

**CHIPPEWA COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**
Regular Session
December 19, 2024

The Chippewa County Board of Commissioners met at a regular session on Thursday, December 19, 2024 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 Savoie lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Administrator Kelly Church, Clerk Steven Woodgate, Administrative Assistant Cady Bauers and 3 members of the public. 13 members of the public logged in via zoom.

ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF COUNTY BOARD MINUTES

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

- Regular Board Meeting –November 14, 2024
- Public Hearing FY2025 Budget

On a voice vote, the motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to accept the correspondence received and to distribute to the appropriate places. On a voice vote, the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Phyliss Reed, Matthew Keller, and two members of the public voiced their concerns about the Neebish Island Ferry.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

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

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-33
Resolution Supporting the Michigan Legislature and Senator Damoose
in Obtaining Funding Earmarked for EUPTA

Whereas all Chippewa County Island residents and visitors need access to schools, school activities, mobility, employment, government services, healthcare, hospitals, the airport, government offices, civic groups, family, and social engagements.

Whereas vital service providers such as fuel delivery, road maintenance, snow removal, sanitation, septic, electrical, internet, fire and emergency require frequent and unplanned access to the Chippewa County Islands.

Whereas the Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority (EUPTA) is the exclusive governing agency of ferry services and cannot afford to properly fund it to provide sufficient daily ferry trips.

Whereas Island residents have daily needs for mobility, equity, accessibility, and

Whereas the Michigan Legislature possesses the ability to provide funding to meet the Islands capital and operational needs; now, therefore be it

Resolved that the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners respectfully supports the Michigan Legislature and Senator Damoose in obtaining urgently needed funding earmarked for EUPTA's ferry services serving Chippewa County residents over the next three years, in order to modernize infrastructure and establish late night ferry services to Neebish Island.

MOVED: Commissioner Savoie
SUPPORTED: Commissioner Lieurance

A ROLL-CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN AS FOLLOWS:

AYES: Commissioners Knepper, Lieurance, Savoie, Traynor, and Chairman Martin
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None

RESOLUTION 2024-33 DECLARED ADOPTED

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-36

Resolution of Support for the Development of PenWin Industries LLC's Waste-to-Renewables Project for the Upper Peninsula of Michigan

WHEREAS, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) is requiring Michigan counties to develop new waste handling procedures to ensure sustainable waste management practices for the future; and

WHEREAS, the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners recognizes the need to support alternative solutions to traditional landfilling and waste disposal methods, particularly those that contribute to environmental sustainability; and

WHEREAS, the development of a Waste-to-Renewables facility by PenWin Industries LLC represents a forward-thinking solution that aligns with Governor Gretchen Whitmer’s green energy initiatives and Michigan’s commitment to a greener, more sustainable economy; and

WHEREAS, the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners seeks to support green industrial development that creates median-wage earning jobs, promotes economic growth, and reduces our reliance on non-renewable energy sources; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of a Waste-to-Renewables facility will encourage infrastructure investment and development, creating an industrial base that will have long-term benefits for the economy of the Upper Peninsula; and

WHEREAS, PenWin Industries LLC has committed to working with all Upper Peninsula counties to promote regional collaboration and to ensure that the economic and environmental benefits of this project are shared across the region; and

WHEREAS, the success of this project is closely tied to the preservation and enhancement of critical rail infrastructure, including the Escanaba and Lake Superior (E&LS) rail line and the Route 8 corridor, which are vital for transporting materials and products to and from the facility, as well as supporting the broader industrial needs of the region; and

RESOLUTION 2024-34 Resolution of Support for the Development of PenWin Industries LLC’s Waste-to-Renewables Project for the Upper Peninsula of Michigan

WHEREAS, a strong and unified approach among all 15 counties in the Upper Peninsula will strengthen our ability to attract state, federal, and private investment, ensuring the long-term viability and success of the Waste-to-Renewables project;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners fully supports the development of PenWin Industries LLC’s Waste-to-Renewables facility as an essential step toward creating a more sustainable future for the Upper Peninsula, while addressing both environmental and economic goals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners acknowledges the importance of preserving and enhancing rail infrastructure as a key component in ensuring the logistical success of this project and supporting broader economic development in the Upper Peninsula; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor of Michigan, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Upper Peninsula legislators, and other relevant stakeholders to demonstrate our collective support for this critical project.

