



## JUNE 2024 Board of Commissioners Activity Reports

Administration Address

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### HIGHLIGHTS FOR JUNE 2024

- 1. Off Road Vehicle Ordinance:** The Board approved an ordinance for off-road vehicles throughout Van Buren County, with some modifications suggested by the Road Commission and Parks Commission. This was approved during the June 11, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 2. Conservation District Resolution:** A resolution was passed requesting the State to maintain the operational budget for Michigan Conservation Districts at \$3,000,000 and to retain local technicians for the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program. This was approved during the June 11, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 3. Remonumentation Grant Administrator Appointment:** Jerry Happel was appointed as the Van Buren County Remonumentation Grant Administrator to oversee the implementation of the Remonumentation Plan. This was approved during the June 11, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 4. Use of County Property – 2024 Arts and Crafts Fair:** The Board approved the use of park areas, courthouse parking lot, and nearby grassy areas for the Arts & Crafts Fair during the September 6-8, 2024, Wine and Harvest Festival. This was approved during the June 11, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 5. 2024 L-4029 Tax Rate Request:** The 2024 Tax Rate Request Form L-4029 was approved for submission to the Michigan Department of Treasury. This was approved during the June 11, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 6. Sheriff's Office Radio Purchase:** Approval was given for the purchase of three mobile radios for patrol vehicles at a cost of \$21,081.06. This was approved during the June 11, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 7. FY 2025 MVAA Grant Request:** The submission of the FY2025 MVAA grant request was approved, including increased funding for existing programs such as the Dental Program and Emergency Relief. This was approved during the June 11, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 8. May 2024 Claims:** Approval was granted for claims totaling \$4,796,800.44 for May 2024. This was approved during the June 25, 2024, BOC meeting.
- 9. Equalization Services Contract Addendum:** An addendum to the Equalization Services contract with Tony Meyaard, Assessing Services, was approved for additional data entry services at an annual cost of \$40,000. This was approved during the June 25, 2024, BOC meeting.

**10. Justice Training Fund Deficit Elimination Plan:** A deficit elimination plan was approved, transferring \$2,000 from the General Fund to the 60% Justice Training Fund (MCOLES). This was approved during the June 25, 2024, BOC meeting.

**11. Public Transit Contract Revision:** The Board approved a revised contract with Central County Transportation Authority, reducing the number of new buses from three to two due to changes from COVID-19. This was approved during the June 25, 2024, BOC meeting.

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

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



## Van Buren Conservation District June 2024 Program Update

*Submitted by Emily Hickmott, Executive Director*

We invite you and yours to our Annual Meeting, Director Election, & Summer Picnic on Wednesday, July 31, 2024 at 5:00 PM. This event will be held at Brookside Farms (34448 44th Avenue Paw Paw, MI 49079). The event is free and will include updates on district programs, award presentations, director election, a picnic dinner, music, and mingling. This year's event will be extra special as we will be celebrating the VBCD's 80th anniversary. We hope you'll come have fun with us! Please RSVP (so we order enough food) by July 23 by calling 269-657-4030x5 or by using [this link](#).

**Seeking Committee Members:** The newly established Southwest Michigan Materials Management Planning Committee (MMPC) is seeking dynamic and dedicated members from Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties to join the effort in creating a forward-thinking Multi-County Materials Management Plan (MMP). Submit your application by 5 p.m., July 1, 2024. Email Bekah Schrag at [schragb@swmpc.org](mailto:schragb@swmpc.org) for a PDF version or with questions. To apply online, access this link: <https://tinyurl.com/SWMcommittee>

**Recycling Collections:** Details and tire sign-up available at:

<https://vanburencd.org/van-buren-county-recycling-collections/>. Please encourage folks to sign up their tires ahead of time! July and August Collections are:

- Large Tire & Business Tire Collection** | July 15, 2024 | 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM | Van Buren County Buildings & Grounds | 753 Hazen Street, Paw Paw, MI 49079
- Large Tire & Business Tire Collection** | July 16, 2024 | 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM | Van Buren County Buildings & Grounds | 753 Hazen Street, Paw Paw, MI 49079
- Recycle Roundup Collection** | August 3, 2024 | 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM | South Haven Public Works | 1199 8th Ave., South Haven, MI 49079
- Passenger & Semi Tire and Electronics Collection** | August 15, 2024 | 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM | Pine Grove Township Transfer Station | 32nd Street (north of CR 388), Gobles, MI 49055

### **Program Updates:**

- **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects** (*Erin Fuller, Colleen Forestieri, Carlie Southland*) - In May, the Ag & Water Quality Team worked with farmers to plan for and install buffer strips and grassed waterways to reduce polluted runoff entering our streams and rivers. The team also continued planning upcoming outreach and education activities.
- **SWxSW Corner CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) Team** (*Abbie Bristol, Alex Florian, Jena Johnson*) - May saw a busy start to the field season for the SWxSW Corner CISMA. Our field Crew started and was trained to identify aquatic and terrestrial invasive species. We began monitoring for spotted lanternfly and surveying for Hydrilla. We also presented at Paw Paw Elementary's STEM day.
- **Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)** (*Kyle Mead*) - The MAEAP Verifier was finally back to normal duties so he and the specialist were able to catch up on pending Verifications that had been scheduled but canceled due to mortality responses to Avian Flu. No new assessments were completed, but there are many calls out to farmers to schedule Re-Assessments, some of which will also have a new system to be verified. The specialist is also helping with some

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Cass County farms that wish to get Re-verified now and not wait to see what happens with hiring a new technician for that county. This will give the Van Buren specialist some extra Re-Verifications on the books for the fiscal year.

