

BARAGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 11, 2026

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Dakota called the Regular Meeting to order on Monday, May 11, 2026 at 5:00 p.m., Baraga County Courthouse, 16 N. Third Street, L'Anse, MI 49946.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

Chairman Dakota led us in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

ROLL CALL:

Clerk Goodreau took roll call with the following results:

Present: James Niemela, District 1, Brad Dakota, District 2, Craig Kent, District 3, and William Menge, District 4 and Lee DeLeon, District 5.

Absent: None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Menge made a motion, supported by Commissioner DeLeon to approve the Agenda, as presented. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner DeLeon made a motion, supported by Commissioner Niemela to approve the minutes for the Regular meeting held on April 14, 2026. On Voice Vote, the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT-Agenda Items Only:

Chairman Dakota opened the meeting up for public comment. No Public Comment on Agenda Items was offered.

TREASURERS REPORT:

Report received, as presented.

Commissioner Kent made a motion supported by Commission DeLeon to approve General Fund Budget Amendment #03-2026:

BARAGA COUNTY

BUDGET AMENDMENTS

For the Fiscal Year Ending 09/30/2026

Account Name	Account Number	Revenue Increase - (Decrease)	Expense - Increase- (Decrease)
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GENERAL FUND - REVENUES

Swampland Tax	101-000-431.00	8,700.00
Fund Balance Surplus	101-000-699.99	58,756.00

GENERAL FUND - EXPENDITURES

Treasurer Health Insurance Expense	101-253-716.00	(15,200.00)
Payment in Lieu	101-253-716.01	5,000.00
Health Insurance Retiree	101-253-716.02	21,600.00
Operating and Office Supplies	101-253-727.00	(200.00)
Postage	101-253-729.00	200.00
Treatment Court Salary and Wages	101-288-703.00	16,300.00
Social Security and Medicare	101-288-715.00	1,200.00
Corrections Health Insurance Retiree	101-351-716.02	28,956.00
District Court Health Insurance Retiree	101-286-716.02	9,600.00

GENERAL FUND – JOURNAL TOTALS

\$ 67,456.00 \$ 67,456.00

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On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

REVIEW OF CLAIMS AND ACCOUNTS:

Commissioner Menge made a motion, supported by Commissioner Niemela to approve the BCMH Trustee Per Diem for April 2026 (\$1,120.00). On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner DeLeon made a motion, supported by Commissioner Menge to approve the payment of the Claims and Accounts for the period of April 15, 2026 through May 11, 2026 in the amount of \$48,641.52. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner DeLeon to approve the payment of the Prepaid Bills and Trust and Agency Accounts for the period of April 15, 2026 through May 11, 2026 in the amount of \$1,796,282.91. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Niemela made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to approve the Sheriff's Dept. Commissary Account expenditures for April 2026 in the amount of \$7,135.46. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Sheriff Brogan brought the board up to date on the process of hiring the new EM/911/BCMH combine employee. Interviews will be taking place within the next few weeks. No action was taken.

ACTION ITEMS:

The Board received an appeal to a FOIA request (Alexander Munro, dated 4/2/2026) for records held within the Equalization Department. The request was denied because there is a fee schedule set forth in the Equalization Department for the requested records (MCL 15.234(10)). Mr. Munro appealed the denial (April 21, 2026) to the Baraga County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Menge made a motion supported by Commissioner Niemela to deny Mr. Munro's appeal to the denied FOIA request (dated April 14, 2026) for assessor records in the Baraga County Equalization Department. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Judge Daavettila presented to the Board a proposed program through Marquette Regional Community Corrections that would provide pre-trial defendant's programming and services for the Circuit and District courts. Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner DeLeon to approve the Marquette County Community Corrections proposal for pre-sentencing services through Marquette Regional Community Corrections at no cost to Baraga County. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner DeLeon made a motion, supported by Commissioner Niemela to approve to place an advertisement in the Summer in Baragaland edition of the L'Anse Sentinel in the amount of \$130.65. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

The Equalization is down one full time employee. Employees in the Equalization Department are required to hold at a minimum a Michigan Certified Assessing Officers certificate. Liz Anderson, Equalization Director reported that it has become extremely difficult to hire due to the State's certification requirements. Ms. Anderson presented the Board with what she believes is a good long-term plan to staff the office. Commissioner Niemela made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to approve increasing the wages/benefits budget for the Equalization Department to increase the current PTE wages to \$30.00/hour and add a temporary employee for the summer at \$13.73/hour for up to 40 hours per pay period. On Voice Vote, the motion carried. On Voice Vote, the motion carried, with Mr. Menge abstaining due to being related to the temporary employee.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

Commissioner Niemela address a phone call he and all the commissioners received from a landowner in Spurr Township and the flooding from snow runoff. The landowner was wondering why the County had not filed a State of Emergency and apply for State funds. Commissioner Kent indicated he had spoken with Road Commission Manager Doug Mills and the damage had not met the threshold for funding. This discussion then led to Mr. Roger Hebert addressing the Board about his issues with the Baraga County Road Commission regarding road maintenance and flooding on Shirley Road in Baraga Township.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- BCMH – Board of Trustees, Minutes
- FY2025 Audit Report

RESOLUTIONS:

Commissioner Niemela made a motion, supported by Commissioner Menge to table the Copper Country Mental Health Services Resolution RE: FY2027 Boilerplate Language. And requested a representative of CCMHS attend the next meeting to discuss the resolution. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Menge made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Michigan Drain Code of 1956 allows the Drain Commissioners across the state to unilaterally levy taxes, force easements, and use taxpayer funds to hire law firms that can be used against the citizenry, county commissioners and township governments without reasonable checks and balances.

WHEREAS, the Michigan Drain Code of 1956 deprives affected Michigan residents of their constitutional right to due process and equal protection under the law.

WHEREAS, the Michigan Drain Code of 1956 paves the way for a handful of petition signatures to turn into a multi-million-dollar projects with a very little say from county commissioners or the landowners whose land the project(s) may affect.

WHEREAS, The Michigan Drain Code of 1956 creates a moral hazard – and financial incentives – whereby the same engineering firms that advise Boards of Determination across the state can also profit from the work they prescribe.

WHEREAS, there are no requirements in the Drain Code of 1956 for the elected Drain Commissioner to get a second opinion on the engineering parts of a petitioned project.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Baraga County Board of Commissioners wholeheartedly endorses these common-sense modifications to the Drain Code of 1956:

- 1) Modifies requirements for notices of drain projects to include a map & list of impacted addresses in the drain district.
- 2) Requires petition signature collectors to disclose to homeowners that they will be assessed and will be responsible to pay for the project.
- 3) Extend the timeline for communities to appeal the Board of Determination's ruling on a petitioned drain project from 10 to 21 days
- 4) Extend the timeline for landowners and municipalities to appeal the apportionment and assessment costs of a drain project from 10 to 21 days and allow landowners and municipalities to appeal the necessity of a project after a "Day of Review" meeting.
- 5) Road Commission can cancel a drain project once they receive construction project costs. This would be done at a public meeting.
- 6) Raise the petition threshold for drain projects from five landowners to signatures representing 51% of landowners.
- 7) Upon receipt of a petition, provide all landowners in the district with a preliminary cost estimate and allow landowners to withdraw their signatures.
- 8) Adopt Ohio's practice of involving the county commissioners in the necessity/cost analysis of petitioned projects.

On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the County Board, Commissioner Menge made a motion, supported by Commissioner DeLeon to adjourn the meeting until Monday, June 8, 2026. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Brad Dakota, Chairman

Wendy J. Goodreau, Clerk