

JAIL COMMITTEE
MEETING-5th Floor-Conference Room
MARCH 2, 2026 – 4:00 PM
MINUTES

A. Call to Order

Chairman Hyrkas called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Chairman Hyrkas announced who was present. Present were: Justin LaCosse, Gretchen Janssen, Dan Holcomb, Todd LaRoux, and Paige Setter-Hallwachs.

By Microsoft Teams: Barry Fink, Faith Morrison, Valorie Troesch, Jaikob Djerf, and Jennifer Kelly.

Chairman Hyrkas read a letter from Sharon Foix stating she will no longer be a member of this committee.

C. Approval of Agenda/Additions

Gretchen Janssen stated she was going to take a tour of the Escanaba jail (Delta County) this coming Friday. This was added to the agenda as #1 under New Business.

A Motion was made by Gretchen Janssen and seconded by Dan Holcomb to approve the agenda as amended.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 6, Nays 0.

D. Approval of Meeting minutes of February 2, 2026

A Motion was made by Dan Holcomb and seconded by Gretchen Janssen to approve the February 2, 2026 Minutes as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 6, Nays 0.

E. Public Comments

None.

F. Old Business / Follow Up on Action Items

1. Reminder of our Objective: Develop a proposed plan for a new Jail/Sheriff's Office that the voters will support.

Chairman Hyrkas reminded everyone on the objective of the committee.

2. Social Media efforts update and next steps
 - i. Public Information Officer

Sheriff Saaranen stated this was discussed at the Jail-Needs Subcommittee meeting.

- ii. Facebook and Instagram accounts created – who has access, who is still going to obtain access?

Chairman Hyrkas stated he sent the language for the introduction to our Facebook page to everyone by email. Gretchen Janssen suggested using smaller sentences to keep people's attention. Valorie Troesch stated she would work on shortening the language and will email it to everyone. Chairman Hyrkas stated he would like to see 3 to 5 people working on making regular postings to Facebook.

- iii. Possible postings
 1. Purpose of the account

Chairman Hyrkas's draft introduction with the changes discussed above will be added to the account to let the voters know the purpose of the account.

2. Multiple posts, linked to info from Abonmarche/Byce's report on the county website to describe why the jail is needed

Chairman Hyrkas stated information from the report should be included as a post.

3. Scenario videos

Chairman Hyrkas stated videos may be created at some point and when available should be posted.

4. Reasons current jail is not sufficient

Chairman Hyrkas stated this needs to be incorporated into posts.

5. Short conclusion summary of why we think a new jail is needed

Chairman Hyrkas stated this needs to be incorporated into posts.

6. Location decision

Chairman Hyrkas stated this needs to be incorporated into the posts. Need to inform the voters why a new jail is needed.

7. List of spaces required in a new jail

Chairman Hyrkas stated this will be done by the Jail Needs Subcommittee.

Justin LaCasse asked if there were any FAQs prepared. Faith Morrison stated the League of Women Voters has FAQs and answers from the last millage attempt. The questions could be changed to what this committee agrees on.

ACTION: Morrison will send the League's FAQs to the committee for input.

8. Size, features

Chairman Hyrkas stated this will be done by the Jail Needs Subcommittee.

9. Total Cost

Chairman Hyrkas stated this will be determined in the future.

10. Taxpayer cost

To be determined.

Justin LaCosse asked if we had any ideas for posts on the consequences of doing nothing, such as losing control of the jail? Doing nothing is not the cheapest option.

3. County Website Feedback Form
 - i. Updated link and question is live

Chairman Hyrkas stated he has no access or received any responses. Gretchen Janssen stated she will ask Alex Radke, IT for an update. Dan Holcolmb stated the committee needs to get public feedback so the committee knows what to focus on. Chairman Hyrkas stated no one commented for awhile up to the time he lost access. Faith Morrison said that the first version of the form was only easily shared to County employees; those on the committee who are not County employees were being sent a “snapshot” of the responses by Alex Radke in the form of an Excel spreadsheet. The old version went dead when the County transferred Radke to a County employee and the system with the snapshots needs to be re-created with the new version. Radke can do this.

- ii. Responses?

Someone should remind Alex Radke as he was going to provide this to our group.

