

**CHIPPEWA COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Regular Session
February 12, 2026

The Chippewa County Board of Commissioners met at a regular session on Thursday, February 12, 2026, in the 91st District Courtroom.

Chairman Martin called the meeting to order at 4:29 P.M. with a quorum present. The meeting was also available via zoom. Commissioner Traynor lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: Commissioners Justin Knepper, Damon Lieurance, James Traynor and Chairman Jim Martin

ABSENT: Scott Shackleton

ALSO PRESENT: Administrator Kelly Church, Clerk Steven Woodgate, Administrative assistant Cady Bauers, and 4 members of the public. 6 members of the public logged in via zoom.

ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF COUNTY BOARD MINUTES

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to accept the following minutes as presented:

- Organizational Meeting – January 5, 2026

On a voice vote, the motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Traynor, for the correspondence be forward in Clerk's office to the proper entity. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dave Deuman said he appreciated the Commission on taking the time to consider Resolution 2026-01.

Sarah Karasinski spoke about the Commission changing the requirements for board members and EUPTA not having an advisory committee

Phylis Reed spoke about the problems with the cuts in the Neebish Island Ferry schedule and that EUPTA has \$7 million in their savings.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Kelly Church provided for informational purposes only – *no action items*.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 2026-01

The following resolution was offered by Commissioner Knepper and supported by Commissioner Lieurance.

**Supporting Citizen Petition to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regarding Canal
Dredging of the St. Mary's River
2026-01**

WHEREAS, the Chippewa County Board of Commission recognizes the importance of maintaining healthy and navigable waterways for the benefit of residents, wildlife, and the broader community; and

WHEREAS, a petition has been submitted by residents David and Heather Deuman of 15905 S. Scenic Drive, Barbeau, Michigan, along with other concerned citizens, requesting assistance from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to dredge the canal located in front of their residential properties, which connects directly to the St. Mary's River; and

WHEREAS, the canal has experienced significant sediment accumulation resulting in stagnant water, trapped wildlife, excessive algae growth, overpopulation of amphibians, and reduced navigability, thereby impacting the local ecosystem, recreational use, and property enjoyment; and

WHEREAS, the petition seeks federal evaluation and potential dredging assistance to restore the canal's function and improve water access for the benefit of Bruce Township residents and the surrounding environment; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE RESOLVED, that Chippewa County Board of Commissioners formally supports the citizen petition submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and encourage federal consideration of dredging assistance for the affected canal.

A ROLL-CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN AS FOLLOWS:

AYES: Commissioners Knepper, Shackleton, Traynor, and Chairman Martin

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Shackleton

RESOLUTION 2026-01 DECLARED ADOPTED

RESOLUTION 2026-02

The following resolution was offered by Commissioner Lieurance and supported by Commissioner Knepper.

SPECIAL TRIBUTE 2026-02

Carmen Fazzari

Let It Be Known, that it is with great pride that the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners join with the employees and residents of Chippewa County, to express their wish for good health and happiness upon **Carmen Fazzari's** retirement as she prepares for the new and exciting experiences that lie ahead.

Carmen Fazzari has served the citizens of Chippewa County with unquestionable integrity, and for this we extend our thanks. **Carmen Fazzari** provided exceptional service to thousands of individuals for the past twenty-nine plus years.

Carmen Fazzari has taken personal pride in her work with Chippewa County starting here in November of 1996 and has served in all three positions in the Treasurer's Office, Deputy Treasurer, Chief Deputy Treasurer and was appointed Chippewa County Treasurer on November 1, 2019, and will be retiring February 28, 2026.

Carmen Fazzari through her recommendations, her high-performance standards, her friendship, her effectiveness, and her awareness to her fellow workers and citizens place her in the highest of categories.

Carmen Fazzari has served the citizens of Chippewa County with honesty and integrity and the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the residents of Chippewa County, extends their appreciation to a fellow elected official, and friend who is thoughtful, caring, dedicated, and who made a favorable impact on the betterment of life and well being in Chippewa County.

