

**WUPPDR FULL COMMISSION MEETING**  
Western U.P. Planning and Development Region

Parkview Lodge & Grill, Highway M-26, Twin Lakes, MI

Monday, December 20, 2021  
5:00 PM (ET)

NAME	Present, voting	Present, non-voting	Absent
Robert Nousiainen, Chair, Ontonagon County	X		
Joe Bonovetz, 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Chair, Gogebic County	X		
Patti Peretto, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair, Iron County			X
Bill Rolof, Treasurer, Baraga County	X		
James Vivian, Jr., Secretary, Keweenaw County			X
Albert Koskela, E.C. Member, Houghton County	X		
Glenn Anderson, Houghton County	X		
Mary Babcock, City of Hancock (Alt.)			X
Ron Blau, City of Hancock			X
Roy Britz, Houghton County	X		
Marlene Broemer, Ontonagon County (E.C. Alt.)			X
Mark Bromley, Iron County			X
Donald Chastan, Village of Ontonagon (Alt.)			X
Gretchen Janssen, Houghton County	X		
Robert LaFave, Village of L'Anse	X		
Paul Lehto, Calumet Charter Township			X
Jim Lorensen, Gogebic County (E.C. Alt.)			X
Lyle Olsen, Baraga County (E.C. Alt.)	X		
Bruce Petersen, Portage Charter Township			X
Del Rajala, Keweenaw County (E.C. Alt.)			X
Jeff Ratcliffe, KEDA ( <i>ex officio</i> )		X	
Jan Cole, City of Houghton	X		
Tony Smydra, Village of Ontonagon			X
Mike Stafford, Iron County (E.C. Alt.)			X
Tom Tikkanen, Houghton County (E.C. Alt.)			X
MaryEllen Hyttinen, Office Mgr., WUPPDR			
Jerald Wuorenmaa, Exec. Director, WUPPDR			
Rachael Pressley, Regional Planner, WUPPDR			
Lisa McKenzie, Asst. Regional Planner, WUPPDR			

**Call to Order:** Robert Nousiainen, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM (ET)

**Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was spoken.

**Roll Call:** The following commissioners responded to roll call done by Hyttinen. Glenn Anderson, Hancock, MI, Houghton County; Joe Bonovetz, Bessemer, MI, Gogebic County; Roy Britz, Houghton, MI, Houghton County; Gretchen Janssen, Houghton, MI, Houghton County; Albert Koskela, Traprock Valley, Houghton County; Robert LaFave, L'Anse, MI, Baraga County; Robert Nousiainen, Bruce Crossing, MI, Ontonagon County; Lyle Olsen, L'Anse, MI, Baraga County; Jeff Ratcliffe, Hancock, MI, Houghton County; Bill Rolof, L'Anse, MI, Baraga County; Jan Cole, Houghton, MI, Houghton County.

**Approval of Agenda:** Moved by Koskela, supported by LaFave to approve the agenda as presented.  
Motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes - (September 20, 2021, Full Commission):** Moved by Rolof, supported by Koskela to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

**Approval of Bills Paid:** Moved by Bonovetz, supported by Koskela to approve the bills as presented from September 1, 2021 – November 30, 2021, totaling \$202,909.49. Roll Call Vote: **Ayes:** Anderson, Bonovetz, Britz, Janssen, Koskela, LaFave, Olsen, Rolof, Cole. **Nays:** None. Motion carried.

**Public Appearances:** None

**Director's report:** Wuorenmaa updated the commission on the EDA CARES grant. There are three implementation projects WUPPDR has been working on: a housing study & strategy, tourism study & strategy, and labor force assessment. Each project is in a different stage of the project, housing being the most advanced. McKenzie updated the commission on the housing study & strategy. Wuorenmaa mentioned there are three surveys that are part of this project: an employer survey, a real estate agent survey and a general public survey. Labor force assessment: Wuorenmaa said WUPPDR is putting together focus groups of employees who may be on the edge of leaving their jobs and is looking largely at the restaurant industry. Wuorenmaa also said he wants to put together groups of employees who recently left their employers and try to get to get some insight as to why. There will be some broader data collection and such, but there is going to be a UP-wide labor market study and we do not want to duplicate a lot of that.

