly documented and into the system! Can't wait to start seeing all these fantastic ideas surrounding conservation happening in our community!

- **Outreach** (*Jacob Diljak*) - The VBCD Tree Sale kicked off! Our largest fundraiser started with a bang with over 60 orders in under a month. Be sure to register for our free webinar, the Backyard Symposium, to hear our speakers talk about farming and gardening resources, backyard poultry, and community gardens.
- **Resource Recovery & Recycling** (*Kalli Marshall, Jacob Diljak*) - The New Year started strong with the initiation of Materials Management Planning as a part of the new amendment to Part 115 Legislation. Van Buren County is excited to work together on a regional plan with Southwest Michigan Planning Commission helping lead the way. This Kalli also educated our residents at a presentation at Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum and Gobles Middle School.

ROAD COMMISSION TALKING POINTS

February 21, 2024

Bid Awards

The Road Commission publicly opened bids on February 6, 2024 as follows:

Liquid Dustlayer
Contract Gravel
Motor Fuels

At the February 15, 2024 meeting the Board awarded the bids as follows, in the best interest of the Van Buren County Road Commission:

Liquid Dustlayer: To all bidding contractors.

Vendor	Product	Gallons /Mi	Cost Per Gallon
Southwestern MI Dust Control	Oil Well Brine	3,000	\$0.19
Great Lakes Chloride	38% Liquidow	2,000	\$0.794

***Contract Gravel:** To the low bidding contractor in each area/garage as follows:

Arlington Township (500 tons)	\$12.29	Yerington Bros.
Bangor Township (2,500 tons)	\$13.28	Yerington Bros.
Bloomington Township (3,500 tons)	\$13.95	Yerington Bros.
Columbia Township (3,000 tons)	\$13.66	Yerington Bros.
Decatur Township (500 tons)	\$11.58	Yerington Bros.

Geneva Township (1,000 tons)	\$14.67	Yerington Bros.
Hamilton Township (5,000 tons)	\$11.54	Yerington Bros.
Keeler Township (3,000 tons)	\$12.43	Yerington Bros.
Lawrence Township (3,000 tons)	\$10.75	Yerington Bros.
Paw Paw Township (5,000 tons)	\$10.59	Yerington Bros.
Pine Grove Township (2,000 tons)	\$15.75	Yerington Bros.
Porter Township (5,000 tons)	\$12.88	Yerington Bros.
Waverly Township (1,000 tons)	\$12.53	Yerington Bros.
Van Buren County Road Commission (Boudreau Pit) (3,500 tons)	\$9.04	Yerington Bros.
Van Buren County Road Commission (Western Garage) (1,600 tons)	\$12.70	Yerington Bros.
Van Buren County Road Commission (Bloomington Garage) (2,000 tons)	\$13.09	Yerington Bros.

Township Supervisors’ Meeting

A reminder that the Township Supervisors’ Meeting will be held on February 27th (TUESDAY) at the Lawrence Conference Center at 7:00 PM. We’d like to see as many Township Supervisors there as possible!

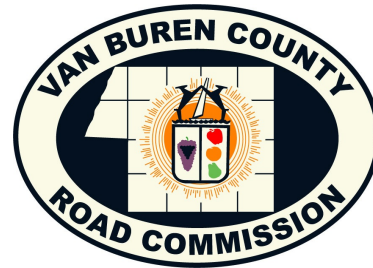
*Prices are based on township’s location in proximity to Yerington Brothers’ gravel pit location(s) and quantity requested.

Road Commission Shingle Roof Replacements

The Lawrence Administrative Office AND the Lawrence Salt Barn shingle roof replacements will be happening over the next few weeks. These shingle replacements serve as a commitment by the Board to correct deficiencies and improve the effectiveness of these locations for both our employees and the taxpayers of Van Buren County.

Motor Fuels: Awarded to all bidding contractors with the following Primary Suppliers:

<u>Contractor</u>	<u>Garage</u>	<u>Fuel</u>	<u>Mark-Up Margin (over rack rate)</u>
Fleming Brothers Oil	Bangor	No Lead Gasoline	.09
Fleming Brothers Oil	Bloomingtondale	No Lead Gasoline	.09
Crystal Flash	Lawrence	No Lead Gasoline	.0699
Fleming Brothers Oil	Bangor	Diesel	.09
Fleming Brothers Oil	Bloomingtondale	Diesel	.09
Fleming Brothers Oil	Lawrence	Diesel	.09



To receive project a complete maintenance & operations update, please see the Road Commission’s **Weekly Update** visit www.vbcrc.org/projectupdates.

2024 Special Maintenance Costs

At its February meeting the Board adopted **2024 Special Maintenance Costs**, including the combination of fog seal with sealcoat to ensure the best product is provided to Townships and residents with the greatest longevity. A Memo was sent to the Townships on February 16, 2024 with the new costs. (See attached copy of Memo sent via email by Alyssa McAndrew).

Background: DEC-JAN FY2024 REPORT

Statistical information Indicates:

- Veteran Services conducted **138** contacts in December and **241** contacts in January. **Relief, Appeals, and DIC**, were the main topics during these last 2 months.
- The dental program spent **\$4,391.50** in December with **19** visits and **\$4,4606.30** in January with **19** visits.
- In FY2024 we have spent **\$24,929.81** of the 2024 MVAA grant. We have **\$61,901.19** remaining in our FY2024 MVAA Fund.
- Soldiers and Sailors did not meet during this reporting period because there were no qualified applicants.

Statistics December 2023 and January 2024

- **VA Claims/Actions:** We had **51** claims/actions filed in December and **121** in January. This reflects both Compensation, Aid/Attendance, and Pension request, along with various actions related to additional benefits.
- **Appeals:** We had 1 appeal in December and **9** appeals in January.
- **Health Care:** Veteran services had **3** veterans signed up for VA Health Care in December and **6** veterans signed up in January.
- **Home/Event Visits:** Veteran services conducted **1** visit in this reporting period.
- **Community Events:** Conducted **4** outreach and County Events since our last report.

Public transportation gave **14** rides in December and **22** rides in January.

- **December**
 - We conducted Holiday visits at various VFW's and American Legions.
 - Recognized the Berrien County Kennel Club with ESA Obi
 - Updated our PIV cards in the office.
 - Attended West Michigan Regional Veterans Treatment Court
- **January**
 - Attended working group with Volunteers of America to address displaced persons/Veterans in the area.
 - Attended the planning session for American Legion "Veteran Standdown".
 - Attended County Administrators Meeting
 - Attended the Agency on Aging Seminar in South Haven
 - Submitted quarterly report to MVAA for FY 2024 Quarter #1.

*** VHA continues to support VBC with the Homeless Veterans Program once a month. Jordan Brinker is our POC at VA for this program."

- **Upcoming events:**

- Start our Breakfast and Services Coffee event by District from (7am-9am) 2 Feb-29 Feb. (Tues, Thursdays, Fridays)
- Initiate and asses our (ALIVE) outreach to Adult Care Facilities
- Planning for possible Spring American Legion Standdown in South Haven
- Horticulture Garden Planning/Events

Military Branch Birthdays

- National Guard. December 13, 1636.
- Army. December 14, 1775.
- Navy. December 13, 1775.
- Marine Corps. January 10, 1775.
- Coast Guard. August 4, 1790.
- Air Force. September 18, 1947
- Space Force. December 20, 2019