



**Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport  
Airport Board of Advisors  
Thursday, February 12, 2026 @ 4:00 PM  
Minutes/Regular Meeting**

<b>Members Present:</b>	Joseph Derocha, Bruce McCollough, Marty Munger
<b>Members Present Virtually:</b>	Christopher Germain, Karen Kovacs, Bradley Stoddard
<b>Members Not Present:</b>	Charles Holsworth
<b>Staff Present:</b>	David Erhart, Airport Manager; Anania Tekurio, Assistant Airport Manager; Duane DuRay, County Administrator
<b>Public Present:</b>	Jesse Bell, Greg Durand, Curtis Penala, Brian Rochan, James Saunders, Evan Wendzel
<b>Public Present Virtually:</b>	Chad Runyan, Jordanne Schwandt, "Jesse's better half", Eric Sibley, "public"

- 1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Derocha at 4:04 PM. Rochan led the Pledge of Allegiance. Derocha took Roll call.
- 2. Approval of Agenda:** Derocha presented agenda to Board for approval. Derocha added Lake Superior Community Partnership (LSCP) 3% administration fee discussion to agenda. Motion by Stoddard to approve the agenda. Second by McCollough. Motion carried (6-0).
- 3. Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the January 8, 2026 meeting approved as amended (correction to spelling of Christopher Germain's name in sections 3, 5, and 10). Motion by Germain. Support by Stoddard. Motion carried (6-0).
- 4. Public comment:**  
Jesse Bell – Requested the Board publicly clarify the level of due diligence performed regarding the County assuming Fixed Base Operator (FBO) operations; referenced lack of documentation returned via FOIA; urged members to speak up to avoid being complicit.

Greg Durand – Requested a copy of the bylaws the Board is operating under and clarification regarding bylaws/procedures for board elections.

Brian Rochan - Provided background/qualifications as a pilot and former FBO operator; commented on historical FBO transitions and requested additional discussion/time out.

**5. Goals and Objectives:**

Review of agreed upon main goals:

- Strive for economic sustainability
- Enhance airport services in Marquette County
- Best in class experience - strive to offer competitive fares

Review of February Objectives:

- Review of cost estimates for financial items
- Review of community input

Airport Manager David Erhart presented compiled cost estimates for potential projects discussed previously by the Board, including navigation/approach-related concepts, airfield/groundside improvements, and FBO equipment needs. Board discussion emphasized prioritizing safety, security, and operational reliability, and projects benefiting multiple user groups.

Derocha stated how he would like the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) 850 chapter priority list to be something focused on and how it should be the board's priority too. ISL equipment for runway 19 was discussed, as well as runway 19 touchdown lights, runway 1 and 19 center lights. Derocha said anything here involving runway improvements, as far as navigation purposes, is definitely something that we need to look at; he said if it can reduce the costs for airlines coming here and cut down on delays then it's a worthwhile investment.

Cybersecurity Assessment (Karhu Cyber)

Curtis Penala (Karhu Cyber) - provided an overview of a proposed phased assessment and prioritized upgrades to improve cybersecurity resiliency and operational stability (including physical/security assessment, passive RF/wireless review, network assessment, monitoring/threat hunting, segmentation, and movement toward a zero-trust style framework).

## 6. Action Items

Grant package development: Motion to further explore/develop the proposed project list/package for the State grant (including refining scope and obtaining more specific quotes where feasible). Motion carried (6-0).

Board appointment recommendation: Motion to recommend Fred Benzie for appointment (per letter from the 850 Chapter). Motion by Munger. Supported by McCollough. Motion carried (6-0)

Informational items: Motion to accept informational items (including introduction of new Assistant Airport Manager; passenger boarding bridge update; resignation notice; Teamsters letter). Motion by Germain. Supported by Munger. Motion carried (6-0)

Manager's report: Motion to accept the Manager's Report and associated airline/passenger updates. Motion by McCollough. Supported by Munger. Motion carried (6-0)

LSCP administrative fee: Motion approved a 3% administrative fee for LSCP to administer the State grant, with a friendly amendment requiring regular status updates at Board meetings. Motion carried; Christopher Germain abstained.

