
MARQUETTE COUNTY OBSERVER CORPS HIGHLIGHTS



LEAGUE OF
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LWV-Marquette County at the City of Marquette July 4th parade.

About Observer Corps

This quarterly newsletter is one of the avenues by which the League of Women Voters of Delta County, Marquette County Unit monitors entities of local government and reports on their regular activities. Here, we provide a calendar of the upcoming governmental meetings that we will follow during the coming quarter, as well as brief summaries of the highlights of the meetings that we have followed during the previous quarter. For more information, including copies of previous newsletters, meeting agendas, and minutes, please contact David Allen at pdavid2@charter.net. If you are interested in joining the LWV, contact Darlene Allen at d-and-d@chartermi.net.



LWV-Marquette County candidate forum for City of Marquette Commission candidates, July 25.

Upcoming Meetings

July 2018

■ Observer Corps

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

August 2018

Observer Corps

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

September 2018

■ Observer Corps

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



LWV-Marquette County voter registration and education drive in Ishpeming.

Meeting Highlights (April-June 2018)

This quarter, several consequential matters were considered by local governmental bodies and their public commenters. First, elected officials and the public continued to discuss the looming disposition of the Presque Isle Power Plant and the Shiras Steam Plant, as well as loss of tax revenues from WE Energy and the transition to power generation by natural gas at the Marquette Energy Center and the grid, rather than by coal. Second, glass recycling, glass disposal, and transparency of decisions made by the Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority continued to concern many local boards and public commenters. Third, the sale of land by the City of Marquette to help pay down bond debts animated many commenters, particularly regarding Parcel #35 of the Heartwood Property, which could affect the South Trails of the Noquemanon Trail Network. Fourth, ballot proposals were discussed by several boards regarding funding for the Peter White Library by overriding Headlee Amendment rollbacks, which would restore millage rates in several jurisdictions.

Marquette County Board of Commissioners

Overcrowding at the jail was an ongoing issue leading to reduced services, staff burnout, and increased inmate incidents. Recycling by the Marquette County Solid Waste Authority remained an issue for the entire county. The Board formally opposed House Bills 5752 and 5753 regarding statewide septic codes because they would reduce local control. The Board formally opposed House Bill 6049 and Senate Bill 1025 regarding statewide accessing requirements because of local costs for complying.

Renewal language was approved for three county millages: county services to senior citizens (0.4474 mills); search and rescue and technical rescue unit programs (0.1525 mills); central dispatch and enhanced 9-1-1 emergency telephone system (0.4970 mills). A brownfield plan was adopted for a parcel at Main Street and Pearl Street in Ishpeming after a public hearing. The board approved updated landing and ramp fees at the airport. The Board allocated proceeds from the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe gaming revenues. A public hearing was held to close out a community development block grant for Blackrocks Brewery. A public hearing was held to update an industrial pretreatment plan for KI Sawyer.

A bid was accepted from eClinicalWorks for electronic medical records at the Health Department (\$184k). A radio system services agreement was renewed with Motorola Systems for March 2018 - February 2021 (\$141k). The Board accepted a bid from Dresslers Mechanical for a sanitary water grinder at the jail (\$58k). Eleven parcels were purchased for the Land Bank Authority (\$54k). A bid from Superior Eagle was accepted to upgrade the phone system at KI Sawyer and the Health Department (\$47k). The Board approved purchase of a patrol car for the Sheriff's Department (\$30k). A bid was accepted from Frei Chevrolet for a pickup truck for the code inspector (\$27k). A proposal from Otis Elevator was accepted to replace a power unit for an elevator in the Skewis Annex (\$23k). A pickup truck was purchased for the KI Sawyer Water/Wastewater Department (\$20k). A services agreement was extended with Johnson Controls, which covers the courthouse complex, the detention center, and other facilities (\$16k). The Board pre-approved an agreement with the FAA for inspection of the airport's precision approach path indicators (\$12k). A food concession with Northern Michigan University was extended at the airport with financial assistance to keep the operation viable (\$10k). The Board approved a modification to the runway rehabilitation contract for the airport (local share, \$1k). Arrangements were made to use a state grant with local match for annual live fire training in aircraft rescue and fire fighting ("ARFF") by relevant personnel at Sawyer International Airport (\$200 local share).

John Carlson, Mine Inspector, made an annual report and discussed the possibility of Highland Copper Company starting a new mine. The Drain Commissioner, Mike Farrell, reported on the Drainage Master Plan.

