



City of Marquette, MI

300 West Baraga Ave
Marquette, Michigan 49855

Meeting Minutes City Commission

**Monday, December 8, 2025
6:00 PM
Commission Chambers**

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call

Present: Davis, Gottlieb, Hanley, Larson, Ottaway, Schloegel

Absent: Mayer

Commissioner Cary Gottlieb moved to excuse Commissioner Cody Mayer due to personal reasons, seconded by Commissioner Michael Larson and Carried Unanimously.

Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Jessica Hanley moved to Approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Jermey Ottaway and Carried Unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor Schloegel reminded everyone that the second meeting in December would be held in one week, on December 15, due to the holidays.

Boards and Committees

1. Reappointment(s)

Recommend Barb Owdziej for reappointment to the Marquette County Transit Authority as a city of Marquette representative for a term ending 12-31-2028

Commissioner Sally Davis moved to Approve the reappointment recommendation as listed, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Jermey Ottaway and Carried Unanimously.

Public Comments - Comments may not exceed three minutes per person. Please state your name and physical address when making public comments.

Barb Owdziej discussed winter snow-removal practices, and said pedestrian access and safety should be more highly prioritized.

Chelsie Wilkinson, representing the Room at the Inn, thanked the Commission and City staff for their extensive discussions over the past several weeks regarding temporary sheltering needs, noting the high volume of public feedback. She said the organization had been able to pivot quickly, with help from donors, but said that even though the current need is lessened, the broader issues still exist.

Presentation(s)

2. Downtown Development Authority, by Executive Director Tara Laase-McKinney

Downtown Development Authority Executive Director Tara Laase-McKinney presented on DDA activity from the previous year, starting with a description of the history and boundaries of the DDA district, TIF performance, and current finances. She reported that most revenues come from TIF and parking, with all parking revenue reinvested into the parking system, and highlighted recent work on the Bluff Street ramp, accessibility upgrades, and ongoing sidewalk and maintenance efforts throughout the district. She also summarized farmers market activity, downtown events (including Blueberry Festival, Music on Third, and the holiday parade/tree lighting), and recent business openings and closures.

Following the presentation, Commissioners discussed issues related to winter accessibility, parking and pedestrian activity on Third Street and Baraga Avenue, facade grants, vacant storefronts, and the potential need to update downtown planning efforts.

3. Local Development Finance Authority, by Chair Leslie Hartman

Local Development Finance Authority Chair Leslie Hartman presented an annual update on her board's activities finances, and SmartZone performance. She discussed LDFA TIF funding this year and said the group approved two interlocal agreements related to brownfield projects. She highlighted SmartZone-related statistics related to job and company creation, clients assisted, licensing deals and issued patents. Hartman noted that the SmartZone was working toward long-term sustainability, as the current TIF plan expires in 2029.

In follow-up discussion, Commissioners asked for details about the jobs and companies supported, and about future organizational funding considerations.

4. Consent Agenda - Roll Call Vote

Commissioner Michael Larson moved to Approve the Consent Agenda as written, seconded by Commissioner Jessica Hanley and Carried Unanimously by Roll Call Vote.

4.a. Approve the minutes of the November 24, 2025 work session

4.b. Approve the minutes of the November 24, 2025 regular Commission meeting

4.c. Approve the total bills payable in the amount of \$1,889,261.25

4.d. 2026 City Commission Meeting Schedule

4.e. Publication and Communication Ordinance Review

4.f. Purchasing and Contracting Ordinance Review

4.g. State Right-of-Way Permits - Roll Call Vote

Unfinished Business

5. City Facilities

Commissioner Jessica Hanley moved to Authorize the City Manager to discontinue working toward a contract to use the Presque Isle Pavilion for overnight overflow shelter use, seconded by Commissioner Cary Gottlieb and Carried Unanimously.

Public Comments - Comments may not exceed three minutes per person. Please state your name and physical address when making public comments.

There was no public comment.

Comments from the Commission

Commissioners Larson and Hanley had no comments.

Commissioner Davis said homelessness is a broader issue that extends beyond the reach of just the City of Marquette but said it is important to continue to focus on the issue.

Commissioner Gottlieb said the E-Bike and Multi-Use Path Task Force has completed its work and expects to present its findings to the City Commission in January. He also said that while the City cannot solve homelessness alone, it is an issue that cannot be ignored.

Mayor Pro Tem Ottaway reflected on the recent Room at the Inn discussions, praising Chelsie Wilkinson for advocating for the organization's residents. He also criticized hostile social media comments and stressed that everyone should realize that at the end of the day, this is a discussion about people.

Mayor Schloegel thanked the DDA for organizing the holiday parade and tree-lighting event, noting the strong turnout despite cold weather. He encouraged residents to shop local and support charitable efforts during the holidays. The Mayor also expressed disappointment with online comments and behavior around the Room at the Inn issue and urged residents to respect the work of those helping neighbors in need.

Comments from the City Manager

City Manager Karen Kovacs thanked the Room at the Inn representatives and City staff for their efforts toward collaboration. She also praised staff for creating and decorating the City's holiday parade float and noted the positive impact of employee engagement efforts.

Adjournment

Mayor Schloegel adjourned the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Paul Schloegel, Mayor

Kyle Whitney, City Clerk

If you require assistance to participate in any meeting, program or activity offered by the City of Marquette, please provide advanced notice to City of Marquette ADA Coordinator Eric Stemen at 906-225-8978 or via email at estemen@marquettemi.gov.