IN SPECIAL TRIBUTE, therefore upon her retirement from Chippewa County, this document is signed and dedicated to honor **Carmen Fazzari**, for her contributions to Chippewa County, and the individuals she served so well, we join to extend to **Carmen Fazzari** a gracious thank you for a job well done. Congratulations on your retirement.

A ROLL-CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN AS FOLLOWS:

AYES: Commissioners Knepper, Shackleton, Traynor, and Chairman Martin
NAYES: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Shackleton

RESOLUTION 2026-02 DECLARED ADOPTED

RESOLUTION 2026-03

The following resolution was offered by Commissioner Lieurance and supported by Commissioner Knepper.

Resolution 2026-03

Supporting Michigan House Bills 5152 and 5153

WHEREAS, the Office of the Register of Deeds is charged with maintaining accurate, accessible, and secure land records that form the foundation of real property ownership, economic development, and public trust in local governments; and

WHEREAS, predatory practices have been identified where third-party firms target vulnerable residents who are facing mortgage foreclosure and convince them to sell either their property or their statutory rights to surplus foreclosure proceeds and redemption for a fraction of the true value, often stripping residents of tens of thousands of dollars in home equity; and

WHEREAS, House Bills 5152 and 5153 have been introduced in the Michigan Legislature to amend the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, providing critical protection for homeowners during mortgage foreclosure proceedings; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 5153 would directly stop this predatory model by making a mortgagor's right to surplus money and right of redemption non-assignable and non-transferable after a notice of foreclosure is recorded, except through legitimate testate or intestate succession; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 5152 would further protect homeowners by requiring a mandatory "Notice of Rights" for any conveyance of property after a foreclosure notice is recorded, ensuring the seller fully understands they are waiving their rights to redemption, occupancy, and surplus proceeds; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Association of Registers of Deeds recognizes that one of the roles of the Register of Deeds Office is to protect the property rights of the public and recognizes House Bills 5152 and 5153 are securing said rights.

WHEREAS, the Michigan Association of Registers of Deeds fully supports House Bills 5152 and 5153, which will protect State of Michigan residents from foreclosure fraud, preserve home equity for families, and reduce the burden on local government resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Chippewa Board of Commissioners are also in support of House Bills 5152 and 5153 which will safeguard Chippewa's residents during the foreclosure process and lessen the strain on county resources.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor of Michigan, the Chippewa County's state legislative delegation, and other Counties as a communication.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners asks the Michigan Association of Counties advocate on behalf of this legislation in the Michigan House of Representatives and the Michigan State Senate.

Resolution 2026-03 – Supporting House Bills 5152 and 5153

A ROLL-CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN AS FOLLOWS:

AYES: Commissioners Knepper, Shackleton, Traynor, and Chairman Martin

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Shackleton

RESOLUTION 2026-03 DECLARED ADOPTED

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Building Grounds and Jail, Legislative and Natural Resources and Information

Technology Committee

Meeting Minutes

January 13, 2026

Agenda Items

Building and Grounds

Courthouse Water Remediation & Repairs Update

The Committee was updated on the progress of the water and materials remediation needed after the December 14, 2025, water line break from the third-floor bathroom. Atlas Cleaning & Restoration LLC provided a detailed twenty-four-page report showing what services were provided by office and floor of the Courthouse. There was water and material damage on each floor of the Courthouse, with the stairwell and the Probate Courtroom having the most needed mitigation, including engineering needed for necessary stairwell repairs. The Committee reviewed the mitigation estimate and the processes used to clean and dry the affected areas, the estimate for reconstruction, which did not include the stairwell added structural repairs. The Committee then reviewed a recent air quality complaint received third-party by County Administration from the Court Administrators who were made aware of possible concerns from local attorneys. The Committee reviewed the indoor particulate levels from a January 8, 2026, report, as testing was sought as soon as the complaints were received. The particulate levels were all lower (better) than the outdoor environment; it was noted that these tests would not determine what actual particulates are in the air. Discussion followed regarding odors and needed follow-up, if any. The Committee also received the Engineering Services documents and repairs drawing, the architectural/engineering services were \$2,900.00. It was noted that the fire panel had already been replaced; and the door security system was awaiting approval from the insurance company and that flow-based shutoff valves were being researched for the Courthouse, Animal Shelter and Sheriff's Office Training Office, to prevent future water issues. A tour of the Courthouse followed at the end of the meeting.