- **National Association of Conservation Districts (NRCS) Technical Assistance** (*Lucas Hartman, Gabriel Francisco*) - This month, the Paw Paw field office was made aware of the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications that have been selected for funding in the 2024 fiscal year. In total, sixteen applications have been selected for Van Buren County totaling over \$980,000 in funding for enhanced conservation practices, over the next 5 years.
- **Outreach** (*Jacob Diljak*) - Look out for our VBCD events and services! Recycling collections in Paw Paw (6/15) and Keeler (6/26) are coming up. Our Local Work Group gathered public opinion on local natural resource concerns (6/5). Free private well water screenings and resources available during office hours. Check out [VanBurenCD.org](http://VanBurenCD.org) to stay updated!
- **Resource Recovery & Recycling** (*Kalli Marshall, Jacob Diljak*) - This season has started and the Resource Recovery program has been busy. Kalli started the month learning lots at the Michigan Recycling Coalition Conference. Later in the month, we held the Arlington Township Passenger & Semi Tire and Electronics recycling collection. The month ended with the Decatur Library Homeschool Hangout where Kalli talked to students about conservation and reused some materials to plant a flower to take home.

# ROAD COMMISSION TALKING POINTS

June 13, 2024

## Audit FY2023

The MI Department of Treasury is underway in its audit of FY2023 for the Van Buren County Road Commission. Derek Hall of the MI Department of Treasury is tentatively scheduled to present his audit and compliance review at the Board's July 10, 2024 regular meeting.

## 2024 Sealcoat/Fog Seal Program

The Van Buren County Road Commission officially kicked-off its 2024 Sealcoat/Fog Seal Program on June 10<sup>th</sup>. Van Buren County has an expansive Sealcoat/Fog Seal Program which is close to the biggest, if not THE biggest Program in the State of Michigan. Here are some "Fun Facts" from Operations Director Greg Brucks regarding this year's planned Program:

Miles of Sealcoat:	182.11
Miles of Fog Seal:	193.89
Tons of Slag:	8,726
Tons of Trap Rock:	10,426
Gallons of Sealcoat Emulsion:	842,807
Gallons of Fog Seal Emulsion:	356,183

## Touch-A-Truck

Road Commission staff recently attended a Touch-A-Truck event at the Decatur VFW hosted by Van Buren Great Start and other event organizers. The young children who gathered for the event had an opportunity to get close to large trucks, busses and emergency vehicles. If you are interested in scheduling an event, or if you know of anyone interested in scheduling a safety or education event, please contact the Road Commission at 269-674-8011, or via email at [vbrcr@vbrcr.org](mailto:vbrcr@vbrcr.org). Education matters!



## Road Commission Mowing Schedule

The Van Buren County Road Commission is currently working to mow the roadsides of **1,313 miles** of Primary and Local roads throughout the County (the equivalent of driving to Ft. Meyers, Florida AND BACK, on a tractor). Subdivision roads will not be mowed. We appreciate your patience as we work throughout the County. This is the first mowing that has been performed by Road Commission staff in at least 10 years. Because our staff is able to mow more of the right-of-way and can remove debris and larger vegetation/saplings as needed, this first mowing will take longer than subsequent mowings will take. While we would like to be able to provide a time frame for mowing in each township, we cannot predict with any reliability as each road can take more (or less) time based on conditions, weather, and equipment. We will provide weekly projections in the Road Commission Weekly Update, which you can subscribe to by visiting the Road Commission's website at [www.vbrcr.org/projectupdates](http://www.vbrcr.org/projectupdates) or by calling 269-674-8011.

**Public Information Meetings**

The Van Buren County Road Commission is hosting Public Information Meetings regarding the road millage renewal proposal on the August 6, 2024 Primary Ballot. The meetings will be held at the **Van Buren Conference Center, 490 South Paw Paw Street, Lawrence, MI** as follows:

**Thursday, June 20, 2024 at 11 AM**

**Thursday, June 20, 2024 at 6 PM**

These meetings are being held in an effort to encourage a continued understanding of the county-wide road millage renewal proposal. Please consider attending and encourage attendance by others!

To receive project and complete maintenance & operations updates (Weekly Update) please see visit the Road Commission's website at [www.vbcrc.org/projectupdates](http://www.vbcrc.org/projectupdates).

