

BARAGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 10, 2026

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Dakota called the Regular Meeting to order on Monday, August 10, 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, and Craig Kent, District 3.

Absent: William Menge, District 4 and Lee DeLeon, District 5.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Niemela made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to approve the minutes for the Regular meeting held on June 8, 2026. On Voice Vote, the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT-Agenda Items Only:

Fran Whitman asked questions about the Point Abbaye Park project.

TREASURERS REPORT:

REVIEW OF CLAIMS AND ACCOUNTS:

Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner Niemela to approve the BCMH Trustee Per Diem for July 2026 (\$860.00). On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Niemela made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to approve the payment of the Claims and Accounts for the period of July 14, 2026 through August 10, 2026 in the amount of \$55,420.99. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner Niemela to approve the payment of the Prepaid Bills and Trust and Agency Accounts for the period of July 14, 2026 through August 10, 2026 in the amount of \$193,589.53. 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 July 2026 in the amount of \$5,479.07. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

No Unfinished Business.

ACTION ITEMS:

Commissioner Niemela made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to correct an error in the Point Abbaye Park Phase III contract with WR Contracting from \$353,136.22 to \$353,406.22 which is a difference of \$270.00. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner Niemela to approve Point Abbaye Park Phase III - Change Order #01 in the amount of \$5,000.00 to add an additional 6" compacted sand as a base under specified gravel pavement for parking lot. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner Niemela to approve Point Abbaye Park Phase III - Change Order #02 in the amount of \$2,151.20 to complete final trail mapping. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Niemela made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to approve Point Abbaye Park Phase III – Payment #1 in the amount of \$50,670.00. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner Niemela to approve the excess amount of the Point Abbaye Park Phase III contract \$557.33 to be paid from Parks & Recreation Fund. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner Niemela to appoint Dr. Leah Abbott as Deputy Medical Examiner, term expiring December 31, 2027. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

No reports were offered.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- BCMH – Board of Trustees, Minutes

RESOLUTIONS:

Commissioner Niemela made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to adopt the following Resolution:

Resolution in Support of House Bill 6105 (Lake Level Assessment Funding Reform)

WHEREAS, Baraga County administers lake level special assessment districts under Part 307 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act; and

WHEREAS, the State of Michigan, through the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), is responsible for paying its proportional share of lake level assessments for state-owned lands; and

WHEREAS, the current Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) formula does not provide sufficient funding for the State's required lake level obligations, resulting in repeated shortfalls that shift costs onto local taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, counties across Michigan have raised concerns that the State's underpayment creates an unfunded mandate and places an unfair financial burden on local lake level districts; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 6105, sponsored by Representative Kunse, would correct this inequity by ensuring the State fully funds its statutory lake level responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC) has identified HB 6105 as a priority fix needed to protect county budgets and prevent local taxpayers from subsidizing State obligations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Baraga County Board of Commissioners hereby expresses its full support for House Bill 6105 and urges the Michigan Legislature to enact this corrective legislation without delay; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be transmitted to Representative Dave Prestin, Senator Ed McBroom, the Michigan Association of Counties, and the Governor's Office; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Baraga County encourages swift legislative action to ensure fair, predictable, and fully funded lake level assessments for all Michigan counties.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:

No Commissioner comments were offered.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Several members of the audience voiced concerns regarding the dilapidated signage at the State of Michigan roadside parks at Canyon Falls, Tioga Park, and Keweenaw Bay.

Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner Niemela to send a letter to the Baraga County CVB encouraging improvements and an update to the signs. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the County Board, Commissioner Niemela made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to adjourn the meeting until Monday, September 14, 2026. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Brad Dakota, Chairman

Wendy J. Goodreau, Clerk