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JIM LEGGETT, MEMBER
KATHY ADAMS, MEMBER

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WEXFORD COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION

OUR MISSION IS TO IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN A SAFE AND EFFICIENT ROAD SYSTEM

Public Hearing

September 30, 2026

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Harry Hagstrom at 10:00 a.m.

Roll Call: Present – Hagstrom, Falan, Leggett, Adams, Jurik

Also Present:
Engineer/Manager: Karl Hanson — Finance and Business Manager: Annie Strom
Superintendent: Tim Schonert — Asst. Superintendent: Brad Harris

Visitor(s): Barb Gwizdala, Ron Gwizdala, Jack Silvers, Bud Webber, Brad Siddall, Beth Scott, Barry Scott, Mike Figliomeni, Luke Richard, Leonard Rezmer, Robert Burns, Mike Hayes, Sandra Houghton, Carl Houghton, Tom Tepastte, Diane Stewart-Tepastte

Pledge of Allegiance

Addition to the Agenda: none

Public Comment:
Ron Gwizdala, S Milne Rd, commented his wife and himself were the people who filed the petition for the absolute abandonment of S. Milne Road. He then read a portion of a prepared statement which is attached.

Barb Gwizdala, S Milne Rd, continued reading Mr. Gwizdala's statement where he left off.

Beth Scott, W Round Lake Rd, finished reading Mr. Gwizdala's statement. She is in support of the abandonment of S Milne Road for safety reasons as described in Mr. Gwizdala's statement. She also commented that the abandonment of Milne Road will not affect the other property owners' access to the Lake. Currently they have been told by Missaukee County Road Commission they have to pull a permit anytime they want to do work on the roadway. She is asking the Road Commission to relinquish rights so they can hire a private company to care for the road and feels they would be able to improve the condition of the road.

Mike Figliomeni, attorney working with Mr. and Mrs. Gwizdala, has filed a memorandum in support of the petition for abandonment of Milne Road. He provided photos and Mr. Gwizdala's statement. The petition was filed as they believe it would be the most cost-effective way to resolve the issue and feels this is not a public road. He commented that there has not been any maintenance on the road and it is a mess. He stated that Missaukee County Road Commission has posted a dead-end road sign on their side, so this is not a through road. He feels it is in the public's interest to abandon the road.

Leonard Rezmer, E 28 ¾ Rd, owns property J and has deed access to the trail and is in support of the abandonment of Milne Road. He stated that he and Mr. Gwizdala work on the parking lot often due to people tearing it up and consistently have people trespassing on their boats and property. Would like to have it shut down to public.

DRAFT

Diane Stewart, E 28 ¾ Rd, is in support for abandonment of Milne Road. She stated she has multiple trail cameras up and has pictures of tires being dumped. ORV traffic is racing down the road. Feels that abandoning the road would make it safer and have less trash dumping.

Barry Scott, Round Lake Rd, supports the abandonment of Milne Road. He spoke about an instance where he was sued by an ORV user who hit a tree on their property. Had another instance where someone hit his vehicle. Also commented on the disposal of trash by the public. Mr. Scott stated they had petitioned Missaukee County Road Commission and were told they wouldn't abandon the road.

Jack Silvers, W Kelly Rd, opposed to the abandonment of Milne Road. Stated he owns parcel R, which gives him access to the lake ramp along with parcels A-Z. He commented he has been traveling this road since 1959 and in 1995 the road flooded which closed it for two summers. He stated that people knew the road was there when they purchased their homes. He is concerned if the road is abandoned this will restrict access to the lake.

Luke Richard, with Attorney Mike Figliomeni, commented that abandonment will not affect any property easement rights.

Brad Siddall, Missaukee County Road Commission Manager, opposed to the abandonment of Milne Road. He commented that he uses this road for ORV and snowmobile access. He also stated this road is a shared road and Fire and EMS need to be able to access it for emergencies.

Carl Houghton, S 49 Rd, stated he talked to a retired fire department from Wexford County, and he said they would not be able to get fire trucks through the road because it is too winding and trees are too close. He also spoke about traffic driving too fast on the road and won't travel it himself due to this.

Board Comments:
Mr. Jurik stated he would like to know what the strategy will be to keep people off the road.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

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Harry Hagstrom, Chairman Annie Strom, Finance & Business Manager

DRAFT

Good morning, my name is Ron Gwizdala and I'm here today with my wife Barb and we are the persons who filed the petition for the absolute abandonment of S. Milne Road from 47 3/4 to the Missaukee County Line. This petition was signed by all parties who are the legal owners of all properties adjoining all of S. Milne Road. Barb and I have 3 children and 6 grandchildren. My parents purchased property in this area which Barb and I own today, and I spent a large party of my upbringing in this area and made it our home in 2008. When growing up I have a many memories and some of them include the excellent service the road commission provided to our family, particularly in the 60's and 70's. In the winters, my parents used to hire Leo Ingraham to plow the roads back to our home and my parents paid 2k dollars one year and it was suggest filing a suit against the road commission. They did and the settlement was that the road commission had no money to pay for what they had spent but they would maintain the road going forward. The road was widened and maintained for many years, and *my* parents used to give the drivers a bottle of whiskey and silver dollars. They would call and let them know when it needed plowing and the road commission was always there. In some cases, they had to work with the sheriff department in bad storms to get them out of the woods.