WUPPDR is working on an EDA application with an entity of the University of Michigan to do a regional economic impact analysis of tourism. This is something we have been talking about for a few years now. The point is to get better data on what the economic impacts of tourism-related projects could be in order to make it more likely that those projects get funded.

WUPPDR is also working with Calumet Township on a potential EDA application for water infrastructure. The City of Bessemer is considering an EDA application for an Iron Belle trailhead in the city.

Pressley gave an update on the projects she is working on: nine grants, six plans, and one survey which was released in November-December 2021. For 2022 Pressley will work to partner and collaborate with organizations in communities throughout the Western U.P. to develop resilient infrastructure; form a regional farmers market association; integrate more local food into institutional purchasing; provide technical assistance to entrepreneurs, communities, and organizations; update recreation plans; and wrap up the MDOT non-motorized transportation plan.

Pressley has been invited to sit on a national panel with the American Planning Association Food Systems Division to discuss our ongoing efforts in rural assistance planning.

**EDA CARES contractual EDO funds:**

- a. **Gogebic and Ontonagon counties** – Wuorenmaa said the EDA CARES Act grant includes funding for contractual assistance to economic development organizations (EDOs). Iron and Baraga counties' organizations have already gotten their shares, but Gogebic does not have an economic development organization and Ontonagon County has one, but it is not really staffed at a high level, so they are just working through how to spend those funds.
- b. **Zoom Prospector** – Wuorenmaa explained this is a platform that sites and empty facilities can be put on so site selectors and businesses that are looking at relocating know what is available in an area and all kinds of data can go on there. This has been paid for primarily by Lake Superior Community Partnership out of Marquette for U.P. wide use. They are looking for support, so WUPPDR is looking at paying them out of the CARES Act grant which is about \$2,750 if the other regions put in. The contribution would come from some of the EDO contractual funding that has not been allocated yet.

The Executive Committee agreed to recommend doing that. Moved by LaFave, supported by Rolof to approve the Zoom Prospector platform. Motion carried.

**Budget – quarterly update and new format:** Wuorenmaa described the new budget format.

**2022 CEDS adoption:** Moved by Bonovetz, supported by Koskela to adopt the 2022 CEDS as presented and authorize proper signatures. Motion carried.


**Member contributions changes due to 2020 Census:** Wuorenmaa explained the county and municipal and Township dues changed with the decennial census which just happened. The county dues are based on a complicated formula which starts from a regionwide flat total amount that has not changed since the early 1980s. From that there is a flat amount of \$4,000 paid by each county, then the remainder is divided based on the state equalized value and population of each county. Wuorenmaa had recommended increasing the dues of any counties whose contributions would increase with the new Census counts but not decreasing the dues of any counties that would decrease based on the formula. This was not agreed to by the Executive Committee. Moved by Bonovetz, supported by Koskela to approve the member contributions changes as presented. Roll Call Vote: **Ayes:** Anderson, Bonovetz, Britz, Cole, Janssen, Koskela, LaFave, Olsen, Rolof, Nousiainen. **Nays:** None. Motion carried.

**2022 Schedule of Meetings:** A draft meeting schedule was presented. The January meeting is scheduled one week later than usual, and the September meeting (annual meeting) is also scheduled later than usual. The Executive Committee had recommended approval. Moved by LaFave to accept the recommendation of the Executive Committee, supported by Olsen to approve the 2022 Schedule of Meetings. Motion carried.

**Other Business:** Wuorenmaa mentioned he had written a comment to the surface transportation board on behalf of WUPPDR regarding a transaction where Watco would take over some railroad lines. They wanted to fast track it through the federal regulatory process and there were some concerns from WUPPDR, Northwood Rail Transit Commission, and a variety of companies had about gone through that.

After meeting with Watco representatives WUPPDR withdrew our objection. The surface transportation board today decided that they were going to allow the exemption as requested. There were some minor conditions WUPPDR had requested to be imposed that were not, but the result is what we wanted it to be. Wuorenmaa has a big write up from the agency, but they did take the comments into account pretty significantly. Most of in the rail this applies to is in Wisconsin, but here it includes the rail line to White Pine.

**Adjourn:** Moved by Koskela, supported by Rolof that the meeting adjourn at 5:47 PM (ET). Motion carried.

  
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Bill Rolof, Treasurer (In lieu of Secretary)