

County of Marquette, Michigan
Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport
Airport Board of Advisors
Thursday, May 14, 2026 @ 4:00 PM
Minutes/Regular Meeting

Members Present: Charles Holsworth, Karen Kovacs, Bruce McCollough, Marty Munger, Bradley Stoddard

Members Present Virtually: Natalie Chmiko, Christopher Germain

Members Not Present: Fred Benzie, Joseph Derocha

Staff Present: David Erhart, Airport Manager; Anania Tekurio, Assistant Airport Manager

Public Present: Greg Durand, Kyle Gawry, Evan Wendzel

Public Present Virtually: Eric Sibley, Jordan Valentine,

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Stoddard at 4:03 PM. Tekurio took Roll call. Kovacs motioned to excuse Benzie and Derocha from today’s meeting for personal and professional reasons. Munger supported.
2. **Approval of Agenda:** Stoddard presented agenda to Board for approval. Motion by Munger to approve the agenda. Support by McCollough. Motion carried (6-0).
3. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the April 9, 2026 meeting approved. Motion by Munger. Support by Holsworth. Motion carried (6-0).
4. **Public comment:** Chmiko introduced herself – representing Lake Superior Community Partnership. She will be taking over Germain’s role as CEO.

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

May Objectives:

Follow Up on Highlighted Financial Items with Additional Information Gathered; Erhart explained that per the last meeting, it was asked to do a price comparison of T-Hangars against ours from the local region and on a national scale. He explained how Tekurio took on that assignment and will present on the findings. With that the meeting segway into Tekurio presenting T-Hangar data.

6. **Action Items**

- A. Follow Up Discussion T- Hangars: Tekurio presented compared pricing information regarding T-hangars in the local and national regions. Purpose of the assignment was to better understand where Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport’s current hangar pricing sits relative to comparable aviation facilities. First tier focused on Local Upper Peninsula Airports: KESC – Delta County, KIMT – Ford Airport, KCMX – Houghton County Memorial Airport and KISQ – Schoolcraft County Airport. These airports were selected because they are geographically comparable UP airports serving similar general aviation communities. Second Tier focused on broader Michigan and National Benchmarks; this group was designed to establish a wider

context regarding enclosed T-Hangar pricing trends. These were not intended to be perfect apples-to-apples comparisons, but rather broader market references to understand general pricing trends, enclosed hangar demand and prevailing market ranges.

Key findings: Overall, the comparison suggests that KSAW's published T-Hangar rates remain competitive and, in many cases, below comparable enclosed hangar pricing within the region.

The intent of the report was not necessarily to recommend immediate pricing changes, but rather to provide market context to assist future operational and policy discussions.

Comments afterward material was presented: McCollough asked if any discussions have been had regarding building new T-Hangars. Erhart answered explaining that at a previous meeting that McCollough was absent to, discussion of a possible build/installation of new T-Hangars was had. Munger mentioned that pricing shouldn't change until the current hangars are fixed and up to proper working conditions.

- B. Airport Vehicle Infrastructure Presentation – Erhart led this presentation. He explained through the handouts given out about the current condition and status of our airport maintenance vehicles and heavy equipment.

Purpose of the presentation was to provide clearer and more comprehensive data regarding operational status of our vehicles and equipment. Information given showed current fleet condition and highlighted equipment in need of replacement. It was discussed that it is pertinent that we make a plan for obtaining new/er equipment and look to other resources to help in this endeavor.

Kovacs mentioned that newer equipment can sometimes even replace 2 old pieces of equipment nowadays; so its not a 1-1 change but could be a 1-2 change depending on where and what we look for.

Both Kovacs and Stoddard mentioned using funds for an Asset Management software/program to help in keeping track of our equipment and vehicles and better manage priorities. And Holsworth mentioned looking to lease type of programs or working with companies that have this equipment on a lease type of deal.

Consensus was that it is pivotal that we focus our efforts on our airport vehicles and heavy equipment or single point equipment failures could operationally hamper airport.

7. Informational Items and Project Updates:

- A. United Airlines Launch Date – Erhart updated that United Airlines has delayed their launch to Oct. 25th, due to FAA's decision of cutting departures at O'Hare.
- B. ATCT Project Update – Erhart led this update explaining the current phase of Air Traffic Control Tower upgrades including radios, HVAC, and a High Riser Escape System are soon to be underway and that additional funding has been applied for.

C. Hangar Occupancy Update – Full capacity with a waiting list of 15.

- a. T-Hangars: Full Capacity
- b. 661: Available
- c. 663: Available May 15th
- d. 400 series: 1 bay available
- e. Kubick (423 E/W, 424, 425): Space available, contact FBO staff for details.

