

PHYSICAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Kimberly L. Murphy
County Administrator

301 N. Main St, Adrian, MI 49221
p: 517-264-4508 | f:517-264-4512

[Website](#)



MEMBERS

Dustin Krasny, Ralph Tillotson, Beth Blanco
301 N. Main St, Adrian, MI 49221

MEETING LOCATION

Chambers

Minutes: Thursday, March 5, 2026

I. Call to Order

Present: *Commissioners Dustin Krasny, Ralph Tillotson, Jim Van Doren, Terry Collins, Beth Blanco*

Also Present: *Drain Commissioner Ed Scheffler, Administrator Kim Murphy, Deputy Administrator Shannon Elliott, Marketing & Communications Coordinator Jennifer Ambrose, Administrative Coordinator Carissa Zubke, Building & Grounds Superintendent Rob VanNieuwenhze, Accountant Matt Turgeon*

The meeting was called to order at 11:00am by Comm. Krasny.

II. Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of Minutes: February 5, 2026

Motion by Blanco, to approve the minutes of February 5, 2026, seconded by Tillotson. Motion carried.

III. Finance Reports

A. Finance Report

Deputy Elliott reviewed the Building & Site and MSC divisions of the capital fund financial reports. No further discussion.

B. **Request:** Close MSC Roof Project MS2503

Last year there was a roof leak in the administration area at MSC, causing significant damage. The project has been completed, all invoices have been paid, and the project is ready to close.

Motion by Blacno, seconded by Tillotson to close project #MS2503. Motion carried.

IV. Building and Grounds / Maintenance

A. Building and Grounds / Maintenance

Superintendent VanNieuwenhze provided the department's monthly report. Updates to the Jails control tower were completed, which included new desks and monitors. A repair was made to the mini-split in the IT department that was not properly cooling.

The judicial and Old Courthouse elevator underwent some repairs. Painting at the drain commissioner's office has also started. Health dept renovations are close to being completed, and the meeting room renovations are done. The department is awaiting a few invoices before closing the project.

B. Request: MSC Detention Window Replacement

Deputy Administrator Elliott reviewed the request for MSC Detention Window Replacement in the amount of \$26,744 as part of the 2026 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Elliott recalled that during the 2025 grant-funded project at MSC old detention, we were fortunate to include some of the window replacements in that project, reducing the amount of County funds. The remaining windows in old detention at MSC will be updated through this request.

Motion by Tillotson, to accept the Interstate Glass quote for \$24,244 and \$2,500 contingency, for MSC Detention window replacement, as part of the 2026 CIP, seconded by Blanco. Motion carried.

C. Request: Purchase Van for Building & Grounds

Included in the 2026 Vehicle Replacement Capital Improvement Plan, \$30,000 was budgeted to replace the building and grounds Kubota. Due to significant mechanical issues with the current 2011 van it was requested to swap the two vehicle replacements and move the replacement of the Kubota to the 2027 CIP.

The request is to recommend approving the purchase of a van for the Building & Grounds Department, not to exceed \$40,000, instead of replacing the Kubota, as part of the 2026 CIP. VanNieuwehnze would like to purchase a used vehicle, decreasing the expense.

Motion by Blanco, seconded by Tillotson to recommend the purchase of a van for Building & Grounds, not to exceed \$40,000, to the Personnel/Ways& Means committee. Motion carried.

Discussion was held that the van would include the County logo and will be the standard vehicle color of white.

D. Request: Purchase Truck for Building & Grounds

Also, a part of the 2026 vehicle replacement plan, \$65,000, was budgeted to replace the 2013 GMC truck/plow and the request is to authorize the purchase of a 2026 truck/plow through MI Deals, in the amount of \$64,135, as part of the 2026 CIP.

VanNieuwehnze reported that a \$2,000 contingency is included in the total to place the County decal and install the plow.

Motion by Tillotson, to approve the purchase of a 2026 truck/plow in the amount of \$62,135.00 plus a \$2000.00 contingency, as part of the 2026 CIP, seconded by Blanco. Motion carried.

V. Drain Commission

A. Presentation: Drain Maintenance Operations

Drain Commissioner Ed Scheffler presented an overview of the Drain Maintenance Operations and Assessment procedures. The duties of the Drain Commissioner are established by statutory law, as well as those delegated by the County Board of Commissioners. The Lenawee Drain Commissioner is responsible for the administration and maintenance of 709 separate drainage districts, encompassing over 1,500 miles of drains within the county. Additionally, they maintain eight court-ordered lake levels. Drain maintenance accounts for about 35% of their operations. County drains include 714 different drains, and the department has three crews and seven drain-related employees.

