

**CHIPPEWA COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Regular Session
March 13, 2025

The Chippewa County Board of Commissioners met at a regular session on Thursday, March 13, 2025 in the 91st District Courtroom.

Chairman Martin called the meeting to order at 4:30 P.M. with a quorum present. The meeting was also available via zoom. Commissioner Traynor lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Administrator Kelly Church, Clerk Steven Woodgate, Administrative Assistant Cady Bauers, CCHD Health Officer Karen Senkus, and 1 member of the public. 1 member of the public logged in via zoom.

ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF COUNTY BOARD MINUTES

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to approve the following minutes as presented:

- Regular Board Meeting – February 13, 2025

On a voice vote, the motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lori Miller voiced her concerns with the Neebish Island Ferry schedule.

Bev Eavou requested the Commissioners to offer a proposal to support Police Week of May 11, 2025 through May 17, 2025.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

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

NEW BUSINESS

CHIPPEWA COUNTY EDC BOARD MEMBER RESIGNATION

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to accept the resignation and recognize him for his efforts and time with the EDC, and advertise to the public that the board position is available to apply for.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

February 25, 2025

A regular meeting of the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners Personnel/Equalization and Apportionment/Transportation/Health and Social Services Committee was held on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at the Chippewa County Courthouse in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Chairman Damon Lieurance called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m. with a quorum present.

Approval of the Agenda

Public Comment

Personnel – Prosecuting Attorney request (Prosecuting Attorney Rob Stratton)

The Committee was given an overview of the request by both Administrator Church regarding the financials and from Prosecutor Rob Stratton with regards to the issues his and the Public Defenders Office being able to hire and retain attorneys in Chippewa County. The request would need to cover not only the staff of the Prosecutors Office, but also the staff attorney positions of the Public Defenders Office, including the Chief Assistant P.A. moving from a Non-Union 15 to 17, the Assistant P.A. (x2) and Assistant P.D. moving from Non-Union 12 to 14 and the Deputy P.D. Non-Union 13 to 15, plus the already approved special salaries for these positions. The total increase at the five-year rates of pay; which four of these positions would be at the starting level; would be an additional cost of just under \$70,000.00 at the highest rates of pay on the County pay scale, using the current benefit rates, which are subject to change. A lengthy discussion followed the overview including topics: public vs. private sector; the County's obligations to provide services; ways to improve retention and recruitment; increase networking for the job postings; the current competitive environment for attorneys; the local economics; housing and specialty courts were discussed.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to approve the grade changes as requested and those presented; with the one (1) Chief

Assistant P.A. moving to Grade 17; the two (2) Assistant P. A's and one (1) Assistant P.D. moving to Grade 14 and the one (1) Deputy P.D. moving to Grade 15, including the special salaries as currently listed on the County pay scale and following County policy. And to step up on the recruitment and advertising for the positions. It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to amend the motion for the Magistrate to be adjusted from level 20 to 22. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Health and Social Services – Guardianship Services (Judge Blubaugh)

Judge Blubaugh and Probate/Juvenile Register Shelley Brosco briefly addressed the Committee, first thanking them for the quick action to put monies in place for those Chippewa County constituents that may need to have a guardianship appointment made on their behalf, but do not have the means of affording the needed services. Judge Blubaugh updated the Committee on actions and collaborations with other local agencies and the services of a new company out of Alpena have come together following the unfortunate death of a local community member who helped a multitude of people in Chippewa County with guardianships, including pro bono work for those less fortunate.

Personnel Updates

The Committee was updated on the new Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA) that went into effect on February 21, 2025, which will change benefits for both full and part-time employees of Chippewa County. The part-time employees will all now be eligible to accrue 1 hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked; and our full-time employees are eligible for 72 hours of sick time per year, instead of the current 64; employees currently covered by a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) will be adjusted accordingly when the various contracts open for negotiations. Part-time staff will now be able to carry over 72 hours instead of the current 40; and non-union full-time will maintain their 168-hour carryover; and those covered by the CBA will follow the contract until re-negotiated. The eight-hour increase will increase the sick time payout that happens for full-time employees each January, per policy. (For the 2026 payout it will only affect the non-union; those covered by a CBA will follow the contract) County policies No. 243 – Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA), previously called Sick Leave for Part-time Employees; Policy No. 230 – Sick Leave and Sickness and Accident Insurance Benefit and Policy No. 233 – Other Leave Time; will all be updated accordingly to meet the ESTA and to match language between policies.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to approve the necessary changes for the Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA), as necessary, including increasing the Non-union sick time hours to 72 and maintaining the 168-hour carryover; with the policies and handbook to be updated accordingly. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

This motion does not cover the current Collective Bargaining Agreements; those contracts will be followed until re-negotiated.