D. Manager's Report – Erhart delivered the manager's report detailing current flight schedule and statistical information from April's flight numbers.

8. **Late Additions:** Erhart updated board on questions from prior board meetings regarding VOR/DME equipment at the airport. Per FAA, it was out of tolerances and it was serviced today and will be up and running tomorrow, Friday, May 16.

9. **Public Comment:**

Greg Durand – Durand started off his public comments wondering who has been in charge all this time – referring to why has these issues with the equipment haven't been addressed. He wants to know where is the estimate of repair, costs for parts, why aren't we buying engines for those going bad, hydraulic pumps, why aren't we pursuing aftermarket options. He continued to ask why we aren't asking questions that are more forward minded – like how long with this equipment last, what will happen in 5 years, etc. He asked why we aren't looking to contract out much of the work at the airport – plowing parking lots, mowing, etc. He suggested another meeting that is just on equipment and to have a plan. How much is the pool of money we have to spend and have recommendations to present to the county board. Durand also directed comments towards hangars – he said that nobody ever asks him what he would like for hangars. He said every airport in the U.P. has built brand new hangars and why haven't we. He said box hangars as opposed to T hangars can fit all sorts of items like multiple planes, RVs, boats, sports cars, etc. He doesn't understand why he would need to lease 2 or 3 hangars to fit his pontoon and other items.

Virtual Public Comment: Eric Sibley – He wanted to give David (Erhart) a shoutout for having a crew there to get the hangar fixed for his work.

Staff and Committee Member Comment:

McCollough – No comment.

Holsworth – He brought up some alternative options/means at looking at our equipment fleet and wondering what the limitations are with contracting work out – FAA regs/ etc. He commented that it seems the board is adding more and more on our (Erhart and Tekurio's) plate but not coming up with solutions. He suggested we work together to get these issues resolved and fixed. He acknowledged the possibility that maybe there aren't companies up here with the proper equipment that we could just easily contract out. He brought up firms that sell stuff and give solutions too that maybe we aren't thinking of. He is worried at the state of the equipment and how it looks like we are close to not being able to be operational if we don't do something fast.

Kovacs – She asked if there is an equipment committee. She acknowledged that it is easy for us to look at the list and ask why it has gotten to this and relay a bunch of options. She also acknowledged that we have to be careful with just thinking we can contract much out and think about our union employees and what that means in that lane when work is being considered to contract out. Maybe on a short-term basis but long-term that doesn't seem plausible. She also mentioned being careful

when we talk about other airports because its not apples-to-apples; many airports in the area do not have the same structure as us, she stated how Marquette Sawyer Regional Airport is the only non-subsidized airport in this region and those that are subsidized she mentions its quite appalling to see how much funding they are given. She emphasized that it is easy to compare but its not accurate. She also mentioned the LDSI spending and how we must get a plan on what we are going to do with the \$3M. That there is some pressure there to have an outline soon before the money is taken back.

Munger – No comment.

Germain – He first apologized for not being able to be at the meeting in-person, he's downstate for stuff. He then supported what Kovacs said regarding the LDSI grant and said the timing of that is getting very real and that they are wanting something signed by June or else we will lose the money. So we must act. He suggests that we maybe should spend the money on consultants and get a team to help David and Nia. And we need to plan for the future of the airport. He said they will start looking at strategic ways to spend the money; maybe 5% on soft costs like planning, consulting, etc.

Erhart – Thanked those with ideas to help us and that we could definitely use some expertise in asset planning and having a more detailed plan. And that we need to plan for the future and be able to anticipate needs.

Tekurio – Thanked everyone for the guidance given today. She said it was nice to see Holsworth and Kovacs here and meeting them in person for the first time. And that we will look more into this new information given and set plans forward.

Stoddard – Stated that as a board they have to step up and provide the guidance and help for David and Nia; whether that means consultants or what not but that we could, with our specific expertise, to help with the problems here at the airport and more future minded plans too. He asked that we look at the main issues at the airport and provide a list of highest priorities and down. What will make the airport inoperable if x doesn't work,etc. He asks how the board can help us and encourages us to provide them that information. He wants to know what we need from them to be successful. It will be helpful to see specific steps. And he wanted me and David to know that we are welcome to reach out at any time for their help and guidance and encouraged us to call and reach out at any time and not think we have to wait for board meetings.

10. **Adjournment:** Stoddard adjourned the meeting at 5:08 pm. Motion by: Munger. Support by Kovacs. Motion carried (6-0)




MARQUETTE SAWYER

REGIONAL AIRPORT

Connect to what matters

 Airport Administrative Office 906-346-3308
Water/Wastewater Dept. 906-346-3137
Maintenance Dept. 906-250-1928

 Airport Services Center, 125 G Ave.
Gwinn, MI 49841

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