

**Western U.P. Board of Health
Health Department Office
540 Depot Street Hancock, MI 49930
Monday, February 23, 2026**

Minutes

Opening

Health Officer Pete Baril opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. (EST). Present were G. Anderson, R. Britz, J. Cane, B. Dakota, W. Menge, R. Nousiainen, and M. Yon. Absent was J. Cayer, R. DeMarois, J. Keranen, and D. Rajala. Also, in attendance were Dr Robert Van Howe, Medical Director; Roy Manninen, Director of Finance; and Julie Heikkinen, Administrative/HR Assistant. There were 2 people present in attendance as audience.

Baril began the board reorganization process with a call for nominations for Chair.

It was moved by Yon, seconded by Anderson that Brad Dakota be appointed Chair of the Western UP Board of Health. Chair Dakota called for other nominations, with no response. Chair Dakota then closed nominations and called for a vote. Motion passed by unanimous approval.

Chair Dakota then sought nominations for the position of board Vice Chair.

It was moved by Cane, seconded by Menge that Glenn Anderson be appointed Vice Chair of the Western UP Board of Health. Chair Dakota called for other nominations, with no response. Chair Dakota then closed nominations and called for a vote. Motion passed by unanimous approval.

Secretary nominations took place next.

It was moved by Anderson, seconded by Cane that William Menge be appointed Secretary of the Western UP Board of Health. Chair Dakota called for other nominations, with no response. Chair Dakota then closed nominations and called for a vote. Motion passed by unanimous approval.

Next in the reorganization process, Chair Dakota asked to establish its Executive Committee for the 2026 year. One member from each county, including the board chair, make up the Executive Committee. Following a brief discussion, Dakota appointed these members to the Executive Committee: Anderson, Nousiainen, Yon, Rajala, and Dakota as Chair.

At this point, Chair Dakota assumed conduct of the meeting.

With reorganization complete, Chair Dakota requested action on the agenda. This action followed:

Motion: Cane/second Nousiainen to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Chair Dakota asked for public comment, no one spoke.

Minutes of the December 08, 2025 meeting were reviewed. This action followed:

Motion: Nousiainen/second Yon to approve the minutes of the December 08, 2025 Board of Health meeting. Motion carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed expenditures for the period: 11/07/2025 to 02/12/2026, leading to this action:

Motion: Yon/second Menge to approve the general expenditures for the period 11/07/2025 to 02/12/2026, voucher # 03, voucher # 04, voucher # 05, voucher # 06, voucher # 07, voucher # 08, voucher # 09, and voucher # 10 in the amount of \$396,203.09. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

Reports:

Pete Baril, Health Officer:

Personnel/Programs:

Activity since last meeting.

Left Employment – Arnie Kinnunen, Health Education Coordinator

New Hires – Dylan Huls, Environmental Health Sanitarian

Current Openings - None

Unions:

MNA update on agenda and in packet

Facilities:

Received specs from OHM for Gogebic County HVAC improvements – 250 – 320k price tag.

Accepted proposal from Erico Electric for electrical and fire panel upgrades as pre-work for the elevator project. \$16,206 – awaiting word on scheduling and lead times.

General:

Closed for All Staff Training on February 16 (Presidents Day) – had a variety of educational sessions including employee assistance program, artificial intelligence, employee apparel store, adverse childhood experiences, cost allocation, EH communication, and Rx Kids. Provided lunch for staff via a wellbeing grant from the Michigan Association for Local Public Health.

Closed Hancock facility early on February 18 – road out front was awful, had three cars stuck at one point, needed to call a tow truck. Decided to call it early and just get everyone out/home.

With departure of our last Health Education employee we will be closing our contract for SNAP-Ed services with the Michigan Fitness Foundation and transferring Marijuana Education and Synar Services to Community

Health Workers. With the closure of the SNAP-Ed grant we will be forfeiting about \$40,000 however filling that position for a hard program end date of July is problematic, this was primarily a staffing grant.

Pete Baril has accepted a Board of Directors appointment with the Keweenaw Community Foundation.