City of Marquette Commission

Many public comments expressed concern about the city selling Parcel #35 of the Heartwood Property, which could impact the South Trails system of the Noquemanon Trail Network (NTN), including comments from Lori Hauswirth and Cary Gottlieb, the Executive Director and President, respectively, of NTN. The city is selling various properties to pay down bond debts to counteract the loss of taxes when the Presque Isle Power Plant (WE Energy) shuts down. However, trail riders are hoping that Parcel #35 will not be included, or will be sold with conditions to entities that are highly sympathetic with the trail system. City Manager Angeli provided a detailed history of the parcel and the public process that led to the current exploration of selling the property. Development pressure near the Lake Superior shoreline continued to be a topic of much public comment and debate. There was support both for increasing the tax base and enhancing the look and feel of the shoreline, but growing concern about multi-story buildings too close to the shoreline. A condo proposal was widely opposed during citizen comments because of its size and character, and the developers cancelled a planned presentation to the commission. An appraisal of Parcel #2 of Founders' Landing, and drafting of a resolution of intent to sell, was approved for a development that likely will include 21 condos. Glass recycling, the history of decisions and lack of transparency by the Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority, and how to handle glass in the future was discussed by public commenters and commissioners. Solutions are being actively sought, but no resolution has been achieved yet. The commission changed the rules to prevent reserving public comment on specific items in consent agendas (Smith and Reynolds opposed).

The commission approved an intent to issue general obligation bonds not to exceed 4,700k for capital improvements and \$1,200k for the lighthouse park. The commission approved \$2,900k for the reconstruction of part of Presque Isle Ave. Oberstar Inc. was awarded a contract for paving and sewer laterals on McClellan Avenue (\$2,600k). The capital improvement plan was amended, moving \$1,580k from the College Avenue improvement to the lighthouse enterprise fund, the Shiras Park restoration project, and the Presque Isle Avenue improvement. A 5th Street construction project was awarded to Smith Construction (\$1,037k). Development of a storm water management plan by GEI Consulting was approved (not to exceed \$100k). A 5-year recreation master plan and citizen survey proposal was approved (not to exceed \$70k). The purchase of a traffic painting machine was approved \$34k. An evaluation of Lakeview Arena by All Star Arenas was approved (not to exceed \$10k). A lease agreement was approved with Pete Frazier, Sr., for the lift at the Cinder Pond Marina. A lease agreement was approved with Superior Kayaking Company at Presque Isle Park (\$147/month). Property was purchased from the Marquette Public Service Garage for improving traffic flow for the hospital. A concession agreement with Vango's was extended at Presque Isle Park and Mattson Park.

The commission approved a strategic plan for the city for fiscal years 2018-2020, as well as capital improvement bonds and Michigan transportation bonds for 2018. Public hearings were held regarding merchandise displays on sidewalks, pedestrian passage on sidewalks, civil infraction

finances and process, adoption of new rental property fire codes, zoning ordinance amendments, and a single lot special assessment. Dark Sky hours were extended at Presque Isle Park.

Annual presentations were given regarding the Investment Advisory Board, the Lake Superior Community Partnership, the Harbor Advisory Committee, the U.P. Children's Museum, the Presque Isle dark sky project, and the Election Board. Karl Zueger was honored for his service with the city. A presentation was also made about Michigan's Redevelopment Ready Communities program.

Public comments regarding fluoridation of water and glass recycling continued to be discussed. Public comments supported the dark sky designation at Presque Isle Park.

Other Cities and Townships

Negaunee City Council

The council discussed whether a deputy director is needed for the Department of City Works, and motions failed to approve contracts for both the director and deputy director. A resolution was passed to support a comprehensive strategic plan and downtown streetscape revitalization plan. The council accepted a bid from Associated Constructors, LLC for the Birch Street water mains (\$147k). The council approved assistance to the Ore to Shore Organization. A Croix Street construction project was approved. Mowers were leased from Northland Lawn, Sport, and Equipment (\$202/month). The capital improvement plan was discussed. A public hearing was held regarding tourist oriented directional signs. A presentation was given on the Lake Superior Community Partnership.

Ishpeming City Council

The time for public comments was extended to 5 minutes per person. A draw to Rural Development was approved for the water improvement project (\$1,245k). A Peterbuilt snow plow was leased from the JX Truck Center (5 years, \$196k). A change order was approved for a contract (\$120k), and a payment was made to a contract (\$24k). A contract was approved with A. Lindberg and Sons for a water improvement package (\$19k). A new columbarium was approved for the Ishpeming Cemetery (\$19k). A sewage pump was purchased for the Bell lift station (\$5k). The council approved \$5k for the Lake Superior Community Partnership. Police radios were purchased (\$4k). Security improvements for the Carnegie Library were approved (\$3k). A part-time position was approved for a rental code assistant. A resolution was approved for UPPCO to pursue LED lighting upgrades. Monthly financial statements were reviewed. A presentation was given on the Lake Superior Community Partnership.

Forsyth Township Board (Gwinn)

A noise ordinance was passed. Road repairs were approved for the Half-Way Creek culvert, Iron Street, Voodoo Street, and Scorpion Street (\$220k; plus \$300k from the Marquette County Road Commission). A bid from Jacobson Landscaping was approved for spring fertilization and maintenance (\$11k). An initial electrical bid from Kobas Electric was not approved, but a second bid was approved (\$10k). Fire department uniforms were purchased (\$4k). Modems were purchased for EMS (\$2k). A request from the Warrior Relief Fund was not approved. The board recommended reducing the road millage from 1.9 to 1.6 mils. Litigation continued regarding the Mallon condemned property. An audit contract was approved.

