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# MARQUETTE COUNTY OBSERVER CORPS HIGHLIGHTS

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LEAGUE OF  
WOMEN VOTERS®  
[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)



One year anniversary of the newly reformulated Marquette County LWV.

## Observer Corps Launch

In April 2017, Darlene Allen and Cate Ferrara led an effort to re-establish the League of Women Voters in Marquette County. Currently, we are the League of Women Voters of Delta County, Marquette County Unit, and we are working towards full independence. In January 2018, David Allen led an effort to launch an Observer Corps for the Marquette County Unit. We currently have 10 LWV members in our Observer Corps, and we are following 11 local governmental entities (we are currently following Ishpeming, Negaunee, and Forsyth Township via their minutes, but we hope to recruit, soon, LWV observers for the actual meetings). Our goals are to provide the LWV and the public with information about their local government and to ensure that local government is aware of public interest and scrutiny regarding their efforts on our behalf.

This quarterly newsletter is one of the avenues by which we hope to accomplish our goals. Here, we will provide a calendar of upcoming governmental meetings for the coming quarter, and brief summaries of the highlights of the meetings that we have followed in the previous quarter. For more information, including copies of meeting agendas and minutes, please contact David Allen at [pdavid2@charter.net](mailto:p david2@charter.net). If you are interested in joining the LWV, contact Darlene Allen at [d-and-d@chartermi.net](mailto:d-and-d@chartermi.net).



Women's March 2018.

# Upcoming Meetings

## April 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
1	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:00 PM Marquette County</li> <li>6:30 PM Marquette Township</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7:00 PM Ishpeming City Council</li> </ul>	3	4	5		
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:00 PM City Marquette</li> </ul>	9	10	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7:00 PM Negaunee City Council</li> </ul>	12	13	14
15	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:00 PM Marquette County</li> <li>6:30 PM Marquette Township</li> </ul>	17	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:30 PM Forsyth Township Board</li> </ul>	19	20	21
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5:30 PM MAPS School Board</li> <li>6:30 PM NICE School Board</li> </ul>	23	24	25	26	27	28	
29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:00 PM City Marquette</li> </ul>	30	1	2	3	4	5	

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## May 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday			
29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:00 PM City Marquette</li> </ul>	30	1	2	3	4			
6	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:00 PM Marquette County</li> <li>6:30 PM Marquette Township</li> </ul>	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4:30 PM Marquette Light &amp; Power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7:00 PM Ishpeming City Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7:00 PM Negaunee City Council</li> </ul>	10	11	12
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:00 PM City Marquette</li> </ul>	14	15	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:30 PM Forsyth Township Board</li> </ul>	17	18	19	
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5:30 PM MAPS School Board</li> <li>6:30 PM NICE School Board</li> </ul>	21	22	23	24	25	26		
27	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6:00 PM City Marquette</li> </ul>	29	30	31	1	2		

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## June 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29 6:00 PM City Marquette	30	31	1	2
3	4	5 6:00 PM Marquette County 6:30 PM Marquette Township	6 7:00 PM Ishpeming City Council	7	8	9
10 5:30 PM MAPS School Board 6:00 PM City Marquette	11	12 4:30 PM Marquette Light & Power	13	14 7:00 PM Negaunee City Council	15	16
17 6:30 PM NICE School Board	18	19 6:00 PM Marquette County 6:30 PM Marquette Township	20	21	22	23
24 5:30 PM MAPS School Board 6:00 PM City Marquette	25	26	27	28 6:30 PM Forsyth Township Board	29	30

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## Meeting Highlights (January-March 2018)

This quarter, many governmental entities endorsed and supported the reopening of the Empire Mine. There was also significant and unexpected turnover, including the untimely death of Marquette City Commissioner, Tom Baldini, and Negaunee City Council member, Mike Van Straten. The lack of glass recycling was a major issue, particularly because it was not widely known that it has not been taking place, despite its apparent inclusion in recycling streams by citizens. Additional details are provided below about governmental entities being observed.

### Marquette County Board of Commissioners

Gerald Corkin was elected chairperson. The meeting schedule and rules for order were set for 2018. Routine committee appointments were made.

