

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS  
KEWEENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
May 20, 2026

The regular meeting of the Keweenaw County Board of Commissioners was held on May 20, 2026, at 6:30 pm, 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 additions under New Business: p) Address need for new video surveillance system in the jail, q) Zoning Administrator application handling.

Motion by DeMarois supported by Rajala and unanimously carried to approve the April 15, 2026 regular monthly meeting minutes.

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

Our first guests tonight were 97<sup>th</sup> District Court Judge Nicholas Daavettila and Marquette County Community Corrections Administrator Trevor Kadlec. Both spoke about partnering with Marquette County for pretrial services, including risk assessments, pretrial supervision, and treatment in Saginaw that can be up to 150 days instead of the normal 30 days. This program would be especially helpful after a defendant has bonded out and is awaiting trial. Judge Daavettila said that this would be beneficial for the courts as locally, there are few resources. Trevor said that this program is grant funded by the MI Dept of Corrections and is overseen by a Community Corrections Advisory Board which meets every two months. Keweenaw County would have to provide a Board member for this board. Trevor is trying to regionalize to assist more counties in the Upper Peninsula and last year, Dickinson and Alger joined. Trevor will be back in June with more information including a budget and hopes that Keweenaw County will be open to joining.

Jay Parent from EGLE was present to talk about saving Buffalo Reef. Buffalo Reef is being affected by the sands in Gay which came from mining. Lake Superior is eroding the stamp sand into the lake and it is traveling down the shoreline as well as causing the reef to die. EGLE is looking to move the stamp sand to an area in Sherman Township away from the shoreline that will be a lined managed facility. Several alternatives have been considered such as: deep water disposal (bringing the sand out and dumping it in the lake), taking the sand and moving it next to the shore, using an existing landfill, moving sand to a limestone quarry, putting the sands back into the mines but they are flooded, keep stocking the fishery but natural reproduction is the best and lastly, building a new reef but that hadn't been too successful in the past. Three ideas came out of all of that which are: take the sand to White Pine Tailings Basin but there isn't a dock or access and they are talking about opening the mine again so that isn't feasible, creating a rock abutment but it would be so long and would need to be maintained forever and lastly is to get the sand into a lined managed facility which is being proposed. There are other areas that have stamp sand, but the sand is more stable because those areas aren't on Lake Superior. The sand is eroded into the lake and dredging must continue as the sand moves. The area for this low hazard industrial waste landfill is away from streams and wetlands and is the most favorable option. There has been public outreach, mostly in Sherman Township and there have been meetings at the Lake Linden School.

Time was allowed for public comment.

Motion by Eckloff supported by Rajala to pay the approved and audited bills in the following amounts: General Fund=\$275,218.01, Construction Codes Fund=\$704.88, 911 Fund=\$3,687.34, Child Care Fund=\$47.62, Houghton County MCF Fund=\$1,292.70, Veteran's Affairs=\$403.33, FRF Fund=\$69,107.25, AROA=\$778.51. Board polled. Ayes: DeMarois, LaMotte, Rajala, Eckloff, Piche. Nays: None. Motion Carried.

Board members did report on committee meetings.

Wording for Residency Guidelines for Canal View haven't been completed.

There was no need to act on opposing the sale of Canal View because the Houghton County Board of Commissioners just voted recently not to sell Canal View.

Motion by Eckloff supported DeMarois and unanimously carried to table the partnership with Marquette County Community Corrections until June when Trevor Kadlec will be back.

Motion by DeMarois supported by LaMotte and unanimously carried to approve and adopt the resolution for a Freedom of Information Act appeal by Alexander Munro relating to certain Keweenaw County property tax records: WHEREAS, The Keweenaw County Board of Commissioners has received and considered a Freedom of Information Act appeal by Alexander Munro relating to certain Keweenaw County property tax records.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Keweenaw County Board of Commissioners adopts the Findings and Determinations attached to this Resolution as Exhibit A, affirming the underlying decision being appealed; and IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that Don Piche, Chair of the Keweenaw County Board of Commissioners, is hereby authorized to sign the Findings and Determinations on behalf of the Keweenaw County Board of Commissioners.