Rx kids is coming to the remainder of the Upper Peninsula, this is a philanthropic program that provides cash payments to expectant mothers and parents of infants up to 6 months of age. WUPHD will be helping roll the program out by creating awareness and providing occasional space. There are no costs nor reimbursements for our agency, we are promoting as a partnership with other agencies.

Will be looking for some fee increases in various programs throughout the year. We are looking closely at our Public Health program finances and seeing that we are consistently losing money on various services. Over the next month we will be looking into our travel immunization program with has extremely low fees, but complicated scenarios, as one of a few providers in the UP we also see a fair amount of people from outside the district come to our agency for this service.

Will be sending out requests for GIS data to each county, current list of contacts includes:

Kathy Jo Koval – Gogebic, Pat Osterman – Baraga, Ann Marie Husar – Ontonagon, Ann Gasperich – Keweenaw, Jaikob Djerf – Houghton

Dr Robert Van Howe, Medical Director:

February is American Heart Month. So, what can someone do to reduce their own risk of heart disease?

More towards a diet that is more plant based: more whole grains, more omega-3 fats, and less red meat. Set an example for your children what healthy eating looks like.

Maintain a healthy weight by eating only when hungry. Ignore other cues to eat such as the clock, social events, happiness, depression. Listen to your body.

Exercise on a regular basis, especially early in the day. This can be as simple as walking. Find friends (or a dog) to walk with. Involve your children or grandchildren in your exercise. Lifetime habits are learned early, so get them in the habit of exercising. Dancing is a joyful path to exercising and socializing.

Have a network of supportive friends. Seek out social opportunities. Loneliness is as toxic as smoking.

Manage your stress. Everyone has stress, what matters is how we respond to stress. This may include relaxation techniques, meditation, yoga, or therapy. Take four breaths over four seconds, hold for two seconds, then exhale over seven seconds. Share more love and kindness and less anger and hostility,

Get enough restful sleep (more than seven hours each night). Practice good sleep hygiene. Limit caffeine and blue light (computer/cellphones) in the hours before bedtime.

Brush and floss teeth twice daily. Periodontal disease impacts the heart

Avoid nicotine either by not smoking or not vaping. Nicotine is stimulant that stresses the heart. It is also one of the most addictive chemicals.

While no alcoholic beverages is preferred, keep the amount of alcohol consumed to a minimum.

Lifestyle changes are imprinted early on, so model heart healthy behaviors for you children to help them have a healthier heart.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

The board reviewed the Accident/Incident Summary Report for the 4th Quarter 2025 & the Annual Report 2025, leading to this action:

Motion: Cane/second Nousiainen to approve the Accident/Incident Reports as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed the Organizational Chart & Policy, leading to this action:

Motion: Menge/second Yon to approve the Organizational Chart & Policy as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed the Lab Purchases, leading to this action:

Motion: Anderson/second Nousiainen to approve the Lab Purchases as presented. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

The board reviewed the MIHP EMR Subscription, leading to this action:

Motion: Cane/second Yon to approve the Lab Purchases as presented. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

The board reviewed the MNA Contract, leading to this action:

Motion: Anderson/second Menge to approve the MNA Contract, effective October 1, 2025. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed the Non-Union Wage Scale Increase, leading to this action:

Motion: Anderson/second Nousiainen to approve the Non-Union Wage Scale Increase, effective March 1, 2026. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed the FY2026 Budget Amendment # 1, leading to this action:

Motion: Nousiainen/second Cane to approve the FY2026 Budget Amendment # 1 as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Other

With no other business, Chair Dakota set the next meeting for 6:00 pm (EST), March 30, 2025, in person at the health department office in Hancock and also available via Google Meet.

Chair Dakota then asked for public comment, one person spoke.

T. Timonen requested that the Board of Health Agenda & Meeting Minutes be available on the agency's website.

Adjourn

The final motion occurred at 7:03 p.m.

Motion: Menge/second Anderson to adjourn at 7:03 p.m. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Dakota, Chair

William Menge, Secretary

Prepared by Pete Baril
PB/jh