

**ST. FRANCOIS COUNTY COMMISSION
MINUTES
MARCH 20, 2025
THURSDAY**

CALL TO ORDER:

The County Commission met at a special meeting with the Road and Bridge Department at the Road and Bridge. Those presents were Presiding Commissioner, Harold Gallaher, Commissioner First District, Kary Buckley, and Commissioner Second District, David Kater. Also, present was Deputy Clerk, Linda Balentine from the County Clerk's office.

Others present, Jason Harris, C. Pingel, N. Barron, M. Hampton, G. Evans, T. Burgan, J. Jones, D. Huff, B. Henson, T. Hafner, J. Shipman, K. Sorbello, J. Howard, T. Mackley, C. Korn, J. Holloway, D. Savage, B. Williams, J. Morgan, B. Matthews, H. Williams, T. Thompson, C. Clark, J. Hampton, K. Burr, J. Boyd, C. Thompson, and Judy Pritchett.

Presiding Commissioner, Harold Gallaher, called the meeting to order at 6:00 a.m.

The floor was open for discussion regarding the recent managerial shift at the Road & Bridge Department. After the previous Hwy Administrator, John Gross left and the retirement of the current Hwy Superintendent, Clay Copeland, Justin Jones was hired as Union Foreman and Clint Pingel was hired as Union Assistant Foreman.

- Nathan Barron informed the Commission that once the previous administration was gone the employees were happy and all seemed content with the new foremen. Mr. Barron stated morale was better than it had been in years, and he feels like the actions of the Commission cost the Road & Bridge department two of the best foremen they had.

Presiding Commissioner, Harold Gallaher, asked the group what the Commission can do to rectify the situation. Associate Kary Buckley asked what exactly was the problem?

- Clint Pingel stated he felt that Associate Commissioner, Kary Buckley and HR, Corey Schrum, were out of line when they approached him under the pretense of checking on a project to get in Mr. Buckley's personal vehicle to discuss the matter. Mr. Pingel also stated that there was no way he could do both the sign man job and the assistant foreman position.
- Justin Jones stated he agrees 100% with Mr. Pingel.

When ask again if Mr. Pingel would reconsider continuing doing the job, he stated "No, but thank you for the opportunity." Presiding Commission Gallaher said he would promise the Commission would not micromanage the foreman any longer.

- Various people made mention they felt like HR, Corey Schrum was very un-ethical, and lines were crossed when trying to get Mr. Pingel to "keep and eye on Jason Harris"

Associate Commissioner David Kater said there is still the mindset of "guilty by association" that was a problem with the previous management, and they are working hard to break that cycle.

Both foremen were told they would have 6 months to make their position into what they would want it to be.

Mr. Buckley stated that he must do the job he was elected to do and making sure department heads are doing their work is part of his job. Mr. Buckley stated he gets calls wondering why certain things are not getting done or questions regarding why road & bridge workers are here or there and sitting around. Comp time is a huge factor in the entirety of this meeting and when certain individuals abuse it, he must account for that. Mr. Buckley admitted that he was checking on Jason Harris and his time because it was brought to his attention that Mr. Harris stated he was at work but there were no time sheets for Mr. Harris on the days in question. Ms. Judy Pritchett said she would vouch for Mr. Harris and said he was at the Road & Bridge the entire day on the day in question. Ms. Pritchett also stated that two of the most ethical people, Mr. Pingel and Mr. Jones, were asked to perform a job but then expected to act in an unethical manner.

- Jason Harris spoke regarding the grant that he is being accused of letting slip by because he did not submit in a timely manner. Mr. Harris stated he was not given the necessary information from the grant coordinator in a timely manner therefore he could not have it submitted before the deadline.
- Justin Jones wanted to know why Mr. Pingel was singled out by Commissioner Buckley and Ms. Schrum, and why he wasn't given the same opportunity as Mr. Pingel?

Mr. Buckley admitted he made a mistake, and he apologized for his actions. He also told the group when he was there at the road and bridge department it was to be of some help and not ulterior motives, and he was not out to hurt anyone.

Several individuals stated they feel like the Commission needs to go through Jason Harris with all matters pertaining to Road & Bridge. The group brought up the fact that HR, Corey Schrum, acted very unethically and she had no business in doing so. Many men believe an open and clear line of communication needs to be implemented between the Commission and Mr. Harris. Some do not understand why the comp time policy is an issue because Road and Bridge does not abuse it. Mr. Tracy Mackley wanted to comment on the fact that it has been said "When we need you the most, you are at your best." So, he would like the Commission to respect them and their positions on the jobs they perform with that in mind. All the men take pride in their job, and most will say it's not for the money.

Commissioner Gallaher informed the group that the draft for the policy book will be available as early as tomorrow and these areas of concern regarding comp time will all be addressed in the manual.

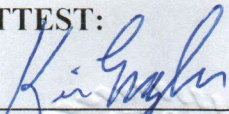
- James Morgan wanted to mention that Clint Pingel is still performing the duties of Assistant Foreman but not receiving the pay associated with that position. He wanted to go on record to say that he feels like Mr. Pingel should be compensated. Mr. Pingel stated he is fine with being paid the sign man position with lead man pay.
- Some of the men were asking why no jobs are being posted when they become available. The Commission said they are not responsible for that. The posting of jobs is something the Hwy Administrator or Superintendent should have been handling.

The Commission is going to meet with Road & Bridge again in a week to discuss the hiring of a non-union position and the salary and benefits associated with that position. Mr. Gallaher said the Commission will not micromanage and will work through Mr. Harris to prevent this from happening again.

ADJOURNMENT:

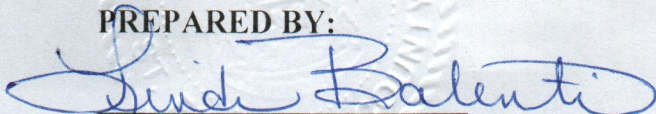
With there being no further business, County Commissioner Kater made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Gallaher seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:

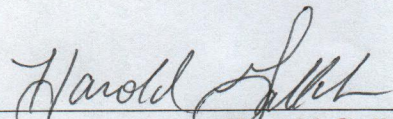


Kevin Engler
County Clerk
St. Francois County, Missouri

PREPARED BY:



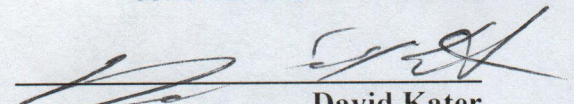
Linda Balentine
Deputy Clerk
St. Francois County, Missouri



Harold Gallaher
Presiding Commissioner



Kary Buckley
Commissioner First District



David Kater
Commissioner Second District