A \$110k bid was accepted to replace the jail chiller. Camera Corner was selected to upgrade courthouse networks (\$14k). Frailing’s Electric Company was selected to install battery backup for the Negaunee Service Center (\$20k). Outside counsel was approved for opioid litigation. Steve Pence was approved as civil counsel via monthly contract. Manny Lentine was hired (up to \$15k) to lobby against Michigan Senate Bill 390 (earmark \$500k of annual revenue from low grade iron ore to local intermediate school district). Mead & Hunter, Inc. will provide professional services (\$29k) to

prepare the design and bid packages for the Sawyer Airport snow broom and concrete repairs, which will be funded through federal (\$855k), state (\$47.5k), and local (\$47.5k) shares.

Neil Lynch will continue as the county's representative for the Marquette County Remonumentation Program (review of platts). The Board formally opposed Michigan House Bills 5096-5098 (limiting fees by road agencies to recover costs from issuing and inspecting utility rights-of-way). The Board formally supported the reopening of the Empire Mine. The Board formally supported the Republic Township dam project. The Board formally supported the Michigan Indigent Defense Act, which supports fair and equal justice for low-income defendants. Economic development under the Lake Superior Community Partnership will focus on Sawyer International Airport and the economic needs of Marquette County communities. The county will continue to provide assessing services for the City of Ishpeming. Family medical leave policies were updated for consistency with the federal Family Medical Leave Act. The Health Department organizational plan was revised. Airport security badge fees were updated.

A public hearing was held regarding the Big Bay Harbor or Refuge expansion project to add a floating dock system with 10-12 slips, and the Board approved a \$121k grant application to the Michigan DNR Land and Conservation Fund, as well as park fees and regulations. Two closed session were held to discuss collective bargaining negotiation strategies, one to discuss suicide prevention in the Gwinn School System, and one to discuss litigation strategies. Briefings were given about: the Sheriff Department; the Lake Superior Community Partnership; the Treasurer's Office.

## **City of Marquette Commission**

Dave Campagna read a tribute to Mayor Tom Baldini, who passed away unexpectedly on December 26, 2017, and the other Commissioners and many public commenters praised his service. Dave Campagna was elected the new mayor, and Fred Stonehouse was elected the new Mayor Pro Tempore. The Commission adopted an application procedure to fill Commission vacancies, following the procedure proposed by Tom Baldini to fill the vacancy left by Sara Cambensy (Jenna Smith was appointed previously to the vacancy left by Sara Cambensy). Paul Schloegel was appointed to the vacancy left by Tom Baldini following the newly adopted procedure.

The Commission approved revisions to the Ore Dock Bottomlands Agreement with the State of Michigan, which will ease potential restrictions. The Commission approved the Marquette Lighthouse Property Land Use Plan after Fred Stonehouse provided comments about the history of the property, and the Commission approved a use agreement for lighthouse tours. The Commission authorized \$5.5k for Senior Center improvements. The Commission established a Parks and Recreation Master Plan Ad-Hoc Steering Committee and a Marquette Public Art Commission and appointed membership to each. The Commission directed the Planning Commission to review short-term rental ordinances (affecting Airbnb, etc.). A public hearing was held regarding a liquor license at 717 N. Third Street, and the Commission concurred with the request.

Presentations were made by the Board of Review, the Marquette Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, the Peter White Library Board, the Downtown Development Authority, the Marquette Area Sister Cities Partnership, the Planning Commission, the Board of Zoning Appeals, and Johnson Controls (regarding energy efficiency efforts). Many comments were made by commissioners, the city manager, and the public about the lack of transparency regarding glass recycling and how to handle glass waste and recycling in the future. The Commission and public commenters supported the reopening of the Empire Mine. Valerie Olson, other public commenters, and several Commissioners made a number of comments about the pros and cons of water fluoridation.

## **Other Cities and Townships**

### **Negaunee City Council**

Council member Mike Van Straten died, an application process was approved for replacement, and Jon Becker was appointed. Nate Heffron became City Manager. The charter language was revised after review by the Michigan Attorney-General. The Council limited the time to respond to notices of the sale of real property in order to prevent delay of the sale of 550 Pioneer Avenue. An easement was approved for the Iron Ore Heritage Trail. The Council supported joining Next Michigan Development Corporation. The Council supported the reopening of the Empire Mine. A closed session was held to discuss trial and settlement strategies.