MOVED: Commissioner Lieurance
SUPPORTED: Commissioner Savoie

A ROLL-CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN AS FOLLOWS:

AYES: Commissioners Knepper, Lieurance, Savoie, Traynor, and Chairman Martin
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None

RESOLUTION 2024-36 DECLARED ADOPTED

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-37
RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT LOCAL CONTROL AND CLAIM OF APPEAL
AGAINST MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION ORDER**

WHEREAS, the County supports state policies that maintain and advance local control;
and

WHEREAS, the State of Michigan has adopted policies and introduced legislation that attempts to further reduce local control in key areas affecting unique interests in local communities;
and

WHEREAS, media reports describe ongoing efforts by interested groups to push for the further erosion of local control; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, the State of Michigan adopted Public Act 233 of 2023 (“PA 233”);
and

WHEREAS, only under limited circumstances, PA 233 confers powers and duties to the Public Service Commission (“PSC”) regarding the siting of utility-scale solar energy facilities, wind energy facilities, and energy storage facilities allowing developers to bypass local zoning authorities when proposing qualifying developments; and

WHEREAS, the PSC issued an order on October 10, 2024 (the “Order”) implementing the provisions of Public Act 233 of 2023 (“PA 233”); and

WHEREAS, the Order attempts to vastly expand the PSC’s limited and enumerated jurisdiction in PA 233 and is both unlawful and unreasonable; and

WHEREAS, the Order is unlawful and unreasonable because, among other reasons: (1) the PSC’s issuance of the Order violates the Administrative Procedures Act, MCL 24.201 *et seq.*, and (2) the Order unlawfully and unreasonably redefines key terms and concepts and creates processes and procedures that violate the Legislature’s express and unambiguous intent for local input in the regulation of energy facilities; and

WHEREAS, a coalition of Michigan Municipalities timely filed a claim of appeal from the Order on November 8, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the window to appeal the Order was merely 30 days, during which conducting a general election and other business contributed to the County’s inability to hold a meeting during which it could consider and vote to join the appeal; and

WHEREAS, the County supports the coalition of Michigan Municipalities in their efforts to protect local control in the regulation of energy facilities; and

WHEREAS, the County would have joined the appeal if it was able to hold a meeting before the deadline to join; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the County Board of the County of Chippewa, Chippewa County, Michigan, resolves its unequivocal support of local control and the coalition of Michigan Municipalities that have filed an appeal from the Order.

MOVED: Commissioner Savoie
SUPPORTED: Commissioner Traynor

A ROLL-CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN AS FOLLOWS:

AYES: Commissioners Knepper, Lieurance, Savoie, Traynor, and Chairman Martin
NAYES: None
ABSENT: None

RESOLUTION 2024-37 DECLARED ADOPTED

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

**FINANCE, CLAIMS AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
December 17, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners' Finance, Claims and Accounts Committee was held on Tuesday, December 17, 2024, at the Chippewa Courthouse in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Chairman Savoie called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. with a quorum present. The meeting was available via Zoom.

Approval of the Agenda

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

Public Comment

Correspondence and Informational Items

Health Department

Health Department –Professional Liability Insurance - \$9,867.35 Medical Director

The Committee reviewed the professional liability insurance invoice renewal for Medical Director Catherine Wilkerson through U.P. Insurance Agency, Inc. in the amount of \$9,867.35 covering 1/1/2025 to 1/1/2026.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to approve the Chippewa County Health Department liability insurance renewal for Dr. Catherine Wilkerson in the amount of \$9,867.35, covering 1/1/2025 through 1/1/2026, with payment to U.P. Insurance Agency, Inc. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Health Department – Purchase Fetch EH via the Public Health Infrastructure Grant \$18,500.00 plus two-year \$7,000.00 per year annual support