**(#26-4)**

Motion by DeMarois supported by Rajala and unanimously carried to set a Truth in Taxation public hearing on Wednesday, June 17, 2026 at 6:15 p.m. at the Courthouse in Eagle River, MI prior to the regular monthly meeting.

Motion by Eckloff supported by Rajala and unanimously carried to allow the Building Codes Assistant (per her request) to go to two days per week, with a third day as needed. The third day may be needed when the Equalization Director needs assistance with appraisals or if there are many permits waiting. This will be a one-month trial and if it isn't working out, she would need to come back for three days per week.

Motion by Rajala supported by DeMarois and unanimously carried to approve Change Order #4 of the Security Project providing card reader/keypad combination access control for office 105 and vestibule 206A, provide conduit and conductors to card reader/keypad and electric strike, and to provide programming to add the doors to the current access control system in the amount of \$10,879.79.

Motion by DeMarois supported by Eckloff and unanimously carried to approve Pay Request #3 for Fenty Contracting Co, LLC in the amount of \$68,177.72 for the security project.

Motion by DeMarois supported by LaMotte and unanimously carried to approve the 911 Plan Review.

Motion by Rajala supported by Eckloff and unanimously carried to scrap the 2009 Triton 2 place snowmobile trailer.

Motion by Rajala supported by LaMotte and unanimously carried to approve the installation of an upstairs bathroom exhaust fan for the sheriff's office in the amount of \$1,325 by Ronald Hyrkas Contracting Inc and for this to come from the Courthouse Improvement Fund.

Motion by Rajala supported by Eckloff and unanimously carried to approve the installation of a man door on the new garage in the amount of \$3,251 which includes installation by Keweenaw Glass & Door.

Sheriff Pennala thanked the Board for their support throughout the years. He was present to begin talking about how to fund the seventh full time position when the ARPA funding expires. Sheriff Pennala said a seventh deputy is necessary if there are going to be two officers in the car at night as backup can be so far away. There was a Finance Committee created and the Treasurer will get a meeting set so that this item can be brought up there.

The Articles of Incorporation for the Keweenaw Heartlands Recreational & Natural Resources Authority have been posted on the website since April 20<sup>th</sup> and they were available at the Board Meeting on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Many hours have been spent by several committees on the entire creation of the Keweenaw Heartlands Authority over the last four years. Public meetings were held by TNC throughout the process. DeMarois motioned to approve the Articles of Incorporation but there was not a second. After further conversation, motion by Rajala supported by Eckloff and unanimously carried to hold a public hearing on Monday, June 1, 2026 at 6 pm at the Courthouse in Eagle River, MI to hear public comment on the Articles and to hold a special meeting right after the public hearing to consider the proposed Articles of Incorporation. The Articles will be published in full in the Daily Mining Gazette prior to the meeting and copies are available at the Clerk's office. Written comments are also welcome prior to the meeting.

The next available grant funding for housing rehabilitation will be in October of 2026. Once more information is available, this will come back before the Board of Commissioners.

Motion by Eckloff supported by LaMotte to hold a public hearing for the request to remove Harvey Desnick from the Planning Commission and as liaison to the Zoning Board of Appeals for allegations of malfeasance in office by John Kern. Roll call vote: Yes-to hold public hearing: Eckloff, LaMotte. Nays: DeMarois, Rajala, Piche.

Motion by Eckloff supported by DeMarois and unanimously carried to table the resolution to Protect Rural Access to Behavioral Health Services by adopting proposed FY 2027 boilerplate language until more information is available.

Motion by Eckloff supported by DeMarois and unanimously carried to purchase and install new video surveillance for the jail.

Item q), zoning administrator application handling was added to the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. There was no action on the matter, but the subject was very controversial.

Time was allowed for public comment.

There being no further business, motion by DeMarois to adjourn at 9:17 pm. Meeting adjourned.

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Donald Piche, Chairman

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Julie A. Carlson, County Clerk

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