Marquette Township Board

The board awarded a bid to Quayle Com for portable radios (\$99k). The board awarded Stantec Consulting Michigan Inc. a proposal for a grant for wastewater collection asset management development (not to exceed \$68k). The board approved a proposed scope for road maintenance by Farhner Asphalt Sealers (\$41k). The board sent a letter to the Marquette County Solid Waste Management Authority. Noise from the Marquette Energy Center was discussed, including presentations from the Marquette Board of Light and Power, and the board authorized exploration of legal actions. The board approved drafting by the clerk of a ballot proposal to override the Headlee Amendment rollback of millages for library services, after a presentation from the Peter White Library. The board directed the clerk to draft a ballot proposal for 0.6 millage for fire equipment replacement. The board approved an amendment to short-term rental requirements. The board approved amendment of the Downtown Development Authority boundaries. The board formally opposed House Bill 6049 and Senate Bill 1025 regarding assessor requirements. Voters Not Politicians gave a presentation about the ballot proposal to prevent gerrymandering.

Chocolay Township Board

Millage proposals for the Peter White Library were discussed, and the board approved a request for a ballot proposal to override the rollback from the Headlee Amendment. A fireworks ordinance was passed. A credit card processing system was approved. The board accepted a land donation from O'Dovero Properties. The board approved overland crack filling (\$54k). The board approved the hiring of a seasonal field technician to assist with zoning enforcement (not to exceed \$9k). A lawn mower was purchased from Northgate Equipment (\$9k). An in-car camera was purchased (\$3k). The lack of glass recycling was discussed. Short-term rentals were discussed, including many public commenters who supported stronger regulation, and the board rejected a zoning ordinance until more work is done on the short-term rental issue. The board rejected a proposed policy to post recordings of board meetings for one year, but accepted a policy to remove recordings after minutes are posted. A presentation was made about gerrymandering by Voters Not Politicians.

Other Boards

Marquette Board of Light and Power

The Marquette Energy Center began running for full days. The first full day cost \$32k rather than the \$48k that would have been required at the Shiras Steam Plant, or \$40k for the grid. The board expects to save approximately \$100 million over the next 20 years. The new plant can begin operating within 5 minutes, rather than the 11 hours required for Shiras. The board discussed complaints about noise from the Marquette Energy Center, including the fact that \$200k was spent to lessen noise issues. The board is working on reducing the sound levels of the new operation. The Shiras plant came offline on June 8. The board is discussing whether the plant should be maintained for future use, but the costs would be high. Coal combustion residuals (coal ash) must be cleaned up by 2022 and current holding ponds would require upgrades costing \$3-4M, under U.S. EPA regulations, which was a major reason that the Shiras Steam Plant was shut down.

A voluntary green pricing program must be in place by 2018, which gives customers the opportunity to link to renewable sources. The Michigan Public Power Authority suggests \$0.01/kWh. A computerized maintenance management system was purchased from Wartsila North America, Inc. (\$131k). A contract was approved for supervisory control and data acquisition (\$36k). IT professional services were approved (\$25k). Purchase of critical spare parts was approved. The board approved a submittal of an application for waiver and plan, pursuant to Public Act 202 of 2017, regarding a defined benefit pension retirement system plan and retirement health benefit systems plan. The board entered a closed session on May 8.

Marquette County Transit Authority Board (Marq-Tran)

The Trowbridge and Marquette Shopping routes were merged to accommodate the new Meijer store. The board agreed that municipal employees' retirement system programs would need to be employee-funded. Requests for proposals were issued for flooring and parking lot repairs in Marquette and Ishpeming. Marq-Tran will bid on NMU campus transit. VAST suggested budgeting a 5-7% increase for healthy insurance. The board discussed policies for banning specific passengers.

Marquette Area Public School District Board (MAPS)

A proposal was approved for the Houghton Mifflin Math Expressions and Journeys (not to exceed \$475k). Dressler Mechanical Inc. was awarded a contract to upgrade the MSHS steam system (\$174k). Racquet Sports was awarded a contract to resurface tennis courts at MSHS (\$51k). A preliminary budget was presented (2016/7 audited; 2017/8 amended; 2017/8 proposed; 2018/9 projected). A presentation was made about the Marquette-Alger Regional Educational Service Agency. Staff and students were recognized for achievements.

NICE Community School District Board

The board accepted a bid from Premeau Construction, Inc. for a radiant heat sidewalks project (\$224k). The board accepted a bid from Cross General Contracting, Inc. for a bleacher project (\$170k). The board accepted a bid from A. Jacobson Landscaping for practice fields (\$79k). The board approved renewal of a contract with PCMI.