4. Federal funding opportunity – Due this Friday 03/06/26

Dan Holcomb stated he received the request form from Representative Bergman’s office and did a rough draft and gave a copy to Chairman Hyrkas. Board Chair Tom Tikkanen should be the name on the form. Holcomb put the project timing from 1/1/27 to 7/1/27 as the time used for engineers to come up with a jail design. For the project description he plans to use a letter that was drafted in January. Chairman Hyrkas will review the form and get it back to Holcomb.

Todd LaRoux suggested that the committee send a thank you note to the Congressman.

5. Jail Needs Subcommittee report

Sheriff Saaranen stated they are working on getting a list of the square-footage needs and wants for a new jail. Gretchen Janssen stated the Subcommittee will need to get a report to this committee. Chairman Hyrkas suggested meeting 1-2 weeks after the Jail-Needs Subcommittee meets. Hyrkas plans to attend the next meeting of the subcommittee.

Sheriff Saaranen asked what the County Board wants in a report. Gretchen Janssen stated she would ask Tom Tikkanen and report to the committee. Faith Morrison said it was her understanding that the County Properties and the Sharon Avenue and Jail-Use Committees reports are needed in April so that the County Board can focus in on the steps to move the jail discussion forward. Our committee, the Jail Committee, needs to write into our report our progress in the overall steps to a new jail design. Morrison stated our report should lean into the work of the subcommittee on jail needs and have enough information for the Board of Commissioners to go forward with planning for a new jail. She stated how the April report deadline is quickly approaching, and the importance of getting a list together of the needs.

6. Review status of steps to complete committee work
 - i. Location – Sharon Ave (completed)
 - ii. Determine what spaces – Draft list assembled by subcommittee, to be shared with this committee when finalized

- iii. Approximate sizes – Draft assembled by subcommittee, to be shared with this committee when finalized
- iv. Construction type – some way to decide now, or include request for comparisons in design RFP?

Faith Morrison suggested Gretchen Janssen should ask the personnel at the Escanaba jail on the construction type of their modern jail and how it relates to their operations. Are there Escanaba jail floor plans for this Committee to reference? Sheriff Saaranen stated their jail is separate from their courthouse as will be the case with a Sharon Avenue jail. He questions the costs. Is it more expensive now compared to before their new jail was built. Valorie suggested asking if the Escanaba personnel would want anything done differently than what they built. Is there anything essential they wish they would have now? Sheriff Saaranen stated there are 2-3 companies making prefab jail units. He stated that the Sheriff's Office can be built differently (construction materials) than the jail. Faith Morrison stated this needs to be clear in the Committee's report and in any RFP for jail construction designs.

- v. Schematic design soon? When should we suggest the county issue an RFP?

Chairman Hyrkas stated it would take 2-4 months to get the schematic design done depending on how soon it can get going. Faith Morrison emphasized that a courtroom, juvenile holding area, and sally ports for the jail and the courthouse will need to be included in the design. With a schematic design, people will then be able to visualize the jail plan. With the inclusion of the arraignment courtroom, it will be more clear who is moving to the Sharon Avenue property from the courthouse. We should discuss with the public the efficiency with bringing the inmates to the new courtroom. Chairman Hyrkas stated the RFP would have to be soon, and he discussed a press release to be done with the schematic design once it's done.

Faith Morrison stated this would take many months, and public input is important. Todd LaRoux asked if Administrator Rheault is counting on the cost for a schematic design out of this year's budget. Does the county have the funds? Faith Morrison stated the previous vote shows the public wants to see more of a plan before voting. She stated that if the expense of a schematic design is not something the County can pay for this year, the 2027 budget will be adopted in September 2026.

Justin LaCosse discussed an RFP for a full design to have requirement to include a schematic design and show how the layout would be in the proposal response. Chairman Hyrkas stated we have a rough block design from Abonmarche/Byce and a new schematic design is months of work. Todd LaRoux stated if the schematic design cannot be done this budget year, and it will not be done by the time the Commissioners need to decide to put it on the November 2026 ballot. Chairman Hyrkas stated he thinks the schematic design would be valuable to have before putting the jail on the ballot.

- vi. Anticipated Project cost

Chairman Hyrkas stated this would be done by the engineer doing the schematic design and will depend on the size and construction type.

- vii. Other sources of funding

Chairman Hyrkas asked the committee to keep looking at other sources of funding.

- viii. A bigger press release (not discussed)
- ix. Bond length

Chairman Hyrkas stated the schematic design would need to be done by July and given to the Board of Commissioners for the decision of a November millage. The bond length can sway a voter as it impacts costs.

