

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

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

Monday, August 15, 2022  
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
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 Lorenson, 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			
Lisa McKenzie, Asst. Regional Planner, WUPPDR			

**Call to Order:** Robert Nousiainen, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM (ET)

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

**Member Roll Call:** The following commissioners responded to roll call done by Hyttinen. Joe Bonovetz, Patti Peretto, Bill Rolof, Glenn Anderson, Mary Babcock, Roy Britz, Marlene Broemer, Robert LaFave, Jeff Ratcliffe, Mike Stafford, Tom Tikkanen, Robert Nousiainen.

**Approval of Agenda:** Moved by Anderson, supported by LaFave to approve the agenda with the additional agenda item as item 13., Partnership Agreement. Motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes - (March 21, 2022, Full Commission):** Moved by Tikkanen, supported by Peretto to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

**Approval of Bills Paid:** Moved by LaFave, supported by Rolof to approve the bills as presented from April 1, 2022 – July 28, 2022, totaling \$185,473.45. **Roll Call Vote:** **Ayes:** Anderson, Babcock, Bonovetz, Britz, Broemer, LaFave, Peretto, Rolof, Stafford, Tikkanen, Nousiainen. **Nays:** None. **Motion carried.**

**Public Appearances:** None

**Audit Report:** Joe Verlin of Gabridge thanked the board for selecting them as the auditing firm. Verlin presented the audit via telephone. Verlin provided a clean opinion of the audit. There were no adjusting journal entries which Verlin commented is rare. There were no negative findings and WUPPDR ended the year in a very healthy financial condition. Moved by Bonovetz, supported by Broemer to approve the audit report as presented. **Roll Call Vote:** **Ayes:** Anderson, Babcock, Bonovetz, Britz, Broemer, LaFave, Peretto, Stafford, Tikkanen, Nousiainen. **Nays:** None. **Motion carried.**

**Director's report:** Wuorenmaa reported on several topics.

**EGLE Materials Management County Engagement grants** - Five counties were engaged. Wuorenmaa received correspondence stating if an extension was requested, EGLE would approve one, so Wuorenmaa requested a 6-month extension.

**Housing** – WUP Housing Study & Strategy was completed with much help from Lisa McKenzie. The Executive Summary is still pending. Wuorenmaa will forward to the board when completed. The next step is to seek implementation funding for staffing to do what is in the strategy, forming a couple new entities to increase development activities beyond the private sector.

**Keweenaw Housing Committee** – Wuorenmaa mentioned both he and McKenzie have been supporting this committee which was created under the Team Peninsula umbrella of community leaders. There were comments and discussions about what Team Peninsula is and does. Wuorenmaa stated he would like to assist with committees in other counties if they are interested.

**July 25 Property Redevelopment Workshop report** – Wuorenmaa informed the commission that this workshop in Bergland went very well and there were presenters from MSHDA, MEDC, EGLE, EPA, Michigan State Land Bank Authority, Jeff Ratcliffe for the Houghton County Land Bank, Director of the Marquette County Land Bank, and a private brownfield consultant.

**Other EDA CARES projects**

**WUP Tourism Issues & Strategies** needs most recent committee input incorporated to be final.

**WUP Labor Force Assessment** will be mainly internal document, since U.P.-wide Labor Market Study is pending (awaiting EDA award determination and procurement).

**CDBG:** Submitted Iron River proposal for a large infrastructure project starting next year.

**Gogebic:** Closure of major childcare provider will have major repercussions especially on the labor force.

**MERS:** Actuarial valuation indicated funded ratio of 106% for calendar year 2021; had been 94% in 2020.  
Voluntary payments: \$4,000 each to be made in July and August.

**Wages/salaries:** Wuorenmaa would like to give at least 10% increases to be budgeted.

**3-year audit bids**—Bid requests have been mailed out, bids due later this month.

MDOT bill - Wuorenmaa informed the committee that MDOT sent us a \$53,000 bill from a project that had ended more than five years ago and began 11 years ago. He is working with the agency to resolve it.

Moved by Broemer, supported by Stafford to accept the director's report and file for reference. Motion carried.

**Ottawa National Forest:**

- a. Master Challenge Agreement - Wuorenmaa informed the commission this is an umbrella agreement with the Ottawa National Forest for WUPPDR to do various small projects without having to do through a whole contractual process. They would like our assistance for engagement with KBIC, community engagement, and physical mobility site assessments.
- b. ELPC proposal for new wilderness areas – Wuorenmaa noted the board had previously discussed this proposal for new wilderness areas in the Ottawa National Forest. Wuorenmaa had been told by Darla Lenz they had not been approached by the proposing organization, ELPC. Any action to be taken would have to be through legislators that would make the decisions. Wuorenmaa also informed the commission he had not been approached by this organization since the last commission meeting.  
Ratcliffe reminded the Commission that there is a big push for support on this but when land is put into wilderness, it does not get touched. It restricts its use considerably, it does not get harvested or managed, and if it catches on fire, there is little done to control the fire or put it out. Ratcliffe recommended to look to see who is listed on the list of supporters and suggested everyone get hold of their Congressional delegation with their views.

Moved by Bonovetz, supported by Tikkanen to show the request was received and will be placed on file. No action was taken. Motion carried.

**MI-HOPE program application:** McKenzie explained what this program is and that WUPPDR had submitted a grant request for one million dollars for the six counties within our region. WUPPDR is hoping to collaborate with other agencies as once MSHDA receives all the grant requests, they will review the requests and get a hold of applicants to resolve overlapping service areas and gaps, so nobody is left behind.

**Personnel Policy matters:**

- a. Amendment to increase base Annual Leave Wuorenmaa explained anything not highlighted in red on the policy is the current policy. Nousiainen read the revision, Stafford summarized the change. Wuorenmaa stated the change is so WUPPDR can be more competitive and to let new hires know they would start at three weeks of vacation. He also mentioned this would positively impact the employee more than it would negatively impact WUPPDR as an organization. Discussion followed. Moved by Tikkanen, supported by Stafford. Roll Call Vote: **Ayes:** Anderson, Babcock, Britz, Broemer, LaFave, Peretto, Rolof, Stafford, Tikkanen, Nousiainen. **Nays:** Bonovetz. Motion carried.
- b. Juneteenth National Independence Day – Wuorenmaa stated he is not asking for or recommending approving this. He just wanted to put this item on the agenda because this is now observed as a state and federal holiday and individual counties have taken action on it. Moved by Anderson, supported by Stafford to not approve this holiday. Motion carried.

**Partnership Agreement:** Wuorenmaa explained this is for the financial services received from Michigan Works! to extend with a 5% cost increase, held at the same annual cost for 5 years. Moved by LaFave, supported by Babcock to approve the agreement. Roll Call Vote: **Ayes:** Anderson, Babcock, Britz, Broemer, LaFave, Peretto, Rolof, Stafford, Tikkanen, Nousiainen. **Nays:** None. **Abstained:** Bonovetz. Motion carried.

**Michigan Works! 32-hour week:** Wuorenmaa is also not recommending this. He just wanted to make the Commission aware that Michigan Works! had gone to a 32-hour week for a three-month trial period for all their non-exempt employees.

**Annual meeting / Chiantello update:** Hyttinen updated the commission on the details of the annual meeting which will be at Alice's Italian Restaurant in Iron River. The Chiantello award will be awarded to Albert Koskela, posthumously. Guest speaker will be Tom Stephenson, Manager from Connected Nation Michigan.

**Other Business:** None

**Adjourn:** Moved by Rolof, supported by Stafford that the meeting adjourn at 6:19 PM (ET). Motion carried.

*Robert Nausen*

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