

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
KEWEENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
February 15, 2023

The regular meeting of the Keweenaw County Board of Commissioners was held on February 15, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. and began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Zoom was available.

The meeting was posted on the door of the Courthouse and on the County website.

Commissioners present: Bob DeMarois, Randy Eckloff, Del Rajala, Jim Vivian, Don Piche.

Motion by Vivian supported by Rajala and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion by DeMarois supported by Eckloff and unanimously carried to approve the January 18, 2023, regular monthly meeting minutes as written.

The following reports were available: Sheriff, Treasurer and Mine Inspector.

Paul Putnam and Heather Britz were at the meeting from the MSU Extension. They came to let the Board know about what is going on with the Extension and to introduce Heather as the Community Nutrition Officer for Houghton, Baraga and Keweenaw.

Rich Bowman, Director of Policy for the Nature Conservancy and Greg Ryskey, Director of Forestry and Parks for Gogebic County came to the meeting to talk about the Gogebic County Forest. Mr. Ryskey spoke to the Board stating that the forest is self-sustaining, even adding to the county general fund. Since 1943, the forest has generated approximately \$15 million and about \$5 million of that went to the county general fund. The county forest is 100% open to the public, it is multi-use for trails as atv's, walking, horseback riding is all present and hunting and fishing are also allowed. They maintain 39 miles of roads and there are 62 hunting camps that pay \$350 per year to the county forest and they pay taxes to the township. The county forest also pays PILT to the townships at \$.20 per acre. The county forest is managed by a commission made up of two county commissioners and three appointed members. The commission also assumed responsibility for two parks back in 2001. They have been working on the infrastructure at the parks including electrical and water.

Time was allowed for public comment.

Time was allowed for committee meeting reports. Rajala stated that the Health Department is looking for public input regarding the new public health code. After public input, all the counties will be asked to vote.

Motion by DeMarois supported by Eckloff to pay the approved and audited bills in the following amounts; General Fund=\$197,159.94 Construction Codes Fund=\$3,170.35 911 Fund=\$48,778.11 Medical Care Fund=\$1,292.70 Indigent Defense Fund=\$3,992.24 Board polled. Ayes: DeMarois, Eckloff, Vivian, Piche. Abstain: Rajala Nayes: None. Motion carried.

Motion by Rajala supported by DeMarois and unanimously carried to table the Pasty.net upgrade until March.

Motion by Rajala supported by DeMarois and unanimously carried to table the elevator project until March with hopes of getting another bid for the engineering.

Motion by DeMarois supported by Eckloff and unanimously carried to accept the resignation of Tom Wierciak as the lagoon operator at Mount Horace Greeley effective March 1, 2023.

Motion by Rajala supported by DeMarois and unanimously carried to approve the agreement between Keweenaw County and Keweenaw Wastewater Services LLC for monitoring, maintenance, servicing and repair of the wastewater treatment lagoons at Mount Horace Greeley effective March 1, 2023.

Motion by Vivian supported by DeMarois and unanimously carried to appoint Jim Vivian as lead and Bob DeMarois as substitute for WUPPDR.

Motion by Rajala supported by Vivian and unanimously carried to table the medical examiner topic until March. Sheriff Pennala will set up a meeting with current medical examiner personnel and

commissioners to try to help with a list of pros and cons of staying with our current setup or to move to the private company that came a couple of months back.

Motion by Rajala supported by Eckloff and unanimously carried to change the mileage rate for 2023 from \$.65.5 voted on in January to \$.65.

Motion by Rajala supported by Vivian and unanimously carried to approve the Performance Resolution for Governmental Agencies for the State of Michigan. The resolution is required by MDOT for purposes of issuing to a municipal utility an Annual Application and Permit for Miscellaneous Operations within the State Highway Right of Way. **(#23-1)**

Motion by DeMarois supported by Eckloff and unanimously carried to adopt the following resolution honoring the Michigan Association of Counties 125th Anniversary:

WHEREAS, Michigan's 83 county governments play a central role in the proper delivery of, and oversight for, critical public services for the state's approximately 10 million residents; and

WHEREAS, Michigan county governments are led by Boards of Commissioners, who are elected from their communities; and

WHEREAS, the State Association of Supervisors of Michigan was formed by representatives of 16 counties on Feb. 1, 1898, in the Senate chamber of the Michigan State Capitol in Lansing; and

WHEREAS, the association's name was changed to the Michigan Association of Counties on July 17, 1969; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Association of Counties is the oldest association representing local governments in Michigan; and

WHEREAS, 48 of Michigan's 83 counties have had at least one of their commissioners (or supervisors prior to 1968) serve as the president of the association's Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, the association created the Michigan Counties Workers' Compensation Fund in 1979 to help county members provide workplace safety and injury insurance services to its employees; and

WHEREAS, the association created the Michigan Association of Counties Service Corporation in 1986 to partner with service providers to help counties save money on everything from health insurance to telecommunications services; and

WHEREAS, the association hosts two major conferences every year to bring together county leaders for briefings on trending public policy issues and to hear from state newsmakers and others; and

WHEREAS, the association's advocacy work in Lansing and beyond has advanced the interests of county governments and the residents they serve; and

WHEREAS, no fewer than five association presidents have served or are serving in the Michigan Legislature in the 21st century, a testament to the culture of public service inculcated by the association

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that KEWEENAW COUNTY wishes to commend and honor the Michigan Association of Counties on its 125th Anniversary year. **(#23-2)**

Motion by Rajala supported by Vivian and unanimously carried to approve the Engagement Letter between the County and Susan D. Sanford for the audit of 2022 in the amount which will not exceed \$11,200. This contract may be extended for two additional years, 2023 and 2024.

Motion by DeMarois supported by Rajala and unanimously carried to continue with Zoom for the county board meetings so that the public can listen and view the meetings but Zoom attendees will be muted at the beginning of each meeting. If anyone wants to speak at a county board meeting, that must be done in person except for the county attorney, who may speak by phone when the situation arises.

Public comment was allowed. Two individuals came forward regarding the health code update that will be voted on by the five counties involved. They spoke of the word "potential" that was used many times and could be used by the health department for power or overreach. They urged the public to read it over before just allowing it to pass.

Time was allowed for public comment.

There being no further business, motion by DeMarois to adjourn at 7:23 p.m. Meeting adjourned.

Donald Piche, Chairman

Julie Carlson, Clerk