### **Ishpeming City Council**

A public hearing was held, and the council approved a quit claim deed for the Symons Building and property. The Lake Bancroft Area Pavilion project was moved from the 2019 to the 2018 Capital Improvement Plan, and engineering plans were authorized to begin. A chain of command was established for any potential absence of the City manager: finance director, then chief-of-police, then assistant city manager. An energy efficiency committee was established. The council approved Marquette County as the provider for assessing services. The council approved a bid (\$233k) from Tunnel Vision of Escanaba for sanitary and storm drain televising. The purchase of tasers for the police department was approved (\$9k). Jessica Flores of Preservation Forward made a presentation about historic preservation designations. A closed session was held, pursuant to MCL 15.268(h) of the Open Meetings Act.

### **Forsyth Township Board (Gwinn)**

A public hearing was held and the Forsyth Township Five Year Recreation Plan Resolution was approved. A fire truck was sold (\$7k) to Try Townships Fire Department. A fire brush truck was sold (\$1) to Skandia Township. Michaela McKeen was hired as a fire fighter, and Derek Gates as a paramedic. The board will pursue legal action regarding a condemned property on County Road 456. Ambulance equipment budgets were amended and equipment purchased. A credit card policy and purchasing policy were approved. The board formally supported the reopening of the Empire Mine. Two closed sessions were held to consider a confidential legal opinions.

## **Marquette Township Board**

The Board discussed how to contribute to Tom Baldini's funeral. Steven Pelto was recognized for his service on the Planning Commission. The Board approved a contract with the Sheriff's Department. The Board approved \$59k for work by Oberstar Construction, Inc. on the Lions Field Recreation Area. The Board held a public hearing regarding ordinances expanding the boundaries of the Downtown Development Authority. The Board planned its work for 2018. Updates were provided from the Planning Commission, the Road Committee, the Recreation Committee, the Fire Department, Public Works, the Assessing Department, and Marquette County 911. The Board supported the Republic Township dam project. The Board entered five closed sessions to discuss strategies and negotiations regarding a collective bargaining agreement.

## **Chocolay Township Board**

The Board discussed the need to update zoning and township ordinances, and they appointed members to conduct a review. The Board discussed ATV use on public roads. The Board approved sale of a surplus police patrol car. Public commenters and supervisors commented about the loss of glass recycling. The Board entered a closed session, and a public commenter complained that the purpose of the closed session was not properly announced.

## **Other Boards**

### **Marquette Board of Light and Power**

Tom Carpenter's service was honored, and an employment contract was issued (Executive Director). The Board discussed solar rates, including the need to avoid current customers subsidizing new solar and wind systems on other customers' properties, and the need to align with national trends; the Board approved avoided cost value rates for residential rooftop solar (\$0.06414 per kWh) and small commercial rooftop solar (\$0.06972 per kWh). The Board discussed Michigan Public Act 95 (Low-Income Energy Assistance) programs, including the need to align with other utilities in the state, probably by instituting a self-funded assistance program. Chris Lund (Utility Financial Solutions) gave a presentation on rates for rooftop solar customers. Paul Nardi summarized the Annual Financial Audit Report. Tom Carpenter summarized the Burns and McDonnell Power Supply Planning Analysis Study, including recommendations to use the Marquette Energy Center (natural gas and fuel oil) and the Mid-continent Independent System Operator grid (the electric grid for the central U.S. and parts of Canada) rather than relying on the Shiras Steam Plant (coal). Boiler repair by CR Meyer and Son was approved (\$87k). The Board approved contracts for annual maintenance and support (\$48k), warehouse roof replacement (Bell Roofing Company, \$142k), and fiber network switch upgrades (\$45k). The Board approved purchase of circuit breakers (\$95k). John Forslin gave a presentation on green energy. Other public commenters supported solar and renewable energy sources.

### **Marquette Transit Authority Board (Marq-Tran)**

Officers were elected. A union contract was signed. Committee assignments were made.

### **Marquette Area Public School District Board (MAPS)**

Officers were elected. Signature and purchase order authorizations were delegated. Presentations were made by the Executive Committee, by the Appropriations Committee, by the Student School Board, by the Bothwell president, and about school safety. Strategic planning was discussed. The Thrun Law Firm was designated as the provider of legal services to MAPS. The return of \$454k to WE Energies was discussed, including reimbursement by the state (sans interest).

### **NICE Community School District Board**

The Board approved the purchase of three new buses from Holland Bus Sales (\$250k), and the liquidation of three old buses. The Board supported the reopening of the Empire Mine.