

**COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PERSONNEL, EQUALIZATION AND APPORTIONMENT/TRANSPORTATION/HEALTH AND
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

April 13, 2026

A regular meeting of the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners Personnel/Equalization and Apportionment/Transportation/Health and Social Services Committee was held on Monday, April 13, 2026, at the Chippewa County Courthouse in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Chairman Damon Lieurance called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. with a quorum present.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Damon Lieurance, Justin Knepper, and Scott Shackleton

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Karen Senkus, Ryan Hering, Dulcee Atherton and Kelly Church

Approval of the Agenda

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioners Knepper, to approve the agenda as presented. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Public Comment

No public comment was offered.

Equalization – Millages and property values

The Committee was updated by Equalization Director Dulcee Atherton who provided information on the County's Personal and Real property totals, Equalized Valuations – REAL and Assessed Valuations – REAL all which are part of the L-4024 report broken down by township acreage with the report showing each of the township's breakdown by the categories of: agriculture, commercial, industrial, residential, timber-cutover and development. The Committee also reviewed the 2026 Millage Reduction Fraction Computation for 2026, and Proposal A (Headlee rollback), and its effects on tax bills and the upcoming millage questions. Equalization Director Atherton asked the Committee to approve the post Board of Review equalized and certified figures on the L4026. The Committee discussed the June Truth in Taxation upcoming public hearing. Discussion followed.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Shackleton, that the 2026 equalized and certified values, tentative taxable values presented by Director Atherton be approved as reported and that all state required forms regarding same be completed and filed as required by statute and to establish a Truth in Taxation Public Hearing for the June 11, 2026 meeting of the County Board. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Personnel – Sheriff's Office – Chippewa Youth Outreach Program

Undersheriff Ryan Hering notified the Committee regarding the formation of the Chippewa Youth Outreach Program, which will be led by Erica Mattson with funding established at the Chippewa County Community Foundation as a 501 3c account to be used as a platform for first responders to be more accessible to the youth in the Community, programs for youth enrichment and support through community wide events. There will be no funding from Chippewa County as the program will be relying on donations, fund raising events and possibly grant funds. No action was taken.

Personnel – Sheriff's Office – Sheriff's Officer Wellness Program

The Committee reviewed a request from the Sheriff's Office to implement a more proactive employee wellness program, Undersheriff Hering addressed the Committee regarding Sheriff's Office employee's mental health

events, mental health time for deputies and a physical fitness program. The Undersheriff is trying to make a proactive change so that the County stops losing talent he shared statistics regarding police officer lifespans compared to the average life expectancy. The Office already utilizes reactive program including Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), Blue H.E.L.P (Honor Educate Lead Prevent), Partners in mental health therapy with Sheriff's Office Administration creating a culture where it is acceptable to talk about mental health and to reach out if needed. The first part of the plan starts with a program called Protect the Protectors™, provided by Robertson Research Institute, the program optimizes brain health for better first responder emotional, physical, and mental health. The Sheriff's Office would like to implement the program utilizing Fund 245 – Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Pilot Program funds, initially for the Sheriff's Road Division, at a cost of \$9,000.00 for FY2026 or \$500 per employee, if grant eligible. The second part of the plan is to use the current mental health budget for gatherings and office-wide events to help create a supportive culture. The third part of the plan is to allow for all full-time employees and 79-hours corrections employees to be able to utilize 1 hour a week for mental health activities which could include therapy, physical training which leads to the final part of the plan which is to incorporate a physical fitness program. Discussion followed.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to support the Sheriff's Office Employee Wellness Program, establishing a more proactive program and to authorize the Protect the Protectors™ program provided by the Robertson Research Institute at a cost of \$9,000.00 for FY2026 for the Sheriff's Road Division. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Personnel – Sheriff's Office Administration Non-Union – Hybrid Eligible – 457 Match

The Committee was updated on benefits within the Sheriff's Office and inconsistencies that develop after negotiations, and when personnel transfer into Sheriff's Office Administrative roles (Sheriff, Undersheriff, Captain and Lieutenant). The difference between a defined contribution vs a Hybrid retirement was discussed; as well as the loss of the 457 Match, if an officer chooses to transfer into Administration. Discussion followed.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to authorize employees currently enrolled in the County's 457 Match Plan (Road Patrol 8% - Corrections 10%) to maintain their current level of contribution upon transfer into Sheriff's Administration positions of Sheriff, Undersheriff, Captain and Lieutenant and to extend eligibility for the 457 match contribution to employees who have previously transferred and are eligible under a hybrid retirement plan, effective 4/27/2026. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Personnel – Health Department – Medical Director Dr. Michael Beaulieu, M.D.

The Committee was notified that Dr. Michael Beaulieu, M.D. will be replacing retiring Medical Officer Dr. Catherine Wilkerson as the Health Department's Medical Director beginning May 15, 2026, with a built-in transition period. The contract is \$60,000.00 annually and Dr. Beaulieu is required to spend 16 hours per week in the health department. The Medical Director Agreement will be on the Finance Claims and Accounts agenda for approval. No action was necessary.

Personnel – Health Department – Permission to speak with LMAS regarding

County and Health Department Administration addressed the Committee regarding the recently announced retirement of Health Officer Karen Senkus, who will be retiring June of 2027. Administration would like the support to reach out to LMAS District Health regarding a potential future merger to not only consolidate services, but to maintain the current services provided to our constituents and possibly add new services. A brief discussion regarding leadership, future unfunded liabilities, and consolidation of services took place.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Shackleton, to authorize Administration to explore options for a potential merger between the Chippewa County Health Department and LMAS District Health our neighboring jurisdiction and to report back the findings for further consideration. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Personnel – County Wide Staffing Update

The Committee was updated on the current job openings, outstanding personnel issues, and reminded of upcoming negotiations.

Personnel – Non-union Part-time Wages

The Committee reviewed the proposed changes to the non-union part-time wages scale, which would eliminate the first three steps and change the starting wage to \$15.49 and change the basis of increase to years instead of hours. This is to keep up with the demands of seeking qualified applicants and to keep pace with the changes to minimum wage. Discussion followed.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Shackleton, to approve the Non-Union Part time (NUPT) as follows: starting rate \$15.49; after 1-year \$15.91; after two-years \$16.36 and after three-years \$16.78; this scale will be effective 4/27/2026. On a voice vote, the motion passed.

Health and Social Services – M-129 Drinking Water Follow-Up

Health Officer Karen Senkus reviewed the investigative report from MDHSS from the July August 2025 reports of potential groundwater contamination along M-129 and updated the Committee on the findings which did not find any aquifer issues, there were many similar issues at the household including needing new caps and another needing chlorination cleaning. The report concluded that the bacteria detections being widespread, not within the same aquifer and with a majority of the MDHSS bacteria detections being identified on properties with identified environmental health hazards, widespread aquifer contamination is unlikely, with many of the houses being resampled with no bacteria detected. Discussion followed regarding the actions of Environmental Health being the correct actions and the possibility of posting the MDHSS report to the Health Department website. No action was taken.

Health and Social Services – RxSaveCard – Program Cost Summary


The Committee was updated on the first quarter of the RxSaveCard program, showing a total of 28 members and a savings to date of \$12,350.00. No action was taken.

Committee and Chairman's Comments


None offered.

Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was declared adjourned at 2:00 p.m.



Kelly J. Church, Recorder



Damon Lieurance, Chairperson