The Committee was then updated by Administrator Church with information only regarding House Bill No. 5046, which increases the per page for a transcript cost to \$3.75 from \$2.35 as of April 2, 2025. In addition several personnel issues that have been happening; the updates included problems with employees using all of their leave time and then using Leave without pay (LWOP), which causes issues with not meeting the minimum requirements for benefits and violates collective bargaining agreements; as the employees are supposed to have forty (40) hours per week; we have had a couple extensive long-term disability claims; that are hindering the offices they work for in their absence; the Sheriff's Office has hired their new Captains positions and has also had a couple employee issues that have been addressed. The Committee was updated on a payroll issue with regards to MCL 45.421; which will be corrected and submitted through payroll for approval; as previously sought attorney opinion has changed since March 2024. The MIDC was also briefly discussed as the new application will be due in April and the struggles of hiring attorneys; the Upper Peninsula Counties are split in the models are used to offer the Indigent Services; with eight (8) using the P.D. Office model and seven (7) using the Managed Assigned Counsel (MAC) model, which limits the local control.

The Committee was also updated on the Circuit Courtroom carpeting being completed and the recent water leaks in both the County Building and the Courthouse as well as the closure of the east entrance due to the snow and ice falling.

Committee Comments

Committee member Knepper asked that the previously pass motion to expedite the Opioid Settlement Committee and RFP be addressed.

Chairmans Comments

Chairman Lieurance commented that his priority is the little guy first; that he knows all the people working for the County are good people and that he doesn't want to forget about those in the lower pay grades.

Adjourn

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

**FINANCE, CLAIMS AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
March 11, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners' Finance, Claims and Accounts Committee was held on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at the Chippewa Courthouse in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Chairman Shackleton called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. with a quorum present.

Approval of the Agenda

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

Public Comment

Correspondence and Informational Items

The Committee reviewed the County Treasurer's Investment reports, the VISA billing, and travel requests. No action required.

Public Defender – Amendment to NorthCare Network Agreement

The Committee reviewed the Amendment to the Agreement between NorthCare Network and Chippewa County Public Defender, the amendment will allow a budget deviation by \$1,000.00 or 5%, whichever is greater without written approval with the exception of wage and benefits.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to approve and authorize the Amendment to the Agreement between NorthCare Network and Chippewa County Public Defender, as presented, allowing for a \$1,000.00 or 5% deviation, excluding wage and benefits. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Office of Emergency Services – UPS Bid Summary

The Committee reviewed the Central Dispatch Uninterruptible Power Supply, two bids were received and met requirements, including a mandatory site visit. It was noted that the County will need to renew a support contract in 2027 and that replacement batteries will need to in approximately 5 years (depending on power surges; in relation to the life of the batteries.) The cost of Li-on (lithium) is three times the cost. Insight Public Sector, Inc. brought in the low bid of \$35,624.37; and with Options 1 (2-warranty extension) and 2 (maintenance support) totaling \$44,882.74.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to approve and authorize the Central Dispatch UPS purchase from Insight Public Sector, Inc. who provided the low bid of \$44,882.74 for a 10Kw- 10000VA UPS with a 10-30KW 208V bypass panel. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Office of Emergency Services – RFP Release – Second Notice – Electricity Upgrade

The Committee reviewed the second notice release for the Central Dispatch Electricity Upgrade which is for the UPS installation and optional subpanel.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to approve and authorize the release of the Central Dispatch Electricity Upgrade for a second time. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Information Systems- Abilita Retainer Agreement Renewal - \$690.00 per month - 24-month agreement with automatic renewal for 12-months - 2% increase

The Committee reviewed the retainer agreement, Abilita provides Chippewa County with telecommunication's recommendations for improvements, reviews billings, equipment, suppliers and plans and has been pivotal in organizing our AT&T billings, eliminating extra costs.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to approve and authorize the Abilita Retainer Agreement, as presented for 24-months with an automatic 12-month renewal. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Information Systems - Release Requests for Proposals

Desktop Computers (23)

VM Server

Rally Bar - Second Notice

IBM Power S1014 System

The Committee reviewed the RFPs as presented, with questions and answers.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to approve and authorize the release of RFPs for Desktop Computers (23), VM Server, Rally Bar (second notice) and IBM Power S1014 System, as presented. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Sheriff's Office - Equipment from Fund 232 - \$11,000.00 (need budget Amendment)