Legislative and Natural Resources

Policy No. 324 County Payments Postmark Policy

The Committee was updated on an issue regarding the need to establish a policy for postmarked payments to County Offices, as the U.S.P.S. has made changes that may affect when envelopes are postmarked. Policy 324 County Payments Postmark Policy and a press release from County Treasurer Carmen Fazzari will establish and help to notify the payor of acceptable proof of timely mailings, as well as, non-acceptable and includes the responsibility of the payor. This policy will be implemented as of February 12, 2026, following the Board of Commissioners Regular February meeting.

Note: House Bill 4799 could require Treasurers to accept the postmark from the U.S.P.S. if not less than five days prior to the due dates, the House currently has this bill placed on third reading as of January 21, 2026. The bill is intended to protect taxpayers from unnecessary penalties and ensure consistency across all taxes in Michigan.

It was moved by Commissioner Traynor, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to approve and authorize Policy 324 – County Payments Postmark Policy, as presented. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

Note: Administration will update policy if necessary per HB 4799.

Committee and Chairman's Comments

No additional comments were offered.

Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Traynor, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to approve the notes as presented. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

FINANCE, CLAIMS AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES February 10, 2026

AGENDA ITEMS

Health Department – Pink Ribbon Request #26-01 - \$1,888.50

The Committee received and reviewed Pink Ribbon Request #26-01 in the amount of \$1,888.50 for payment from the Pink Ribbon Fund, all expenses were previously reviewed by Health Officer Karen Senkus.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to approve and authorize Pink Ribbon Request #26-01 for payment in the amount of \$1,888.50. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

Health Department – Smiles on Wheels – Provider Agreement

The Health Department presented a new service agreement for Smiles on Wheels to provide the services necessary for Kindergarten Oral Health Program through the Health Department. Smile on Wheels will do all the reporting, outreach and contacting the schools, and the Health Officer will approve the reports before they are submitted and act as a liaison when needed.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Chariman Martin, to approve and authorize the new provider Smiles on Wheels to provide the required Kindergarten Oral Health Program for the Health Department. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

Sheriff's Office – Purchase New Handguns - \$18,507.50 (budgeted)

The Committee reviewed the Sheriff's Office request to purchase twenty-two new handguns and accessories for the road division employees, a total cost of \$18,507.50 which is below the budget requested amount by \$4,727.03. The Committee asked a couple questions regarding the difference in firearms quoted by CMP Distributors, Inc.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to approve and authorize the purchase from CMP Distributors, Inc, to purchase new handguns and accessories for the road division employees at the price of \$18,507.50. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

Sheriff's Office – Deputy handgun buyback guideline \$200.00

The Committee also reviewed a request to establish a policy handgun buyback guideline, which will offer the Sheriff's Office staff the opportunity to purchase their old service weapons at the cost of \$200.00. This will change the past practice of getting estimates and having the Board of Commissioners approve each handgun buyback.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to approve and authorize the Sheriff's Office a \$200.00 handgun buyback program for the Sheriff's Office employees to purchase their service weapons. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

Sheriff's Office – Vehicle Purchase update (no action needed)

New 2024 Chevy truck purchase \$45,989.00

2026 Chevy Tahoe \$55,792.00

The Committee was updated that these vehicles were purchased at the State of Michigan pricing per the FY26 Budget request; and were also notified that Sheriff's Office purchased a lesser cost Chevy truck at a saving of approximately \$9,000.00.

