



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

Members Present:	Fred Benzie, Christopher Germain, Bruce McCollough, Marty Munger
Members Present Virtually:	Charles Holsworth, Bradley Stoddard
Members Not Present:	Joseph Derocha Karen Kovacs
Staff Present:	David Erhart, Airport Manager; Anania Tekurio, Assistant Airport Manager; Duane DuRay, County Administrator
Public Present:	Greg Durand, Brian Rochan, Evan Wendzel
Public Present Virtually:	Betsy Rochan, Jordanne Schwandt, Eric Sibley

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Germain at 4:03 PM. DuRay led the Pledge of Allegiance. Germain took Roll call.
2. **Approval of Agenda:** Germain presented agenda to Board for approval. Motion by McCollough to approve the agenda. Support by Munger. Motion carried (6-0).
3. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the February 12, 2026 meeting approved with suggested edits by Benzie, to have acronyms spelled out upon first use and then can resort back to acronyms; specifically for these minutes, ILS should be spelled out, Instrument Landing System. Motion by Benzie. Support by Munger. Motion carried (6-0).
4. **Public comment:** None.

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 March Objectives:

- Continued follow-up from the prior meeting regarding potential use of the \$3M grant funding. No new changes were proposed to the goals/objectives.

6. **Action Items**

Erhart provided updated research regarding feasibility and cost of improving lower-visibility approach capability, particularly for Runway 19.

Key points:

- Initial assumptions about cost were too low because many published project costs often exclude FAA-owned navigational equipment.
- Based on consultation with Mead & Hunt and Rochester, MN examples:
 - o A full ILS installation for Runway 19 comparable to Runway 1 would likely cost approx. \$10 - \$12 million.
 - o A Cat II approach with centerline lighting would likely cost \$6 - \$8 million.
 - o Even a MALSR/approach lighting system would likely cost \$2 - \$2.5 million.
- Additional issues:
 - o Airports often pay only for site work, concrete, cabling, or supports, while FAA generally owns the actual approach equipment.
 - o If the airport were to procure and own the equipment itself, costs would be significantly higher.
 - o Ongoing annual maintenance could be tens of thousands of dollars per year if the FAA does not assume ownership.
 - o FAA testing, tolerances, and approval requirements would still apply even if the airport owned the equipment.
 - o Existing LPV capability on Runway 19 offers lower minimums than LNAV/VNAV, but at least one airline operator (Envoy) does not use LPV approaches due to company policy/training limitations.
 - o RVR alone would not significantly improve access without supporting ILS/approach lighting infrastructure.
 - o Installing lighting during future runway rehabilitation could also complicate how the runway is managed during construction.

Board discussion:

- Members thanked Erhart for the research and noted the new information significantly changes the direction of discussion.
- It was agreed more research is needed on other potential uses for the grant funding.

Grant timing update:

It was reported that the airport **does not need to spend the funding by September 30, 2026**. Instead, once the agreement is signed, funds may remain available until **September 30, 2030**.

It was also noted:

- The grant may be used more flexibly than originally thought
- It may support broader **air capacity enhancement**
- It may potentially be used for **strategic planning or contracted professional services**, not just infrastructure

General consensus was to return to the broader list of possible projects and continue refining options.

7. Informational Items and Project Updates:

A. Fuel Truck Purchase / FBO Transition

At the last board meeting, authorization was given to purchase:

- **Two 5,000-gallon Jet A trucks**
- **One 3,000-gallon Jet A truck with defuel capability**

The manufacturer is **SkyMark**.

Estimated lead times:

- One truck: approximately **60 days**
- Two trucks: approximately **90 days**

Because the lead time creates a gap before the FBO transition date, staff has been evaluating fueling partners.

B. Fueling Partner Recommendation

Erhart reported ongoing discussions with:

- Phillips 66 / Aero Energy
- Titan
- Avfuel

Avfuel was identified as offering the most complete transition package, including:

- Leased fuel trucks available by changeover date
- Point-of-sale support
- Temporary labor and training support through sister company **Avflight**
- Transition support at no upfront cost, tied to fuel supply agreement

David noted this would likely involve changing from **Phillips 66** branding, which may affect some customer loyalty programs and aviation community preferences.

A formal recommendation was expected at the upcoming board meeting.

C. GA Apron Project Update

Design is nearly complete.

The updated timeline suggests:

- Bidding / contract award around **September 2026**
- Construction likely in **2027**, due to seasonal constraints

D. Airfield Pavement Sealing and Marking Project

This recurring project remains on track for completion in Fall 2026. Specific dates not yet available.

E. 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.

Erhart also noted, something not added on the agenda, the Mobile Boarding Ramp. The airport expects delivery of the mobile ADA-compliant boarding ramp on Tuesday, Mar. 17. It will support ground boarding for additional airline activity.

F. Manager's Report - Erhart provided and reviewed the Manager's Report.

Board Discussion on Hangars

Board/public discussion included:

- Current number of T-hangars and waiting list size
- Concern that existing policy may discourage on-field aircraft sales if hangar rights cannot transfer with aircraft ownership
- Suggestion that policy be reviewed to better support local GA pilots purchasing aircraft already based on the field
- Suggestion for future additional hangar development near the former fire station site
- Staff noted Mead & Hunt has also identified other possible locations for future hangar expansion, including west of the current T-hangars

A motion was made by McCollough and seconded by Holsworth to accept informational items **A through F**. Motion carried unanimously.

8. **Late Additions:** None

9. **Public Comment:**

Rochan – commented about Runway 19 and the instrument approach system. He said Runway 19 may not currently be “airspaced” for a precision approach. Before pursuing ILS-related investment further, staff should confirm whether Runway 19 can be airspaced for that purpose. The commenter also noted that Category II approaches are rare in Michigan and often require tower monitoring.

Durand – commented on airport finances and improvement planning. He encouraged the board to ensure it has a clear understanding of: available airport funds, assets and liabilities, account balances, improvement priorities and sequencing. He also noted recurring pavement deterioration on the apron and urged continued attention to that need; to include having the airport maintenance techs bring out scalper blade to chop ice off pavement.

Sibley – virtual commenter – raised concern about some hangars being used for non-aeronautical storage. Also mentioned that with current waiting list, staff should inspect hangars and ensure compliance with airport policy. Specific mention was made regarding a hangar that seems primarily used for storage and not for an aircraft.

10. Staff and Committee Member Comment:

Erhart – Thanked attendees for their input and noted that public expertise is helpful as the airport evaluates technical and infrastructure issues.

Tekurio – Expressed confidence in Erhart’s leadership and thanked him for his work.

DuRay – no comment.

Munger – Gave kudos to airport staff involved in snow removal, specifically mentioning: Ron Koth, Owen Hansen and Joe Perry.

Benzie – raised a possible opportunity related to surveillance / ADS-B traffic display capability in the tower. He referenced a senate bill supporting avionix or related surveillance tools and suggested staff contact Scott Bolster (Sawyer Tower sup), research the matter and board may wish to consider a letter of support if appropriate.

McCollough – suggested old fire station spot for installation of new T-hangars.

Stoddard – Apologized for arriving late and thanked everyone for covering the meeting.

Germain – Gave additional detail on the \$3 million grant including:

- The airport has until **September 30, 2030** to spend the funds after agreement execution
- The grant is a **reimbursement grant**, which was an unexpected complication
- The county is expected to help front costs and then be reimbursed through the airport / LSCP process
- Only a limited amount of administrative funding is currently available under the grant structure
- There may be value in using grant funds for strategic planning and outside professional support

11. Adjournment: Germain adjourned the meeting at 4:50 pm