

BARAGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 14, 2025

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Dakota called the Regular Meeting to order on Tuesday, October 14, 2025 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, William Menge, District 4 and Lee DeLeon, District 5.

Absent: None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commissioner DeLeon made a motion, supported by Commissioner Menge to approve the agenda, with the following additions/changes: g. Sheriff Brogan, Nancy Kent and h. Proclamation, Jill Tollefson. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner Niemela to approve the minutes for the Regular meeting held on September 8, 2025, Special Meeting held on September 25, 2025 and Closed Sessions held on September 8, 2025 and September 25, 2025. On Voice Vote, the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Agenda Items Only:

Nick Lindemann, member of the 911 Committee, voiced concern over the appointments to the Emergency Manager and 911 Director position. He would like to see input from the 911 Committee and potentially advertising for interested persons.

TREASURERS REPORT:

As presented by Treasurer, Jill C Tollefson.

REVIEW OF CLAIMS AND ACCOUNTS:

Commissioner Menge made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to approve the BCMH Trustee Per Diem for September 2025 (\$1,140.00). On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner DeLeon made a motion, supported by Commissioner Niemela to approve the payment of the Claims and Accounts for the period of September 26, 2025 through October 14, 2025 in the amount of \$35,151.08. 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 September

26, 2025 through October 14, 2025 in the amount of \$879,793.33. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Niemela made a motion, supported by Commissioner DeLeon to approve the Sheriff's Dept. Checking Account expenditures for September 2025 in the amount of \$4,233.50. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There was no Unfinished Business.

ACTION ITEMS:

Commissioner Menge made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to approve the 2025 millage rates submitted by Equalization Director Elizabeth Anderson with the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of the County has examined the Certificates, statements, papers and records submitted to it showing the amount of monies (expressed millage rates) to be raised in the several townships of the County, School, Township and other purposes, now on file in the office of the County Clerk, and properly certified to, no objections being made to raising any such monies by any taxpayer to be affected thereby.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that this Board directs that the several amounts be raised for County, School, Township, and other purposed and that said amount (in millage) be spread on the assessment rolls of the proper township as follows:

ARVON TOWNSHIP	County Operating	8.5295
	County Seniors	0.9923
	Road	1.9846
	Township Operating	0.9098
	Fire	1.4862
	Ambulance/EMS	0.5944
	Township Roads	0.9908
	State Education Tax	6.0000
	CCISD Operating	0.3970
	CCISD Voc. ED	0.9797
	CCISD Special Education	1.9001
		24.7644
Arvon Township School	School Operating	<u>13.0000</u>
ARVON TOWNSHIP TOTAL		37.7644
BARAGA TOWNSHIP	County Operating	8.5295
	County Seniors	0.9923
	Road	1.9846
	Township Operating	0.9962
	Ambulance	1.5000

	Fire	1.5000
	State Education Tax	6.0000
	CCISD Operating	0.3970
	CCISD Voc. ED	0.9797
	CCISD Special Education	1.9001
	School Sinking Fund	2.9970
		27.7764
Baraga Area Schools	School Operating	<u>17.9820</u>
BARAGA TOWNSHIP TOTAL		45.7584

COVINGTON TOWNSHIP	County Operating	8.5295
	County Seniors	0.9923
	Roads	1.9846
	Township Operating	0.9762
	Township Recreation	1.0000
	Township Fire	1.0000
	Township Ambulance	1.0000
	State Education Tax	6.0000
	CCISD Operating	0.3970
	CCISD Voc. ED	0.9797
	CCISD Special Education	1.9001
	L'Anse School Sinking Fund	0.9900
	School Debt	2.5000
		24.7594

L'Anse Area Schools	School Operating	<u>18.0000</u>
COVINGTON TOWNSHIP TOTAL		42.7594

L'ANSE TOWNSHIP	County Operating	8.5295
	County Seniors	0.9923
	Roads	1.9846
	Township Operating	0.9873
	Township Fire	0.9873
	Township Ambulance	1.4809
	State Education Tax	6.0000
	CCISD Operating	0.3970
	CCISD Voc. ED	0.9797
	CCISD Special Education	1.9001
	L'Anse School Sinking Fund	0.9900
	School Debt	2.5000