Sheriff's Office – Canteen Services, Inc. Amendment Four Renewal

The Committee reviewed the Sheriff's Office request to approve Amendment Four from Canteen Services, Inc., which will go into effect March 8, 2026, with a revision to the pricing schedule and will remain in force through March 8, 2027. The Committee received and reviewed the

breakdown cost increases that covered the past three years, the agreement allows for one (1) additional one-year renewal.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to approve and authorize Canteen Services, Inc. Amendment Four Renewal, increasing the per meal cost effective March 8, 2026, through March 8, 2027. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

Sheriff's Office – Diamond Pharmacy Services – 4% Increase

The Committee reviewed noticed from Diamond Pharmacy Services of a 4% increase effective January 1, 2026; Diamond Pharmacy Services provides inmate medication dispensing and management services for the Chippewa County Correctional Facility. The increase is applicable to the dispensing and return processing fees per the pricing agreement for the remainder of the calendar year.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to acknowledge the 4% increase from Diamond Pharmacy Services, effective January 1, 2026, for twelve months; Diamond Pharmacy Services provides inmate medication dispensing and management services. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

Information Systems – 50 MBPS Point to Point Bid Summary – 10-Year - \$48,775.00

The Committee reviewed a request from Information Systems to change from a firewall with internet to point-to-point services to meet new CJIS (Criminal Justice Information Services) requirements of having 140-3 (security requirements for cryptographic modules) Certificate for the Sheriff's Office Training Building, the service billing will be split 25/75 with the Animal Shelter covering 25% and the Sheriff's Office covering the other 75% and will replace the current Charter line. The Committee reviewed the savings and the 10-year bids provided.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to approve the low bid of \$48,775.00, a 10-year locked in rate with Peninsula Fiber Network, to provide a 50 MBPS point-to-point connection between the County Building and the Animal Shelter/Sheriff's Office Training Building, as presented (monthly cost of \$400.00, one-time cost of \$775.00 = total cost \$48,775.00). On a voice vote, the motion carried.

Information Systems – Release Request for Proposals

Zulty Desk Phones

Firewall

Website Refresh

The Committee received the Request for Proposals for the Zulty Desk Phones, Firewall and Website Refresh.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to approve and authorize the release of the Requests for Proposals, as presented for the Zulty Desk Phones, Firewall and Website Refresh. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

Office of Emergency Services – Incident Command System 400 Advanced Training
\$2,500.00

The Committee reviewed a request from Director Greg Postma, to provide requested Incident Command System training for ICS-400, to provide an opportunity for local community leaders and employees to attend class at the cost of \$2,500.00 which will occur on March 5th and 6th. Providing Emergency Training to county officials and partners is also a requirement of the EMPG Grant.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to approve and authorize Incident Command System 400 Advanced Training at the cost of \$2,500.00 per requirement. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

2026 Survey & Remonumentation – BCC 26-17 \$122,687.00

- **Administration - \$17,735.88 – Patricia Weinreis**
- **Monumentation Contracts**
 - **\$48,600.00 – Alpine Engineering – 27 corners**
 - **\$48,600.00 – Sidock Group – 27 corners**
- **Peer Review Professional Surveyors - \$5,000.00 shared**
 - **Jeff Davis, P.S., Sidock Group**
 - **William L. Karr, P.S., retired**
 - **Ginger L. Michalski, P.S., Alpine Engineering**
 - **Larry Rogers, P.S., retired**
 - **Lawrence Weinreis, P.S., retired**

The Committee reviewed the 2026 Survey and Remonumentation Grant from the Office of Land Surveying and Remonumentation of \$107,687.00 and the County contributed \$15,000.00 for a total of \$122,687.00. The Committee reviewed the contracts for administration, monumentation and peer review for the 2026 Remonumentation Program. All documents need to be approved and authorized for signature by the Committee.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to accept and authorize the Program Representative/Administrative contract in the amount \$17,735.88 for Patricia Weinreis, P.S., under the direct supervision of Robert Laitinen, PS, Chippewa County Surveyor; to approve two (2) Monumentation contracts each contract for \$48,600.00 for Alpine Engineering and Sidock Group to monument 27 corners each; to approve five Professional Service Agreements for the Peer Review Surveyors, total not to exceed \$5,000 for the following Surveyors: Jeff Davis, P.S., Sidock Group; William L. Karr, P.S., retired, Ginger L. Michalski-Wallace, P.S., Alpine Engineering; Larry Rogers, P.S., retired and Lawrence Weinreis, P.S., retired. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

Administration – Chippewa County Courthouse Complex and the City of SSM for Parking Enforcement Activities and Juror Parking Passes