The commissioner utilizes four excavators, a tractor/sprayer, dozer, high-pressure jet truck, various trucks, a UTV, and an RTK GPS system, which is used to set the grade. In an average year, the crews dip out about 40 miles of open drains and mow or spray around 80 miles of drains.

During the dip-out process, Scheffler explained, they remove sediment, allowing for self-cleaning and providing positive drainage for subsurface outlets. The eastern half of the county includes private tiles, and county drains provide an outlet for those systems.

Scheffler discussed the importance of tree and brush removal along the banks, allowing grass to grow to help prevent runoff. Tree stumps remaining after removal are treated with a herbicide to prevent regrowth.

Routine mowing prevents shrubs from overgrowing and promotes thicker grass growth; this is generally done every five years. The crews apply herbicide with a hand sprayer, applying the product only where it is needed to minimize runoff. The overall goal is to promote thick grass growth and minimize brush growth. The channels are periodically straightened to prevent erosion.

Tile drain maintenance is performed to repair holes in the tile or separating joints. Many of these drains were built in the early 1900s and have not been replaced, which makes replacement very costly. If replacement is needed, it is completed through a petition process.

Scheffler reported that work is scheduled with notice to landowners and includes both routine drain inspections and landowner requests. Much of their work is impacted by the weather.

Funding for the Drain Commissioner's operations was discussed next. The Drain Code allows the office to spend up to \$10,490 per mile on a drain annually. Scheffler stated that larger projects can be spread out over several years.

Township boards have the option of passing a resolution to exceed the maintenance spending limit; however, this has not been necessary in recent years.

If the petition process is used, it increases both the project expense and the time required, as it involves hearings, studies, engineering design, bidding, and other steps.

Each drain district is its own legal entity and has its own financial account to fund the maintenance, inspection, and repair of drains. There are three Revolving Drain Funds that may be borrowed from when needed.

Scheffler further discussed the calculations and methodology used for apportionments and assessment roll development.

At-large apportionments require the Drain Commission to allocate a percentage of expenses to all benefiting entities, including counties, townships, villages, cities, MDOT, and railroads. A 10-year history of the county's at-large assessments was presented. Scheffler also shared information regarding the requirement for all landowners to review their apportionments.

Discussion then opened regarding other county drains. Scheffler stated that when there is not a Drain Commission, the drains are generally maintained by the road commission.

Commissioner Scheffler also discussed the decision not to purchase a spray drone for the commission.

B. Request: Gittus Tile Drain Maintenance Assessment

The Gittus Tile Drain was petitioned by freeholders within the drainage district for improvement. The project was found necessary by a Board of Determination. The project consisted of replacing the drain (enclosed tile drain) and was substantially completed in January 2026. Total cost of the project is \$130,000, the County's apportionment is 14% or \$18,200.00. The Drain Commissioner's office is going to be soliciting bids for financing in the near future and is offering an opportunity for all freeholders and at-large entities to pre-pay their assessment to avoid financing charges. The County's apportionment is 14% or \$18,200, to prevent finance charges.

The request is to recommend the pre-payment of the Gittus Tile Drain Assessment in the amount of \$18,200 be considered to avoid finance charges, to the Personnel Ways & Means Committee

Motion by Blanco, seconded by Tillotson to recommend approving the pre-payment for the Gittus Tile Drain assessment of \$18,200, to the Personnel/Ways & means committee. Motion carried.

C. Monthly Report

Included in the packet, no discussion.

VI. Updates & Other Business

Evans Lake Dam is potentially being relocated from where it currently is. Discussion took place regarding the process of setting a lake level.

A. MSC Renovations

Deputy Elliott provided an update and some photos of the renovation were included in the packet. Granger, the project contractor employee, worked over 55,000 hours on this project and Elliott was happy to report that there have been no incidents.

Elliott stated the flooring is installed, ceiling will be next, and most of the painting has been completed. We are planning to take possession on April 17th.

VII. Public Comment

No comment.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion by Tillotson, seconded by Blanco to adjourn the meeting at 11:52am. Motion carried.