

BARAGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2024

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Eilola called the Regular Meeting to order on Monday, May 13, 2024 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 Eilola 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: Gale Eilola, District 1, Brad Dakota, District 2, Craig Kent, District 3, and William Menge, District 4.

Absent: Chad Cichosz, District 5.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner Menge to approve the minutes for the Regular meeting held on April 9, 2024. On Voice Vote, the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No Public Comment offered.

TREASURERS REPORT:

As presented by Treasurer, Jill C Tollefson.

Ms. Tollefson also updated the Board on the business of the Baraga County Land Bank. The Land Bank has been awarded a grant to purchase and demolish two vacant blighted properties; the old Da Shack building in Baraga and the property at the corner of Tuttle/Main Street across from the L'Anse Baptist Church. Commissioner Menge made a motion, supported by Commissioner Dakota to approve the use of General Funds to pay for the purchase and demolition of two properties to be reimbursed by the grant dollars. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

REVIEW OF CLAIMS AND ACCOUNTS:

Commissioner Menge made a motion, supported by Commissioner Dakota to approve the BCMH Trustee Per Diem for April 2024 (\$1,120.00). On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner Menge to approve the payment of the Claims and Accounts for the period of April 10, 2024 through May 13, 2024 in the amount of \$98,445.45. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Dakota made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to approve the payment of the Prepaid Bills and Trust and Agency Accounts for the period of April 10, 2024 through May 13, 2024 in the amount of \$1,648,724.06. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Menge made a motion, supported by Commissioner Dakota to approve the Sheriff's Dept. Checking Account expenditures for April 2024 in the amount of \$10,167.72. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Commissioner Menge made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to table the KBIC appointment to the Baraga County Veterans' Affairs Committee. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

ACTION ITEMS:

Patrick Osterman, Equalization Director, presented the Board with the 2024 Tax Rate Request (L-4029). Commissioner Menge made a motion, supported by Commissioner Dakota to approve the 2024 L-4029, as presented, and directed Chairman Eilola to sign such document. On Voice Vote, the motion carried. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner Menge to accept the resignation of Mike Vizina from the Baraga County Jury Commission. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner Dakota to appoint Shelley Lloyd to the Baraga County Jury Commission (term ending April 30, 2025). On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Menge made a motion, supported by Commissioner Dakota to accept, with regret, the resignation of Ethan H. Johnson from the Baraga County Economic Development Corp. Board. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Dakota made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to purchase an advertisement in the L'Anse Sentinel 2024 Summer in Baragaland edition in the amount of \$114.00. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Dakota made a motion, supported by Commissioner Menge to approve the purchase of case management software, new laptop computer and monitor for Juvenile Caseworker, Dawn Howe, in the amount of \$2,985.00. ARPA funds to pay for the software and hardware. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner Dakota to approve the purchase of a new computer with dual monitors for the Probate Court Registrar's office in the amount of \$1,160.00. ARPA funds to pay for the computer and hardware. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Dakota made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to approve the purchase of a three-year subscription for multi-factor authentication for the entire

domain and a three-year subscription for KnowBe4 employee cybersecurity education in the amount of \$11,745.00. A MMRMA grant will cover 50% of the costs. ARPA funds to pay for the other 50% in the amount of \$5,872.50. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

The Board received two proposals to replace the roof on the pole building at the Sheriff's Department. Mike Whitman Construction; \$21,800.00 and Radiant Roofing & Construction; \$24,000.00. Commissioner Dakota made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to accept and award the bid to Mike Whitman Construction in the amount of \$21,800.00. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

There was no one from the Trails Authority to provide an update.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

No reports were offered.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Baraga County Extended Care Corporation, Minutes
Baraga County Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees, Minutes
UP Peace Officer Memorial
Village of Lanse, Master Plan Review

RESOLUTIONS:

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

WHEREAS, Michigan 2-1-1 is a service provided at no cost to Michigan residents, and connects them with thousands of health and human services agencies and resources right in their communities – quickly, easily, and confidentially; 24 hours a day, 365 days a year via phone, email, live chat, and online databases; and,

WHEREAS, Michigan 2-1-1 has supported Baraga County during natural disasters, including regional flooding, power outages, extreme weather conditions and global crises, including providing information about COVID=10 testing and vaccination locations; and

WHEREAS, many individuals from Baraga County have contacted Michigan 2-1-1 for assistance with housing, tax preparation, job training, utility assistance, food, and other resources in just the last year alone; and

WHEREAS, Baraga County recognizes Michigan's 2-1-1 service as an essential part of our human service infrastructure, connecting individuals and families in need with critical assistance in times of crisis.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Baraga County Board of Commissioners requests the Michigan Legislature to support an additional \$7 million in funding for Michigan 2-1-1 in the FY2025 budget.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Baraga County Board of Commissioners directs the County Clerk to send a copy of this resolution to the Baraga County delegation of both the Michigan Senate and House of Representatives; the Majority Leader of the Senate; the Speaker of the House; Governor Gretchen Whitmer; and as a communication to other Michigan counties.

On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

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

It is hereby resolved that the Commissioners of Baraga County authorize the formation of a new Transit Commission to be called the Snowbelt Transit Commission.

WHEREAS, the economy of the Western UP has been devastated by the closure of the White Pine Mine (1997) and the Paper Mill (2013) in Ontonagon County as well as the Ojibwa Prison in Gogebic County, and

WHEREAS, the rail line from Rockland to Ontonagon has been removed, and

WHEREAS, the tourism has been the largest economic engine which was negatively impacted during COVID, and

WHEREAS, the second largest economy, logging, is currently being negatively impacted by increasing fuel prices and crumbling infrastructure; this further affects our tourism industry as well as our residents, and

WHEREAS, companies and primary wage earner jobs have left the counties and many companies are discouraged from coming to the Western UP due to the lack of a sufficient logistical network, and

WHEREAS, the two counties of Gogebic and Ontonagon can work together to preserve a vital network for economic growth going forward, and

WHEREAS, the abandonment of the rail line has crippled the ability to attract new industries.

THEREFORE, the purpose of the Snowbelt Transit Commission is to acquire and to preserve the Out of Service/Abandoned rail line from the Wisconsin/Michigan border to White Pine, Michigan, while keeping intact the multi-use trails that help support tourism and to ensure the future growth of the Western Upper Peninsula.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:

No Commissioner Comments were received.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Catherine Andrews updated the Board on the petition drive to initiate legislation to amend the clean & renewable energy and energy waste reduction act.

Ms. Andrews also updated the Board on the North Country Trail system.

Dawn Howe, Probate Court Juvenile Caseworker, updated the Board on the Girls on the Move program. The program is now being used in Baraga Schools. Copper Shores is providing substance abuse education for juveniles with MIPs. The case management system has been installed. Ms. Howe has interns from NMU working for her this summer and that has been a great addition.

Clerk Goodreau reported that the Covington Township land acquisition has finally been completed and deeds were recorded last week. A ribbon cutting ceremony will take place on Wednesday, May 15th.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the County Board, Commissioner Dakota made a motion, supported by Commissioner Menge to adjourn the meeting until Monday, June 10, 2024. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Gale Eilola, Chairman

Wendy J. Goodreau, Clerk