The Committee reviewed the Memorandum of Understanding between Chippewa County Courthouse Complex and the City of Sault Ste. Marie for Parking Enforcement Activities and Juror Parking Passes, these MOU came about in April of 2024, when the City of SSM looked to terminate the process of providing the free paper parking passes with the jury notices and transition to paid parking as it is with all other users and asked that it be possible to transition as soon as May 1, 2024. Since that point the MOU has been bounced back and forth for many months, including having the courts go directly with City staff to try to come to an agreement; recently an updated draft MOU was drafted and reviewed, with an outstanding question about parking on Court and Bingham Avenue meters. The Committee discussed several topics regarding parking and the conflicts, including the comments from the Courts with Commissioner Knepper indicating that the cost of snowplowing and maintenance of the parking lots brought this forward and the metered parking on Court Street and Bingham Avenue was just an oversight. Discussion followed.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to approve the amended Memorandum of Understanding between Chippewa County Courthouse Complex and the City of Sault Ste. Marie for Parking Enforcement Activities and Juror Parking Passes. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

Administration – Flow-based Water Shutoff Valves

The Committee reviewed flow-based water shutoff valves for the Courthouse, Animal Shelter and the Sheriff's Training Building. These flow-based water shutoff valves could have saved much of the damage to the Courthouse's December 14th water line break and were suggested by a Facility Consultant who reached out following the water damage. This type of valve would not work in the Jail Facility.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to approve and authorize the quote from Albert Heating & Cooling to install water shutoff valves as follows: Courthouse \$3,166.00, Animal Shelter \$2,312.00 and Sheriff's Training Building \$2,468.00; not including electrical. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

Administration – Courthouse Water Damage Update

Administrator Church gave a quick update on the status of the Courthouse water damage, everything is fully dried and we have approval to move forward with repairing the damages, MMRMA will only be covering 50% of the stairwell repairs and the water damage did not cause the structural issue it only aggravated the already broken stringers. Repairs should start within the next week.

Finance - Claims and Accounts – January– County

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to recommend the approval of January bills and payroll: general claims \$619,808.01, other fund claims \$948,653.98, payroll \$634,804.33 total claims \$2,203,266.32. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

CLOSED SESSION

Collective Bargaining Negotiations pursuant MCL 15.268 (c)

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to approve and authorize the Collective Bargaining Agreements between Chippewa County, Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM), from 1/1/2026 to 12/31/2028; covering the Sheriff's Office Road Patrol, as re-negotiated and ratified by the Road Patrol Union members, and authorizing the 457 adoption agreement changes for Nationwide as negotiated. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

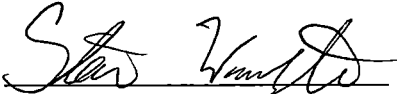
It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to accept the minutes as presented. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

COMMISSIONER REPORT ON MEETINGS AS BOARD REPRESENTATIVES AND GENERAL COMMENTS

Commissioner Knepper said he is interested in looking into the EUPTA Advisory Committee legal concern, would like to meet with the staff at EUPTA, and would be interested in possibly having a joint meeting with the Board of Commissioners and the EUPTA Board to brainstorm ideas. Commissioner Lieurance mentioned he thought it was important to establish a policy to make only residents serve on the local boards. He also mentioned that EUPTA has an Advisory Board that meets annually. Commissioner Traynor said he tried to get the EUPTA Board to help Neebish Island, but he does not see them giving any of the \$7 million they have in the bank to help them. Chairman Martin said people serving on local boards need to be residents, and money from EUPTA's fund equity should only be spent sparingly to prevent financial difficulties if any problems occur in the future. He also said the County was in bad financial shape 20 years ago from money going to the retired employees' pensions and health care at the time, and he doesn't want the County to be in bad financial shape again. Chairman Knepper mentioned Chippewa County has incredibly unique geography with its large islands, and it may be short sighted not to think about strategic growth on the islands. Chairman Martin said the islands downstate do not get the subsidies like the islands in Chippewa County, and asking for more money could do more harm than good.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commissioner Traynor, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to adjourn, accordingly. On a voice vote, the motion carried. The Board adjourned at 5:34 P.M.



Steven Woodgate, Clerk



James Martin, Chairman