The Committee reviewed the request to purchase Fetch EH, a software program for environmental health services, to help staff retrieve data more easily and perform work in the field more efficiently. This will add another layer to the GIS mapping already used by other County agencies.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to approve and authorize the Chippewa County Health Department purchase of Fetch EH software from Amalgam, LLC utilizing the Public Health Infrastructure Grant, with a cost of \$18,500.00, plus annual support of \$7,000.00 each year for the next two years. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED

Sheriff's Office – Scrap three vehicles

The Committee was asked to re-authorize the disposal of three non-road worthily vehicles, with the vehicles going to the scrap yard, to free up space at the new storage building.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to approve and authorize disposal of 2011 Chrysler, 2012 Ford and 2012 Chevy vehicles to the scrapyard. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Sheriff's Office – MCOLES Sponsorship funding change \$3,700.00 from Fund 232

The Committee was updated on the Employed Recruit grant for the 2025 sponsorship, which is going to require a \$3,700.00 match due to increases in the minimum wage; the Sheriff is asking these be paid from Fund 232 to sponsor employed recruit Logan Corey.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to approve and authorize \$3,700.00 from Fund 232 to pay for the funding difference of the employed recruit sponsorship grant for 2025. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Office of Emergency Services – Motorola three years actuary FY25 - \$25,985.37

The Committee reviewed the three-year Motorola Solutions service agreement which provides maintenance for the radio systems; that pricing as follows FY2025 - \$25,985.37, FY2026 - \$27,409.31 and FY2027 - \$28,914.20 the services provided include dispatch service, onsite and infrastructure repairs, technical support and network preventative maintenance.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to approve and authorize the Motorola Solutions Central Dispatch service agreement as presented for fiscal years 2025 - \$25,985.37, 2026 - \$27,409.31 and 2027 - \$28,914.20, as presented. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) – County Veteran Service Fund (CVSF) – Unexpended funds return to SOM \$5,856.84

The Committee reviewed the letter from Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency Grant Manager, indicating the unexpended funds of \$5,856.84, as well as the \$44,143.16 of authorized grant expenditures that went towards helping the Chippewa County Veterans.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to confirm unexpended amount of \$5,856.84 has been returned to the SOM Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, per the grant requirements. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

District Court – Court Administered Recovery Expert, LLC – first amendment to add travel reimbursement to the grant

The Committee received an amended (first) contract from Judge Eric Blubaugh regarding the Mental Health Court, seeking to add travel to the under section 8 expenses.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to authorize and approve the requested change to the Chippewa County Mental Health Court contract, to be identified as First Amended. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Information Systems – Out-of-State Travel Request

The committee reviewed a request for Information Systems' Anthony Zakic to attend a three-day cybersecurity incident response course in College Station, Texas; the course and travel will all be covered except for mileage of approximately \$30.15.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to approve and authorize the out-of-state travel request from Anthony Zakic, to attend a three-day cybersecurity incident response course in College State, Texas in August of 2025; only cost mileage at an estimated \$30.15, all other travel, hotel to be covered. On a voice vote the motion CARRIED.

Survey and Remonumentation – Completion Report for Grant Year 2024

The Committee reviewed the 2024 Completion Report for Chippewa County Remonumentation, showing a total of 69 corners being remonumented during the 2024 Program.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, seconded by Commissioner Traynor, to accept and authorize the Completion Report for Grant Year 2024. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Administration – MMRMA 2025 Renewal (Net Asset Distribution/Renewal/Contribution)

The Committee reviewed the net asset distribution of \$37,385.00, which is recommended to be returned to the County's loss fund and the proposed contribution for renewal of FY2025 for the County's Property and Liability Insurance including the Health Department. The County's outstanding reserves still exceed the minimum requirements of one and half times self-insured retention \$112,500.00 plus any known reserves; due to this underwriting has increased the County member loss fund contribution by \$50,000. Total premium for the year is \$351,609.00; with the CCHD portion being \$84,357.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to approve the net asset distribution of \$37,385.00 be returned for the County's loss fund and to approve the renewal and contribution breakdown as presented totaling \$351,609.00 to MMRMA for the County's FY2025 Property and Liability Insurance. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Administration – Acrisure – Short-Long-Life Insurance Change to MetLife 1/1/2025

