

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
KEWEENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
November 19, 2025

The regular meeting of the Keweenaw County Board of Commissioners was held on November 19, 2025, at 6:30 p.m., at the Courthouse in Eagle River, MI and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The meeting was posted on the door of the Courthouse and on the Website.

Commissioner's present: Bob DeMarois, Randy Eckloff, Mike LaMotte, Del Rajala and Don Piche

Motion by DeMarois supported by Eckloff and unanimously carried to adopt the agenda with two items added under New Business: f) Resolution in Support of Bringing Amtrak Passenger Rail Service to the Upper Peninsula, g) Reaffirmation of Vote for Black Bear Rezoning due to Wording of Motion in Minutes of October 15, 2025 Meeting.

Motion by LaMotte supported by Eckloff to approve the October 15, 2025 regular monthly meeting minutes (Rajala voted NO). Minutes approved. The October 24, 2025 budget meeting minutes were approved unanimously as written.

The following reports were available: Sheriff, Treasurer, Mine Inspector & Maintenance.

Mike Bach, Copper Country Mental Health Executive Director, was present to update the Board. Mike tries to come annually to keep the Board up to date on what is going on locally and in the State. Mike spoke about the possible privatization of mental health, multiday hospital stays for psychiatric patients, transport, and bed availability for psychiatric patients. There is some talk and work being done to be able to bring patients to WI instead of going all the way downstate. Mike also thanked the Board for their continued support.

Time was allowed for public comment.

Commissioners did report on various committee meetings.

Motion by DeMarois supported by Eckloff to pay the approved and audited bills in the following amounts: General Fund=\$180,748.84 Construction Codes Fund=\$3,921.70, 911 Fund=\$4,846.65, Houghton County MCF Fund=\$1,367.76, Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund=\$30.00, FRF Fund=\$234.00, Sewage Lagoon Fund=\$85,810.00. Board polled. Ayes: Eckloff, DeMarois, LaMotte, Rajala, Piche. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Prior health insurance issues are still being dealt with. Motion by Rajala supported by DeMarois to send a letter to Upper Great Lakes to encourage them to work with employees. The sheriff department will provide a letter to the clerk to put on letterhead to send it out.

The generator project is not ready to be bid out but if it is ready before the next meeting, perhaps the Board could have special meeting to get the project moving. Motion by Rajala supported by Eckloff and unanimously carried to purchase new UPS (uninterrupted power supply) battery backups for all workstations in the Courthouse and Sheriff Department with purchases to come from the Courthouse Improvement Fund.

Motion by DeMarois supported by Rajala and unanimously carried to set a public hearing on December 17, 2025 at 6:15 pm for proposed budgets.

Zane Hyrkas-Project Manager from OHM presided over bid opening on November 12, 2025 at 2 pm in the Courtroom for the Security Project. The following bids were received and all contractors had their bond, addendum 1 and 2:

LR Contracting	364,000
IMS Contracting	344,591
MJO Contracting	321,000
Fenty Contracting	294,400

Zane took the bids and OHM looked them over, did post bid interviews with the three lowest bidders and provided a letter of recommendation for the Board of Commissioners. Based on OHM's review, Fenty Contracting was the lowest qualified bidder and provided all required documentation with their bid. Motion by DeMarois supported by Eckloff and unanimously carried to award the bid to Fenty Contracting in the amount of \$294,400.

Motion by DeMarois supported by Rajala and unanimously carried to approve the Masterplan Quarterly Report to the Nature Conservancy as submitted.

Motion by Rajala supported by Eckloff and unanimously carried to have the sheriff department fill in when maintenance is off during the winter to shovel and/or snow blow as needed. The Courthouse ladies will shovel as needed also.

Motion by DeMarois supported by Rajala and unanimously carried to add New Year’s Eve to the Courthouse holidays.

Motion by Eckloff supported by LaMotte to approve the following resolution to bring Amtrak Rail Service to the U.P.:
WHEREAS, Amtrak is working on plans to extend passenger rail service from Milwaukee, WI to Green Bay, WI, as well as other expansions across Northeast Wisconsin; and
WHEREAS, the federal and state highways have become very busy as tourists travel to enjoy the natural beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula; and
WHEREAS, Amtrak has an opportunity to expand their passenger rail service to the Upper Peninsula which would allow tourists and locals a new mode of transportation which is a benefit to all; and
WHEREAS, Amtrak travel would allow people the advantage of enjoying the scenery and beauty that the Upper Peninsula has to offer and this would be a safe way of transportation between snowstorms and wildlife as we all drive across the Upper Peninsula;
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Keweenaw County Board of Commissioners supports bringing Amtrak passenger rail service to the Upper Peninsula. **(#25-6)**
Board polled: Ayes: Eckloff, DeMarois, LaMotte, Rajala, Piche. Nays: None. Motion carried.

Motion by Rajala supported by DeMarois and unanimously carried to correct the October 15, 2025 regular meeting minutes. The draft minutes read as follows:
Motion by Eckloff supported by LaMotte to deny the rezoning request for Black Bear. The property is in Lac La Belle and the request was to go from Rural Residential to Resort Service. Board polled. Ayes: Eckloff, LaMotte, Piche. Nays: DeMarois, Rajala. Motion to deny the rezoning request carried.
The corrected minutes for this motion now read (changes in bold):
After the Board of Commissioners considered the Planning Commission’s Findings of Fact and recommendation to approve the Black Bear rezoning, motion by Eckloff supported by Lamotte to deny the rezoning request for Black Bear. The property is in Lac La Belle and the request was to go from Rural Residential to Resort Service. Board polled. Ayes: Eckloff, LaMotte, Piche. Nays: DeMarois, Rajala. Motion to deny the rezoning request carried.

Time was allowed for public comment.

An insurance committee meeting will be held on Friday to discuss other options for dental and to look at vision options.

There being no further business, motion by DeMarois to adjourn at 7:40 pm. Meeting adjourned.

Donald Piche, Chairman

Julie A. Carlson, Clerk