## 7. Informational Items and Project Updates:

- A. Introduction - Assistant Airport Manager: David Erhart introduced Anania Tekurio as the new Assistant Airport Manager.
- B. Passenger boarding bridge: Project schedule updated; manufacturer lead times delayed with first replacement bridge delivery projected for Q2 2027; funding remains available.
- C. Teamsters Local 406: Letter of support noted regarding anticipated union representation for FBO staffing.
- D. Hangar Occupancy Update
  - a. T-Hangars: full capacity. There is a waiting list currently.
  - b. Hangar 661 – Available
  - c. Hangar 663 – Army RTC/Bell Helicopter – Testing until May
  - d. Building 400: 2 bays available.
  - e. 400 series hangars - Kubick (423 E/W, 424, 425): Space available, contact FBO Staff for details.
- E. Manager’s Report - Erhart provided and reviewed the Manager’s Report. Motion by McCollough. Supported by Munger.

8. **Late Additions:** None

9. **Public Comment:**

Brian Rochan - Provided technical clarification regarding Instrument Landing System(ILS)/Runway Visual Range (RVR)/approach categories and cautioned that airline equipage, ops specifications, and crew training may limit operational benefit from certain upgrades; recommended consulting airlines. Also emphasized airline-driven fueling standards and the need for training/operations manuals.

Greg Durand - Raised concerns about readiness for County FBO assumption (staffing, training, equipment lead times); asked about hangar revenue and vacancy drivers; questioned runway extension estimates and urged pursuit of FAA funding options and documented planning.

10. **Staff and Committee Member Comment:**

Tekurio – Nothing to add.

Erhart – Thanked those in attendance and for the input given.

DuRay – Thanked David and everyone at the meeting and appreciated everyone’s input.

Germain – Mentioned he did hear from the state; said they technically have to apply for the money that’s already applied to us; will go through the process. He is optimistic.

Kovacs – Nothing additional.

Stoddard – Nothing additional.

McCollough – Commented about when and if additional hangars are coming and highlighted awareness of where additional hangars will be placed in the future.

Munger – Asked if and where do public comments concerns and questions get answered. Derocha said to put this concern on as an agenda item for next meeting. Munger also clarified that he didn't vote to terminate any contracts, that he wanted a discussion. He said in the minutes it says discussion, voting for discussion, not voting to terminate.

Derocha – He said he appreciated everyone coming and appreciated what everyone does.

11. **Adjournment:** Derocha adjourned the meeting at 5:46 PM



## Manager's Report

### Airline Activity Summary

1. Current Flight Schedule (February)
  - a. American, provides two round trip flight to Chicago seven days per week
    - i. Departures
      1. Chicago 8:04 AM
      2. Chicago 2:40 PM (starting February 12<sup>th</sup>)
    - ii. Arrivals
      1. Chicago 2:04 PM (starting February 12<sup>th</sup>)
      2. Chicago 9:15 PM
    - iii. Third daily trip to ORD slated to begin April 8, 2026
  - b. Delta, provides two round trip flights to Minneapolis and Detroit
    - i. Departures:
      1. Minneapolis 7:31 AM
      2. Detroit 1:25 PM
    - ii. Arrivals
      1. Minneapolis 12:36 PM
      2. Detroit 9:57 PM
  - c. United Airlines still on track to start service on May 21, 2026
2. Passenger numbers continue to see recovery from post Covid numbers
  - a. 2019 passenger count 116,856.
  - b. 2025 passenger count 112,076.
  - c. 4.1% down from pre-Covid. Winter weather around holidays negatively affected our numbers at the end of the year, but passenger traffic is still up 21.1% year over year and has grown each year since CY2022, growing overall by 25.3% from CY 2022 numbers.
  - d. January Figures
    - i. January 2026 passenger count is 7,636
    - ii. January 2025 passenger count was 5,610
    - iii. January 2019 passenger count was 7,184
    - iv. 2026 YTD numbers are a 26.5% increase from 2025 figures and a 5.9% increase over 2019 figures
  - e. With additional service coming from United and increasing service from American this month and in April, this year is likely to be the return to or exceeding of historic levels of service.

<b>Total Passengers</b>	
CY 2026 YTD	7636
CY 2025	112076
CY 2024	88456
CY 2023	84059
CY2022	83776
CY 2021	101991
CY 2020	53262
CY 2019	116856
CY 2018	105525