The Committee reviewed information from Acrisure regarding the renewal for employer sponsored short term disability, long term disability and life insurance, along with employee paid voluntary life insurance rates. Acrisure was able to provide a quote from Metlife that will reduce the County's expense by about \$5,000.00 annually, while matching the voluntary life insurance rates for the employee's coverage.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to approve and authorize Metlife as the new short, long and life insurance carrier as of January 1, 2025. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Administration – Forensicfluids – Confidentiality Statement and Service Agreement

The Committee reviewed services agreements for both 50th Circuit Drug Court and the Medical Examiner to use Forensicfluids to provide 10 panel and EtG screening for drug court and for a postmortem panel for the Medical Examiner.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to approve and authorize the two service agreements with Forensicfluids for 50th Circuit Drug Court and the County Medical Examiner. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Administration – Parking Enforcement Contract

Administration sought approval to sign the parking enforcement contract with the City of Sault Ste. Marie to have them provide parking enforcement Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the Bingham Avenue parking lot.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to approve and authorize the parking enforcement agreement between the City of Sault Ste. Marie and Chippewa County, for the Bingham Avenue parking lot. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Administration – Courthouse Stairwell Landings estimated \$5,100.62

The Committee reviewed an estimate to have the six landings in the Courthouse stairwells to be replaced due to the deterioration. The estimate of \$5,100.62 was received from MCS Flooring LLC for the tear out and install of textured rubber tiles.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to approve the estimate from MCS Flooring LLC to tear and install textured rubber tiles in the six Courthouse stairwells at a price not to exceed \$5,100.62. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

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

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Lieurance, to recommend the approval of November County bills and payroll: general claims \$1,003,881.25, other fund claims \$2,651,957.26, payroll \$789,020.96, and Health Department claims \$216,395.14 and payroll \$154,928.71 total claims \$4,816,183.32. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Finance – Budget Amendments for FY2024

The Committee reviewed the year end budget amendments, amendments for the Sheriff's Building, child care, inmate medical, and correcting a potential compliance issue of having a negative balance in the Animal Shelter Donations Fund, vehicles, plumbing and retiree health care, also, discussed the continued funding of MERS unfunded liability, as by paying these down, it will help reduce monthly expenditures in the future and lower our costs for general operations.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Knepper, to approve the year-end budget amendments and to include a MERS payment of \$500,000.00 from the General Fund to cover MERS divisions with unfunded liabilities. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Finance – MVAA Grant Amendment

The Committee reviewed a motion from the Veterans Affairs Committee, seeking to change the MVAA Grant to include two cell phones with hot spots and a laptop to be utilized for mobile visits and clinics.

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to approve the MVAA Grant amendment to include two cell phones and one laptop. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

Committee Comments

Commissioners Martin, Lieurance and Traynor all thanked Commissioner Savoie, offering accolades for the time he has served the Board of Commissioners and that he will be missed.

Chairman Comments

No additional comments were offered.

Adjourn

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Commissioner Traynor, to accept the minutes as presented. On a voice vote, the motion CARRIED.

COMMISSIONER REPORT ON MEETINGS AS BOARD REPRESENTATIVES AND GENERAL COMMENTS

Commissioner Savoie said goodbye to everybody and that it was nice working with the citizens of this county and board. Commissioners Traynor, Knepper, Lieurance, and Chairman Martin thanked Commissioner Savoie for all the hard work he had done for the county, his wisdom, and that he will be missed. Commissioner Lieurance also thanked the residents of Neebish Island for their hard work and will follow up with the State regarding the ferry services.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Commissioner Savoie, supported by Chairman Martin, to adjourn, accordingly. On a voice vote, the motion carried. The Board adjourned at 5:06 P.M.


Steven Woodgate, Clerk


James Martin, Chairman