- x. Which election to go to – BOC is planning on a vote to see if they will go in November

The language for a November millage is due by August 8, 2026 by 4:00 pm per Clerk Kelly. This is before the August regular County Board meeting which is 6 pm the same day; thus, the last regular meeting to approve a millage for November is July. A special meeting could be called, however.

Chairman Hyrkas asked the reasoning for having the millage in November. He feels like it is being rushed. Gretchen Janssen feels the same. Sheriff Saaranen stated the numbers need to be precise to go for a millage. He feels the last time was rushed. Now, he feels we have good contractors and workers on these committees. Faith Morrison said her view is that the role of the Jail Committee is to make a recommendation to the Commissioners. If this committee feels that the design cannot be sufficiently ready by July for a vote on a millage, then we should say that to the Commissioners. They will then make the formal decision of whether to stick with the idea of a November millage.

Chairman Hyrkas stated that at our next meeting the Committee will have to decide on our recommendation to the Board as to when to put the jail project on the ballot. Faith Morrison reminded the committee that the vote to declare the intent of the Board to put a jail millage on the ballot in November passed by a vote of 3-1 (Commissioner Britz absent; Commissioner Keranen voting no). If this committee believes that November is too soon in terms of the jail design, and if it recommends a later millage date, the extra time would also help to build stronger Board support for the millage.

7. Other action items

- i. Committee report due to the Board of Commissioners by April 14th, 2026.

Dan Holcomb suggested using AI to do 3 proposals to save money and know the life expectancy of the new jail. For the construction type use brick, mortar and steel. Justin LaCosse stated he and Faith Morrison did attempt to do this. Morrison stated AI was helpful but that it tended to focus entirely on the Abonmarch Byce report; it did not come up with new designs. She stated the Sheriff and his staff are working on revisions to the Abonmarch/Byce report on spaces and square footages to allow discussion of space/cost tradeoffs. Morrison suggested that maybe AI could be used to come up with a block design from the Sheriff's new numbers.

G. New Business

- 1. Goals for/before next meeting(s)

Gretchen Janssen will send an email to the committee asking for questions that she can ask when she tours the Escanaba jail on Friday.

Faith Morrison stated the committee needs to hear from the Jail Needs Subcommittee and be ready to respond. Chairman Hyrkas stated we need some members to work on the social media. Valorie Troesch suggested that Krissy Sundstrom would be excellent for this. Sundstrom said she cannot do this due to other commitments. Hyrkas requests help from everyone to do a post 1 time per

week. Jail needs information from Arbonmarche Byce's report can be used for questions. There is need for generating feedback from voters.

2. Next meeting date and time.

The Sheriff noted that the Jail-Needs Subcommittee is meeting 10am March 16; Chairman Hyrkas stated he will attend that meeting. The Jail Committee should meet shortly after that.

The Sheriff recommended that the committee meet jointly with the Jail-Needs Subcommittee the following week.

The next meeting of the Jail Committee will be on March 23, 2026 at 4:00 pm. The Jail-Needs Sub Committee will join the Jail Committee for this meeting. A second Jail Committee meeting was also scheduled, and that meeting will be on April 6, 2026 at 4:00 pm.

H. Public Comments

Andrea Johnson from Treatment Court stated she would like to join the Committee. She will draft up something on why we need a new jail. She discussed pre-trial risk assessments being done in Marquette County (they use Justice Point) and the remote screening that's done to decrease the number of people held in the jail pre-trial. Some are given a personal recognizance bond. She will talk to the Sheriff about this. Gretchen Janssen approved Andrea Johnson being a member of the Jail Committee.

Krissy Sundstrom stated any social media post should have an image, and for consistency it's good to have a template for the questions. She recommended the software Canva. If a post is to have a link it should be put in the comment section because the algorithm downgrades posts with links.

Faith Morrison stated that the next Sharon Avenue Property Committee meeting will be on March 5, 2026 at 10:00 am. Todd LaRoux stated he will be running the meeting as Commissioner Roy Britz will not be there.

J. Adjournment

Motion was made by Gretchen Janssen and seconded by Dan Holcomb to adjourn the meeting at 5:22 p.m.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 6, Nays 0.

JARED HYRKAS

JENNIFER KELLY
COUNTY CLERK/REGISTER OF DEEDS

APPROVED: _____
JK