I know this area very well and have many friends in the area and as a kid I would travel around with Mr. Don Gunnerson and post property in this area. Mr. Gunnerson owned over 7000 acres of land and was part of the Missaukee Land Company and had his personal property that bordered it as well. I'm familiar with the trail we are here about today and nobody was ever allowed to travel this without his permission. He would chase people down and run them out. He had dogs posted that they would bark when someone came down the road to alert him. He had problems with trespassers on a routine basis and adverse relationships with locals. In one instance someone put

dynamite under the porch of his home, and it blew the porch off. He also had bullet holes in the orange chevy I believe it was a travelall and todays version would be a suburban with no window. I used to swim at round lake and fish with his permission on the property I own today. The logging trail at that time ran to the north of where it is today.

My property was originally purchased by the Milne family who put the home that is there today on this property in 1993 and lived their full time. This road has always been private. There were other roads in the area to the north that were considered public that have closed over the years as well.

The Wexford County Road Commission adopted the Seasonal Road System in 1994 and our trail does not show up on any posting that this would be a seasonal road and at the time if there was a full-time resident they were not allowed to classify it as seasonal. Still today there are no traffic control signs or seasonal road requirement signs, only no trespassing signs. The Milnes maintained this as a private road until he became sick, and some folks started to travel on it and where it is today was there garden and the gate was just to the east.

We purchased the property in 2008 and have maintained this road year-round with the assistance of Barry Scottt and we have paid others to maintain it as well including brining this past year. Some years later I received a notice from Mr. Cooper saying that he wanted me to remove *my* gate. I explained that this is a private road and he then met me at my home to look at it. When he arrived my son Ryan and I met with him and upon his arrival, he gave me a paper with Round Lake Estates Plot which was the subject of a court action and it was ordered disbanded and Wexford County was a part of that as well. Mr. Cooper said that he was not aware this trail existed and asked that I file a

petition to abandon the road so that there would be no questions about it being abandoned and not a county road. I did not immediately do that as there was one owner who was in favor but feared retaliation if we did so. After many altercations and run in with people we decided to move forward and 100 percent of all the people who own property signed the petition. I would note that every owner has property that borders 47 ¾ road for access to their property.

As a husband, father, grandfather and the fundamental role of government is to provide safety and security to family and the public. I as the family member have endured several incidents of vehicles that have been in accidents on our road and have driven very dangerously which could have resulted in significant injury or death to my family members. I have also served in public safety roles as a police officer starting at Delta College in 1979 and the Iosco County Sheriff Department, Saginaw City Police Department, Missaukee County Sheriff Department, City of Ovid Chief of Police until 2021. I also have served in government roles with City of Lake City, Forest Township, Village of Marion, and Leroy. I have received many awards for my public service including work on many homicides for Exceptional and Distinguished Service as well as Award for Professional Excellence from the Michigan State Police. In my professional life experience, I'm informing you this section of trail is very dangerous and not suited for public travel. There have been people injured, many accidents and close calls as well as watching my dog get hit by a fast-moving jeep which also did not have any license plate on it. I have almost been struck as well and my grandchildren who are not allowed to walk or ride a bike on the trail because of these reasons. This trail goes between my home and barn, and my barn is used to house our farming equipment as well. Other neighbors have experienced the same issues:

1- Driving too fast
2= Safety of being in our yard and path between the house and barn which is on a curve.
3- These vehicles have no plates and are mostly not maintained with loud mufflers and frequently brake down and avoid law enforcement
4- Drugs and Alcohol issues
5- frequent trespassing and littering using our private parking lot for illegal activity and vandalism tearing down our signs
6- trespassing and using our lake which is now full of milfoil from outside boat usage from trespassing
7- several close calls which included a orv traveling fast and almost taking the drivers head off with the front bucket of our tractor which my son was driving, and he is an emergency responder and was so upset he could not drive the tractor.
Our trail is maintained by us year-round as we live here full time and have to be able to come and go and we can't do so when others tear up our road to make them impassible or get stuck, break down and this becomes a public safety issue with services we rely upon not being able to make it to our homes. At best if the County believes they have any interest in our trial it is seasonal at best meaning 6 months of the year it should be closed to public travel and we are then talking about the other 6 months of the year.

If you still have any doubt, ask yourself this question. There is no mention of this trail described in our deed as a public road or right of way and if it were that would mean that of the 300 feet between the water and 47 3/4 road that the county would have 99 feet of right of way of my property. Not to mention that my septic field would be in the right of way as well. The easement for power was given by Mr. Milne not the road commission. We maintain this road year round and this

puts an additional burden on us when it is torn up frequently and leaves it impassible as well as the liability when maintaining it.

This has been a very stressful time for me and my family as well as our neighbors. In fact a few weeks back when I received the notice via certified mail at the post office I suffered a stroke that day and have permanent physical damage which includes loss of my vision in my eye. I ask you as a board if you should believe you have any interest in our road to relinquish it so we can continue to maintain it as well as upgrade the road and have the option to hire private service to do some of this for us and ensure we as well as the public are safe and we have continuous access to our homes and property and limit our exposure to the frequent trespassing and nuisance of littering and vandalism and dumping that we frequently endure.

Thank you for your consideration.