

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

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

Monday, March 21, 2022
5:00 PM (ET)

NAME	Present, voting	Present, non-voting	Absent
Robert Nousiainen, Chair, Ontonagon County	X		
Joe Bonovetz, 1 st Vice Chair, Gogebic County			X
Patti Peretto, 2 nd 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
Jan Cole, City of Houghton	X		
Tim Gasperich, Calumet Township			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
Paul Putnam, MSU Extension		X	
Del Rajala, Keweenaw County (E.C. Alt.)			X
Jeff Ratcliffe, KEDA (<i>ex officio</i>)		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			
James Marusich, Regional Planner, WUPPDR			
Lisa McKenzie, Asst. Regional Planner, WUPPDR			
Guest: William DuPont, Village of Ontonagon			

Call to Order: Robert Nousiainen, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 5:02 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, Roy Britz, Jan Cole, Robert LaFave, Paul Lehto, Patti Peretto, Paul Putnam, Jeff Ratcliffe, Bill Rolof, Tom Tikkanen, Robert Nousiainen.

Approval of Agenda: Moved by LaFave, supported by Rolof to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes - (December 20, 2021, Full Commission): Moved by LaFave, supported by Peretto to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Approval of Bills Paid: Moved by Rolof, supported by Tikkanen to approve the bills as presented from January 1, 2022 – February 28, 2022, totaling \$98,455.20. Roll Call Vote: **Ayes**: Anderson, Britz, Cole, LaFave, Lehto, Peretto, Rolof, Tikkanen, Nousiainen. **Nays**: None. Motion carried.

Public Appearances: None

Director's report: Wuorenmaa mentioned the USED A CARES Act Pandemic Recovery projects are still ongoing. The regional housing study and strategy has come a long way. Discussion groups were held in all six counties. The real estate survey had great results from realtors from around the region. WUPPDR is looking for resources that may be available to increase the housing stock in the Western U.P.

Tourism Strategy: working with the new non-motorized trail from LL to Hancock; working with other organizations regarding tourism etiquette; looking at doing an assessment of mobility to tourism and recreation destinations for handicapped accessibility. Wuorenmaa is hoping to bring in some other sites to review that are in the PHF service area. Wuorenmaa also mentioned there are a couple EDA proposals he is waiting to hear back on.

Lastly is the Labor Force Assessment. Since this project was proposed there is UP wide funding to do a labor market study for the whole UP from Invest UP. WUPPDR is focusing to hear from disengaged workers and remote workers.

Audit and MERS updates: Wuorenmaa said the audit has been completed. There was one minor finding of a budget item in one fund that exceeded the budgeted amount. Wuorenmaa will wait for the correction action letter from the state, and he will respond appropriately. Otherwise, it was a clean audit. This is the last year with this auditor so WUPPDR will have to bid it out again this year.

MERS Defined Benefit Plan: Wuorenmaa explained the past several years with MERS issues and the requirement that we be funded 100%. WUPPDR has made numerous lump sum payments to catch up. MERS completed an internal evaluation. Wuorenmaa stated it looks like we are now pretty much fully funded but would like to make some voluntary payments, so we stay on top of it in hopes to avoid the issues in the future.

EDA CARES remaining funds: Gogebic and Ontonagon counties do not have EDO's so there isn't anywhere to put the contractual funds that are in the budget. Wuorenmaa would like to put the funds back into WUPPDR personnel costs.

Quarterly budget update/amendment: Wuorenmaa mentioned that since the original budget there have been a couple more things added which leads to a small budget increase. Moved by LaFave, supported by Peretto to approve the quarterly budget update/amendment. Roll Call Vote: **Ayes**: Anderson, Britz, Cole, LaFave, Lehto, Peretto, Rolof, Tikkanen, Nousiainen. **Nays**: None. Motion carried.

Hazard Mitigation Plans County match shortfalls: Wuorenmaa said the counties that have shortfalls will be having invoices sent to them.

Materials Management County Engagement Grants – multi-county application: Wuorenmaa notified the commission there is an EGLE grant opportunity for engaging communities on materials management. All counties have a solid waste plan that is mandated by the state, but these plans were developed in the mid to late 1990's have not been updated since because EGLE has only been supporting of updates/amendments if there was a compliance reason to do it.

Wuorenmaa suggested that the counties get ready for the planning process to update their plans.

Resolution of Support – Village of Ontonagon State Financial Support: DuPont notified the commission regarding the Village of Ontonagon MERS financial issue. The village has been in contact with the state legislature to try to find assistance in resolving this issue. The village is looking for a Resolution of Support from the commission. Moved by Lehto, supported by Tikkanen to support the village of Ontonagon for state financial support. Motion carried.

June meeting date change: Moved by Tikkanen, supported by Rolof to accept the June meeting date change to June 28. New schedules will be sent to everyone. Motion carried.

Annual meeting location: Hyttinen reminded the Iron County commissioner to start considering where the annual meeting will be held and for everyone to start thinking about some Chiantello candidates.

Other Business: None

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