		27.7287
L'Anse Area Schools	School Operating	<u>18.0000</u>
L'ANSE TOWNSHIP TOTAL		45.7287
SPURR TOWNSHIP	County Operating	8.5295
	County Seniors	0.9923
	Roads	1.9846
	Township Operating	0.9545
	Township Fire	2.4697
	Township Cemetery	0.3457
	Township Garbage	2.2227
	Township Roads	1.9758
	State Education Tax	6.0000
	MARESA Operating	0.2018
	MARESA Operating	3.5000
	School Sinking Fund	1.7386
		30.9152
N.I.C.E Community Schools	School Operating	<u>18.0000</u>
SPURR TOWNSHIP TOTAL		48.9152

On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner DeLeon made a motion, supported by Commissioner Niemela to advertise in the L'Anse Sentinel for bids for the 2026 snow removal. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Chairman Dakota discussed the vacancy of the Emergency Manager and 911 Director positions and the necessity of these positions to be filled in a timely manner. Sheriff Brogan said since Jeff Hubbard's resignation his office is getting many phone calls and he saw an imminent need to have the position filled. He and Undersheriff Miller are willing to take on the positions but if the Board decided to go in a different direction, he would be fine with that as well. Discussion followed. After much discussion a motion was made by Commissioner Menge, supported by Commissioner Niemela to appoint Undersheriff as Acting Emergency Manager for 90 days. On Voice Vote the motion carried.

Commissioner Kent made a motion, supported by Commissioner DeLeon to appoint Sheriff Joe Brogan as the Acting 911 Director for 90 days. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Menge made a motion, supported by Commissioner Niemela to re-appoint Sue Wilson to the Baraga County DHHS Board for a three-year term expiring September 30, 2028. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- BCMH Board of Trustees, Minutes

RESOLUTIONS:

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

WHEREAS, There are currently five Behavioral Health Hospitals in the entire State of Michigan, none of them located in the Upper Peninsula, and

WHEREAS, The need for such a facility is very high in the Upper Peninsula but the only facilities available to meet this need are below the Bridge, and

WHEREAS, Local law enforcement agencies in the Upper Peninsula are frequently tasked with transporting citizens with severe mental health issues to one of these downstate facilities, and

WHEREAS, These mental health transports involve many hours and hundreds of miles taking much needed manpower off the streets and incurring great expenses for local units of government, and

WHEREAS, Every Upper Peninsula law enforcement agency has been contacted and everyone has acknowledged the tremendous waste of manpower and the risks inherent in transporting individuals with mental health issues over great distances by law enforcement officers who are untrained in how to handle these special need individuals, and

WHEREAS, Contact has been made with every county, village, township, tribal and college law enforcement agency throughout the Upper Peninsula and they unanimously support the establishment of a Behavioral Health Hospital in the Upper Peninsula, and

WHEREAS, Collaboration amongst the local governments in the Upper Peninsula is critical to convincing the legislature in Lansing to support funding and maintaining a Behavioral Health Hospital in the Upper Peninsula, and

WHEREAS, Collaboration amongst the local governments in the Upper Peninsula is also critical to creatively identifying and securing funding necessary to augment any forthcoming state funds necessary to adequately build and operate a Behavioral Health Hospital that can be shared and benefited from by all.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Baraga County Board of Commissioners supports the establishment of a Behavioral Health Hospital in the Upper Peninsula, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Baraga County Board of Commissioners stands ready to work collaboratively with other local units of government in the Upper Peninsula

in order to accomplish that goal by lobbying our representatives in Lansing to provide funding, and by identifying our own resources that may be used to make such a facility a reality.

On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS:

Chairman Dakota raised the issue of the building permitting process in Baraga County. The Board discussed the possibility of there being one building permitting process and one building inspector in the County for all five townships. Chairman Dakota is going to reach out to the townships to begin a conversation.

Nancy Kent noted that there is an influx of mental health patients from Ontonagon County to BCMH because the hospital closed. Maybe the Ontonagon hospital could be a behavioral health hospital.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Treasurer, Jill C. Tollefson, thanked the Board for the many years of a great working relationship and for their support. Ms. Tollefson introduced Ashley Kristo, the newly appointed Treasurer. Clerk Goodreau explained Ms. Kristo was appointed by a committee, set by statute, of herself as County Clerk, Judge Timothy S. Brennan, and Prosecuting Attorney Joseph P. O'Leary. Ms. Kristo's term begins November 1, 2025. Congratulations to Ashley Kristo the new Baraga County Treasurer!

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the County Board, Commissioner Menge made a motion, supported by Commissioner Kent to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:08 p.m. On Voice Vote, the motion carried.

Brad Dakota, Chairman

Wendy J. Goodreau, Clerk