



City of Marquette, MI

300 West Baraga Ave
Marquette, Michigan 49855

Meeting Minutes City Commission

**Monday, November 17, 2025
6:00 PM
Commission Chambers**

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call

City Clerk Kyle Whitney administered the oath of office to Commissioners Sally Davis and Michael Larson, who were elected at the November 4, 2025 election.

The Clerk then oversaw the process by which the City Commission determined who to appoint as the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem for the coming year.

After one round of voting, Commissioner Jessica Hanley made a motion to appoint Paul Schloegel as Mayor for the coming year, seconded by Commissioner Sally Davis and carried unanimously.

Following another single round of voting, Mayor Schloegel made a motion to appoint Jerney Ottaway as Mayor Pro Tem for the coming year, seconded by Commissioner Larson and carried unanimously.

The Clerk then administered the oaths of office to the incoming Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem, and Mayor Schloegel ran the remainder of the meeting.

Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Jessica Hanley moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Jerney Ottaway and carried unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor Schloegel noted that the off-leash dog area at Tourist Park would be opening a few days late this year, due to construction in the park; he said that the delay is inconvenient but that the work is really improving the space.

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

Chelsie Wilkinson, Executive Director of Room at the Inn, spoke about her concerns for the local homeless population. She requested the City Commission allow Room at the Inn to utilize the Baraga Gym in City Hall as a temporary shelter.

Kim Frost spoke in support of the Room at the Inn request.

Abigail Andrews, the Street Outreach Case Manager for Room at the Inn, said the need for shelter has exceeded the current facility capacity.

Glenn Richards, who currently lives at Room at the Inn, shared his personal experience and said he would not have survived without the shelter.

Jeff Renshaw, who also lives at the shelter, spoke about his personal experience and said his medical needs make outdoor sleeping unsafe.

1. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Sally Davis moved to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Michael Larson and carried unanimously.

1.a. Approve the minutes of the October 27, 2025 regular Commission meeting

1.b. Approve the total bills payable in the amount of \$4,515,750.95

1.c. Handgun Weapon System Purchase

1.d. Toole Design Contract Extension

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

Chelsie Wilkinson reiterated the request for temporary overflow use of the Baraga Gym for six weeks.

Comments from the Commission

Commissioner Larson said he is still processing the Room at the Inn request, and he would ask the City Manager and Mayor to work together to help the full commission understand the issues and possible solutions.

Commissioner Hanley said Room at the Inn have consistently done everything they can to serve the unhoused population, including working closely with the City at times. She expressed a commitment to coming to the table to help find a workable solution that protects everyone.

Mayor Pro Tem Ottaway congratulated Commissioners Davis and Larson on their recent elections and said they are very important to the commission. Regarding the Room at the Inn request, he expressed a desire to gather more information and work toward the best possible outcome.

Commissioner Davis thanked the community for re-electing her and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve another three-year term. She congratulated the new Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem and thanked former Mayor Hanley for her strong leadership over the past year. Addressing the Room at the Inn representatives, she praised the compassion they show to the people they serve and expressed appreciation for the development of family shelters. She said that, while Baraga Gym may or may not be the final solution, the City, county, and broader community need to find a solution quickly, and that she believes all commissioners are interested in helping address the issue.

Commissioner Gottlieb said he didn't have much to add but that he hoped the staff and manager could provide some information and guidance on the Room at the Inn request.

Mayor Schloegel congratulated the re-elected commissioners and said he was honored to be selected by the Commission to serve as Mayor for the coming year. Regarding Room at the Inn, he noted his longstanding support of the organization and commended those involved for their tireless and emotionally demanding work. He said the City and Commission would do their best to help said he looks forward to receiving more information and moving forward on potential solutions.

Comments from the City Manager

City Manager Karen Kovacs explained that the Room at the Inn had approached her on Friday with the request to use the Baraga Gym as a temporary overnight overflow shelter. Staff immediately began reviewing the issue, including discussions with department heads and the City Attorney.

She outlined key concerns related to liability and risk associated with using a public facility as an overnight sleeping space when it is not designed or intended for that purpose. She noted there are emergency circumstances in which limited use might be considered, but emphasized the practical difficulties of working around the gym's busy programming schedule to convert a heavily utilized public space into a safe sleeping environment and then back again each day in order to accommodate for early-morning senior and recreation programs.

The Mayor asked what steps would be needed if the Commission wanted to move forward with the Baraga Gym or a similar arrangement. The City Manager advised that the Commission should formally direct staff to develop parameters and a recommendation in coordination with Room at the Inn, and indicated that staff could likely bring a recommendation back at the next week's meeting.

She expressed confidence that, with Commission direction, staff can help to identify possible workable solutions.

Mayor Schloegel then asked the Manager to facilitate working with Room at the Inn to provide some emergency housing in some form.

Adjournment

Mayor Schloegel adjourned the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

Paul Schloegel, Mayor

Kyle Whitney, City Clerk

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