



February 2021 | Volume 11 | Issue 2 | [SHARE](#)

Road Commission board seated for 2021



Ottawa County Clerk Justin Roebuck swears in Road Commissioners Betty Gajewski, Kurt Van Koevering and Tom Bird (not pictured) during the Jan. 14, 2020, OCRC Board meeting.



The Ottawa County Road Commission is pleased to announce the 2021 Board of County Road Commissioners for Ottawa County.

The Road Commission is governed by a five-member Board, appointed by the County Board of Commissioners for six-year terms.

At least one member is appointed every two years. Although the Road Commission Board is appointed by the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners, the Road Commission is separate from county general government. The Road Commission Board also serves as the Ottawa County Public Utilities Board.

The 2021 Road Commission Board members are:

Betty Gajewski -- Chair -- Betty was first appointed to the Road Commission in December 2014. She was reappointed in December 2020 to a current term running January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2025. She has owned a business and worked as an environmental professional for a nonprofit organization, public university, international manufacturer, engineering firm, and development commission. Betty served as a member of several Ottawa County commissions as well as the Tallmadge Township Planning Commission.

Jim Miedema -- Vice-Chair -- Jim was appointed to the Road Commission in January 2013 with a term expiring December 31, 2018. He was reappointed for another 6-year term beginning January 2019, expiring December 31, 2024. He is a retired body shop owner and currently resides in the Jamestown Township area. Jim has over 20 years of township service as a former Jamestown Township Supervisor and is currently serving as a Jamestown Township Trustee.

Tom Bird -- Member -- Tom was first appointed to the Road Commission in January 2011. He was reappointed to a two-year term in December 2020 for a term running January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2022. He resides in the Park Township area. Tom is a retired telecommunications engineer having worked for 45 years in engineering management and as a consulting engineer.

Tom Elhart -- Member -- Tom was first appointed to the Road Commission in January 2011 with a current term expiring December 31, 2022. He was born and raised in Ottawa County and currently resides in the City of Grand Haven. A Hope College graduate, Tom is an Associate Broker with Signature Real Estate and has served on several boards for non-profit organizations. He also is a Rotary past-president and Paul Harris Fellow.

Kurt Van Koevering -- Member -- Kurt was first appointed to the Road Commission in December 2020, with a current term running January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2025. He was born and raised in Ottawa County and currently resides in the City of Zeeland. A Hope College graduate, Kurt is the President of Zeeland Record/ZR Graphics, a 127-year family printing, publishing and large format business, and editor of the Zeeland Record. Kurt is board vice president for the Bridge Ministry Center and a member of the City of Zeeland's Shopping Area Redevelopment Board. He also served on the City of Zeeland Planning Commission for 27 years.

Be sure to [visit our website](#) for a complete list of meeting dates, agendas and minutes, and board member contact information.

Weight limits posted on two county bridges



The Ottawa County Road Commission has approved posting vehicle weight limits on several bridges.

In Chester Township, the OCRC approved posting the following limit on the 32nd Avenue bridge over the north branch of Crockery Creek, between Truman Street and Sherman Street: One Unit Vehicle—41 tons, Two Unit Vehicle—41 tons, Three Unit Vehicle – 55 tons.

A recent discovery of some structural deterioration was the reason for the bridge weight limits to be put into place.

The OCRC has also approved posting a 30-ton weight limit on the Cleveland Street bridge crossing the Crockery Creek Tributary between 112th Avenue and 96th Avenue in Crockery Township.

This posting was also done because of a recent discovery of some structural deterioration.

Posting these weight limits assures the traveling public that the bridge will remain safe until funds are available for bridge improvements.

Be sure to visit the ["Trucking" section](#) of our permits website for a complete list of weight restricted bridges and to view a map of Ottawa County bridges.

All about weight restrictions on county roads

By law, road agencies can enact weight restrictions on any roads not designed as “all season” roads.

All season roads are much thicker and designed to allow trucking year-around. The Road Commission employs weighmasters for enforcement of seasonal weight restrictions on county roads.

Weight restrictions lower axle loading limits and reduce maximum travel speeds for certain vehicles. The Road Commission must strike a balance between “business as usual” and protecting the roads when determining to implement seasonal weight restrictions.

Most of the roads in Ottawa County are seasonally restricted. Efforts are made to coordinate restrictions with neighboring counties.



Why do we have seasonal weight restrictions?

Road damage caused by heavy vehicles during winter and spring thaw periods is a problem that affects all northern states.

Unless a roadway has been designed and constructed for heavy vehicle loads year-round and designated to be an "all season" road, a significant loss of strength occurs during a seasonal thaw.

The damage to a road is directly related to the amount and frequency

of the loading applied.

Michigan law provides that the months of March, April and May are automatically reduced loading months, but the statute also allows the Road Commission to implement those restrictions earlier, or suspend reduced loading, depending upon the weather and road conditions.

Be sure to visit [our website](#) and the County Road Association's [Seasonal Weight Restrictions website](#) for the latest info and updates on seasonal weight restrictions.

Fatalities remind us to drive safe in work zones

On January 14, 2021, an **Iron County Road Commission worker** was killed after a motorist failed to stop at a work zone sign.

On December 31, 2020 **Brian Theobald, a city of Eastpointe Department of Public Works employee,** was killed after a trench collapsed.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT LIVES ARE AT STAKE.
 Avoid Distractions, Slow Down, Move Over, Obey the Signs

WE HONOR OUR FALLEN.

The new year is barely two months old, and already here in Michigan we're mourning the tragic loss of a road worker in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

On Jan. 14, 2021, an Iron County Road Commission employee was killed when a motorist failed to stop at a work zone sign.

Always remember to do your part to maintain a safe work zone for our employees and roadside workers everywhere. While driving, always remember these tips:

DO...

- Watch for orange diamond-shaped warning signs or electronic message boards.
- Stay alert and dedicate your full attention to driving.
- Avoid changing radio stations, using a cell phone, etc. while driving in a work zone.
- Drive carefully and slowly through the work zone.
- Pay close attention and heed directions on work zone warning signs.
- Watch for stopped or slowing traffic, and anticipate potential dangers.
- Keep an eye out for construction workers, their equipment and vehicles.
- Use extra caution when driving at night.
- Watch for detours and lane diversions.

DO NOT...

- Speed up or slow down significantly while going through a work zone.
- Slow down to look at the construction work being done.
- Resume normal speed until after you emerge completely out of the work zone area.
- Tailgate. Most of the accidents within a work zone are rear-end collisions.
- Change lanes within a work zone.

Important Dates:

February 11, 2021 | 9 a.m. | Board Meeting

February 25, 2021 | 9 a.m. | Board Meeting

[View Meeting Minutes & Agendas](#)

14110 Lakeshore Drive | Grand Haven, Michigan | 49417
616-842-5400 | [Contact Us](#) | Office Hours: Monday-Friday; 7:30AM-4PM

The Ottawa County Road Commissioners:

Tom Bird | Tom Elhart | Betty Gajewski | Kurt Van Koevering | Jim Miedema

Managing Director

Brett Laughlin