

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

September 10, 2026

A regular meeting of the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners Personnel/Equalization and Apportionment/Transportation/Health and Social Services Committee was held on Thursday, September 10, 2026, at the Chippewa County Sheriff's Office Training Center in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Chairman Damon Lieurance called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. with a quorum present.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Jim Traynor, Dr. Joel Robertson, Mike Bitnar, Ryan Hering, Justin Fruchey, Cady Bauers, Karen Senkus 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.

Personnel – Sheriff's Office – Protect the Protectors – Employee Wellness Program

The Committee listened to a presentation by Dr. Joel Robertson from the Robertson Research Institute who offers a non-profit 501(C)3 wellness/brain-health program specifically designed for first responders, including law enforcement, firefighters, dispatchers and other public-safety personnel. The program focuses on helping responders manage the long-term effects of occupational stress and improve emotional, physical and mental well-being through educational seminars, individualized strategic plans, and follow-up assessments. This is a wellness program is structured first-responders including patrol officers, corrections officers and dispatchers, where the participants receive a personalized brain health assessment, analytical insights with actionable strategies for daily health, performance and relationships. Discussion followed with Committee member Knepper asking about potential programing that could include the other local and city personnel. Undersheriff Ryan Hering summarized the program and its potential benefits to the road patrol and corrections officers; the Sheriff's Office will be seeking approval to move on to Phase II for the road patrol officers and starting Phase I for the corrections staff. Administration will check with Central Dispatch Director Greg Postma, about the SNC approval to determine if this is something that he would also like to implement.

A five-minute break between agenda items was taken at 11:47 a.m.

Personnel – Health Department – CCHD Association with LMAS Recommendation

County and Health Department Administration updated the Committee with a recommendation to enter into an Association Agreement with the LMAS in preparation for the retirement of the Chippewa County Health Officer in June 2027. The annual cost of the agreement for 2027 would be approximately \$174,472, which includes .50 FTE Health Officer, .15 FTE Community Health Director, .20 FTE School-Based Health Coordinator and .05 FTE Deputy Health Officer. The Association Agreement will have an annual increase in costs to be agreed upon by all parties. This cost would be offset by approximately \$175,000.00 in eventual annual personnel savings. Overall, the proposed Association Agreement offers continuity of leadership, preserves Chippewa County's local public health structure, avoids potential disruption to state funding, supports existing employees, and programs, and creates a responsible framework for greater efficiency and cooperation through attrition and shared responsibilities. The final Association Agreement will be presented to the full board once drafted and approved by MDHHS.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to enter into an Association Agreement with LMAS District Health Department effective July1, 2027, sharing the positions as presented and to bring the full Board of Commissioners the Association Agreement for approval once drafted. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

***** See Board meeting minutes from 9-17-2026 motion not acted upon due to LMAS not approving the Association**

Personnel – Health Department – Lead Role effective 6/1/2027, County Scale 12

The Association Agreement with LMAS will require Chippewa County to designate an employee to serve in a local lead role position and assist with coordinating day-to-day operations. We recommend assigning that responsibility to the county's current Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. The employee's salary would initially increase by approximately \$12,000 to a County Grade 12 (following Policy 211), with the total increase eventually reaching up to \$20,000 annually, plus associated fringe-benefit costs.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioners Shackleton, to approve as part of the Association Agreement that a lead role position be appointed as of June 1, 2027, at the County Grade 12 following Policy 211, that role will go to the current Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

***See Board meeting minutes from 9-17-2026 motion not acted upon due to LMAS not approving the Association

Personnel – Non-Union Updated PayScale and Switch Health Department Employees to County Scale

The Committee discussed proposed pay raises for non-union employees; reviewed salaries of the non-union employees for its annual consideration. These annual adjustments aim to ensure wage competitiveness and retain qualified staff. The proposed increase is based on union and non-union percentage increases over the past years; the proposed 2% increase for approximately 60 full-time positions is estimated at \$90,000.00 annually. The 2% increase would include changing over the final ten positions from the Health Department including the Supervisors, Sanitarians, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Information Systems Technician, Health Educator, SHACC Clerk/Tech being added to the County pay scale and to pay the Hearing and Vision Technician hours at the County Grade 7, all effective 9/27/2026. Following lengthy discussion and review of the pay scale, cost estimates, comparables and the positions changing from the Health Department scale to the County. The Committee discussed the county budget overall and the affordability of the continued increases and overall concerns for a balanced budget and the MERS current unfunded liability of almost 18 million dollars.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Shackleton, to approve and authorize a non-union wage increase of 2% effective September 27, 2026, including adding the final Health Department positions to the County scale, as presented for the Supervisors, Sanitarians, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Information Systems Technician, Health Educator, SHACC Clerk/Tech being added to the County pay scale and to pay the Hearing and Vision Technician hours at the County Grade 7. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Personnel – Building Inspector Position Options

The Committee was updated on the Building Inspector's resignation effective September 25, 2026, and presented with a couple options which have not been fully researched due to the limited timing of the announcement and the lack of receiving SOM qualified Building Officials resumes. The County could seek assistance for 60 days from the State of Michigan to step in and handle the approximately 280 open permits; the State would invoice the County at the State rate for services allowable for each plan review/permit performed by the State; this arrangement can be sought to be extended for an additional 60-days. The County could also rescind our authority effective September 25, 2026, which we are still determining how the current permits would transfer over to the State of Michigan. If we were to find a qualified building official, we could be reassigned as a building official authority at that time. Notification to the Townships regarding the Building Official would need to be a consideration, we do have one township that does have their own building official (Pickford), which the Townships could also consider. We will be keeping the part-time staff on to assist with either the State of Michigan assistance or the transfer of files. Administration will still need to follow up on the soil erosion program and the recently updated National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Lengthy discussion took place with topics including reaching out to current building license holders/contractors to make them aware of the job opening, increase in the pay grade and the importance of trying to keep this position in-house to help with the response time and the local economy.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to seek the 60-day assistance from the State of Michigan's LARA, to send out letters to licensed builders/contractors and to increase the pay grade to the County Grade 12. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Health and Social Services – Chippewa County Community Health Needs Assessment – September 15, 2026

The Committee received the invitation to attend the Community Health Needs Assessment presentation on September 15, 2026.

CLOSED SESSION

Collective Bargaining Negotiations pursuant MCL 15.268 (c)

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to enter closed session to discuss collective bargaining negotiations, pursuant to MCL 15.268 (c).

Roll call vote 3-0. Closed session began at 12:37 p.m.

It was moved by Commissioner Knepper, supported by Commissioner Shackleton, to exit closed session wherein we discussed upcoming collective bargaining negotiations, pursuant to MCL 15.268 (c).

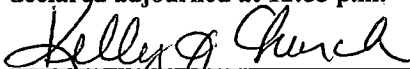
Roll call vote 3-0. Return to open session at 12:54 p.m.

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 12:55 p.m.



Kelly J. Church, Recorder



Damon Lieurance, Chairperson