The Committee reviewed a memo from Sheriff Bitnar requesting items for the new storage building and equipment for the MDTs in the patrol vehicles. The equipment includes two cameras \$800, Laptop for building evidence \$1,300, Knox Box \$500, 800 Radio \$8,000 and twelve chargers for MDTs \$400, these items would be paid from Fund 232, and a budget amendment will be necessary for the purchases.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to approve and authorize purchases and \$11,000.00 budget amendment for Fund 232, purchases include two cameras, Laptop, Knox Box, 800 Radio and twelve chargers for MDTs. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Sheriff's Office - Rural Jails Mental Health Partnership Initiative (RJMHP) Grant with zero-match for Inmate mental health care and medication

The Committee reviewed a memo from U/S Ryan Hering asking the committees approval to take part in the Rural Jails Mental Health Partnership Initiative (RJMHP) which is a zero-match grant the will reimburse Chippewa County for inmate mental health services

including psychiatric medications, psychiatrist visits to the facility, additional nursing hours with the possibility of having a cell upgraded. This was a pilot program that is expanding.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to approve and authorize the Sheriff's Office participation in the Rural Jails Mental Health Partnership Initiative (RJMHP) grant, a zero-match grant that will provide mental health services and medication for the County's Correctional Facility. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Administration – Caribou Lake Level Control 3-year Inspection – Ayres \$2,530.00

The Committee reviewed the 3-year notice of inspection notice from EGLE; per Section 22 of Part 307, Inland Lake Levels, and a quote to provide an inspection, in accordance with MIEGLE's Dam Safety Division of the Caribou Lake Level Control Structure (Dam ID 1941) from Ayres, a Wisconsin company that has provided the past two inspections for the County.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to approve and authorize the Caribou Lake Level Control Structure (Dam ID 1941) inspection services be completed by Ayers Associates, at a price not to exceed \$2,530.00, as presented. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Administration – Cost Allocation Plan Bid Summary

The Committee reviewed the bid summary for the County's Cost Allocation Plan, four bids were received, with all meeting bid specifications to complete the Cost Allocation Plan for years FY24, FY25 and FY26, Maximus Consulting Service, Inc. is the current contract holder and did present the low bid.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to approve the low bid from Maximus Consulting Service, Inc. to complete the County's Cost Allocation Plan for FY24, FY25 and FY26 at the cost of \$5,000.00 per year. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Administration – Architectural/Engineering Services – Courthouse Courtrooms Air Conditioning from the Building & Grounds Committee - \$3,900.00

The Committee reviewed a proposal from U.P. Engineers & Architects, Inc. to provide design, bidding and contract administration services to install air conditioning units in both court rooms of the Chippewa County Courthouse for the fee of \$3,900.00. Commissioner Knepper wants to make sure that the historical aspect of the Courthouse is not lost with a project like this and Commissioner Shackleton noted to check on possible rebates from Cloverland.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to approve and authorize U.P. Engineers & Architects, Inc., to provide design, bidding and contract administration to install air conditioning units in the Circuit and

Probate Court rooms of the Chippewa County Courthouse at a price of \$3,900.00. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Administration- Opioid Settlement

Seek Application for Steering Committee – Due April 9th

Release Request for Funding Proposals – Due May 5th

The Committee recently approved the final draft of the Application for the Opioid Settlement Steering Committee; and Administration updated the Request for Funding Proposals both for release; staggering the dates so that the Committee can be established prior to the proposals being due.

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to approve and authorize releasing and seeking Opioid Settlement Steering Committee members and to release the Request for Funding Proposals. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Finance - Claims and Accounts – February – County and Health Department

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to recommend the approval of February County bills and payroll: general claims \$518,801.38, other fund claims \$896,558.70, payroll \$625,973.14, and Health Department claims \$175,230.01 and payroll \$140,126.48 total claims \$2,356,689.71. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Committee Comments

Commissioner Martin noted and complimented the Commissioners that attended the bi-partisans League of Women Voters-EUP round table discussion at the Bayliss Library on March 4.

Chairman Comments

No additional comments were offered.

Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Shackleton, supported by Commissioner Knepper for approval of the Finance, Claims and Accounts Committee Meeting minutes. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

COMMISSIONER REPORT ON MEETINGS AS BOARD REPRESENTATIVES AND GENERAL COMMENTS

Commissioner Shackleton is in support of the police week resolution and requested to have the resolution at April's Board meeting. Commissioner Knepper encouraged the Eupta Board to look for ways to address the Neebish Island Ferry issue and add extra time to the ferry schedule. Commissioner Traynor received an email from Representative Fairbairn for the County to support a resolution to open a WO funding account and a resolution to support the building of a

quarry behind Goetzville. Commissioner Martin is concerned with the federal funding for the building of the quarry dock possibly getting froze.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commissioner Lieurance, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to adjourn, accordingly. On a voice vote, the motion carried. The Board adjourned at 5:08 P.M.


Steven Woodgate, Clerk


James Martin, Chairman