

**Western U.P. Board of Health
Health Department Office
303 Baraga Avenue L'Anse, MI 49946
Monday, April 27, 2026**

Minutes

Opening

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

Chair Dakota requested action on the agenda. This action followed:

Motion: Yon/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 March 30, 2026 meeting were reviewed. This action followed:

Motion: Menge/second Britz to approve the minutes of the March 30, 2026 Board of Health meeting. Motion carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed expenditures for the period: 03/13/2026 to 04/09/2026, leading to this action:

Motion: Yon/second Menge to approve the general expenditures for the period 03/13/2026 to 04/09/2026, voucher # 13 and voucher # 14 in the amount of \$170,328.37. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

Reports:

Pete Baril, Health Officer:

Personnel/Programs:

Activity since last meeting – Retirements – LaVerne Pestka, Public Health Clerk, Ontonagon
Hires – C. Morley & G. Sutherland – Temporary EH Techs

Current Openings – None

Unions:

EH Technician position will be moved back into the bargaining unit, working out the details with the employee currently.

Facilities:

Ontonagon – lockset failure and door damage due to wind on the DHS side.

Hancock – gas leak detected by Semco in the basement mechanical room, being addressed by Northern Plumbing and Heating

Hancock – elevator project to kick off on Monday, May 4th, elevator will be down for about a week while they complete the modernization project.

General:

Sent an abatement/vacate order to a known drug house on Oak Street in Ironwood, law enforcement noted wastewater in the basement of the home during their activity there. We have had complaints in the past at this address. We escalated our enforcement under the UP Environmental Health Code to seek abatement of the issue (clearing of the sewage from the basement).

Dr Robert Van Howe, Medical Director:

Tick season is starting, so we need to reacquaint ourselves regarding how to reduce the risk of tick-borne illnesses. We have seen the number of cases of Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, and babesiosis increase across our district. We even had a case of Powassan virus encephalitis in a young child. Wear loose-fitting long-sleeved shirts and pants when out in the field or in the woods. Use insect repellent or clothes treated with repellent. Do tick checks each day. Once attached, it takes a couple days for the tick to transmit illness. Humans are a dead-end host for these illnesses. Intermediate hosts included white-tailed deer and white-footed mice.

Early symptoms are often vague, and most people do not recall a tick bite. Lyme disease can be identified by a characteristic rash. Anaplasmosis and babesiosis are diagnosed using blood tests. All three can lead to serious illnesses.

Physicians can elect to treat an engorged deer/bear tick with a single dose of antibiotic to prevent Lyme disease and anaplasmosis from developing.

These tick-borne illnesses are now being seen in the Lower Peninsula, so the State is now taking notice. We are reminded not to let our guard down.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

The board reviewed the Health Officer Review as presented, leading to this action:

Motion: Yon/second Rajala to approve the Health Officer as presented. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

The board reviewed the Medical Director Review as presented, leading to this action:

Motion: Britz/second Anderson to approve the Medical Director Review as presented. Carried on roll call vote, all voting yes.

The board reviewed the Authorized Signatures for the Ontonagon office account, leading to this action:

Motion: Rajala/second Yon to approve the Authorized Signatures for the Ontonagon office account as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed the Accident/Incident Report – 1st Quarter 2026

The board reviewed the Employment Procedures, EEO, and Immigration Reform Act Policy, leading to this action:

Motion: Rajala/second Menge to approve the Employment Procedures, EEO, and Immigration Reform Act Policy as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed the Employment of Relatives Policy, leading to this action:

Motion: Rajala/second Yon to approve the Employment of Relatives Policy as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed the Non-discrimination and Harassment Policy, leading to this action:

Motion: Rajala/second Anderson to approve the Employment Procedures, EEO, and Immigration Reform Act Policy as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed the Consideration of Individuals under the ADA Policy, leading to this action:

Motion: Rajala/second Menge to approve the Consideration of Individuals under the ADA Policy as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed the Verification of Professional Credentials Policy, leading to this action:

Motion: Rajala/second Nousiainen to approve the Verification of Professional Credentials Policy as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed the Direct Deposit of Payroll and Distribution of Paychecks Policy, leading to this action:

Motion: Rajala/second Yon to approve the Direct Deposit of Payroll and Distribution of Paychecks Policy as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board reviewed the Life and AD&D Insurance Policy, leading to this action:

Motion: Rajala/second Menge to approve the Life and AD&D Insurance Policy as presented. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board discussed the Interpretation of MNA Scale for New Hires Policy, leading to this action:

Motion: Anderson/second Rajala to remove the Interpretation of MNA Scale for New Hires Policy as discussed. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

The board discussed the Use and Recording of Comp Time Policy, leading to this action:

Motion: Rajala/second Menge to remove the Use and Recording of Comp Time Policy as discussed. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Other

With no other business, Chair Dakota set the next meeting for 6:00 pm (EST), May 18, 2026, in person at the health department office in Ontonagon and available via Google Meet.

Chair Dakota then asked for public comment, no one spoke.

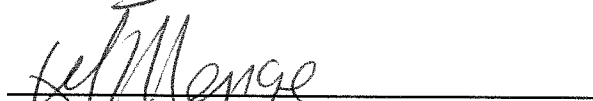
Adjourn

The final motion occurred at 7:10 p.m.

Motion: Nousiainen/second Menge to adjourn at 7:10 p.m. Carried on voice vote, all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,


Brad Dakota, Chair


William Menge, Secretary

Prepared by Pete Baril
PB/jh