



Tuesday, May 6, 2025

The Beacon is a publication written by the Beacon Staff; the editorial views expressed are the views of the authors.

BOC to Debate Clous Assault Rifle Lawsuit, and Facilities Master Plan at May 7 Meeting



The Clous AR-15 style rifle lawsuit, 2% Tribal Grants, appointment of the Jail Steering Committee, a condensed version of the Facilities Master Plan, and the City moving IT off of the County system are the primary items on the BOC agenda for Wednesday. The Consent Agenda contains a variety of minutes and a letter from TVC expanding upon the March 12 presentation to the board. The 400-page packet is available [here](#).

The weeks of May 5 and May 15 are National Correctional Officers and Employees week and National Police week respectively to honor the men and women who work odd hours

in frequently dangerous situations to keep our community safe. Make a point of thanking them this month.

The meeting will start with a closed session to speak with the attorneys representing the County in the lawsuit caused by then Commissioner Clous displaying his rifle during a virtual County Commission meeting on January 20, 2021. Clous displayed his rifle (and Commissioner Hentschel laughed) after Keli MacIntosh spoke in public comment on the January 6, 2021 violence at the Capital and the presence of several Proud Boys at a previous BOC meeting where a Second Amendment Sanctuary resolution was discussed and approved. See this YouTube video of the news story from 2021 when the lawsuit was filed:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRO2ORE118Q>. It is somewhat unusual to start with closed session, but it is time-efficient when the County is paying attorneys by the hour.

The condensed Facilities Master Plan identifies \$47 million in repairs needed to the current buildings; there is a lot of deferred maintenance. The report is near the end of the meeting, and is a preview for a joint meeting with the City on May 14, where the planning firm (Tower Pinkster) will present to both the City and County, as there are several shared facilities. One interesting note is that the boiler in the Jail provides heat to both the Government Center and Courthouse. This condensed report is worth reading and starts on [page 347](#).

A Consent Agenda letter from Kevin Klein, the TVC CEO, contains a discussion of the 65 DNL (day-night average sound level) contours at the airport with projections through 2043. The assumptions for daily flight numbers, annual flight numbers, seasonality, and most importantly, aircraft fleet composition are not provided. There are no seasonal models of aircraft noise, just a single annualized number. The letter indicates that the airport will not come to the BOC for terminal expansion bond approval until November 2025.

The discussion on the Jail Steering Committee will be a proxy for how the project will likely move forward. The starting recommendation for the committee consists of :

- Scott Sieffert, Chair, from a rural district
- TJ Andrews, Vice Chair, from an urban district
- Judge Charles Hamlyn (13^h Circuit Court), a Judge elected from three counties
- Sheriff Michael Shea, the Sheriff, elected County-wide
- Nate Alger, the County Executive

The final item on the agenda is a status report on the City moving off of the County IT systems. All City departments have moved except the Police Department, and that is expected to occur before June 1.

If You Were Vaccinated for Measles before 1969, Think about Getting a Booster

by Bruce Moore

Between 1963 and 1968, there were two measles vaccines; one provided long-term immunization, and one did not. If you were vaccinated during this period, you may want to talk to your health care provider about getting the current measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine. See Margaret Renki's March 24, 2025 "[Why I Got the Measles Vaccine at Age 63.](#)" Suzanne Rowan Kelleher's April 20, 2019 "[Born in the 1960s? The CDC Says You May Need a Measles Shot Before Traveling.](#)" and James Barron's "[Do You Need Another Measles Shot?](#)" for more information.

According to Roxanne Werly's report "[Northern Michigan health department prepares for potential measles cases.](#)" the vaccination rate for school-age children in Leelanau County is between 81-83%--prime territory for a significant outbreak.

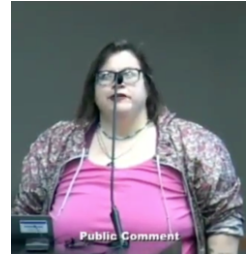
Pharmacies and the Grand Traverse County Health Department have the adult version of the MMR vaccine, but generally require an appointment. For appointments at the GT County Health Department, call 231-995-6131.

BOC Approves Ethics Policy, Pulls Out of Shared 911 System, Approves Health Department Community Program at April 16 Meeting

by Pam Lassers

Public Comment on The Pines

[The Traverse City Police Department announced that it will begin enforcing a ban on camping on public land on May 6.](#) This is not a county action and not an action of the county Board of Commissioners, but one person made an exceptional public comment. Audrey Willet told of being homeless despite working multiple jobs and lacking other alternatives. Watch her 3 minute story [here](#).



Community Survey

A National Community Survey has been distributed to county residents with a deadline of May 8. The survey gauges opinions on public safety, local government services, infrastructure, economy and quality of life. The NCS allows counties to track changes in public sentiment over time and benchmark their performance against other municipalities. Residents may complete the survey online [HERE](#) before May 8.

Ethics Policy

After several revisions, commissioners approved adoption of an Ethics Policy. The document outlines standards of expected behavior and conflicts of interest for both employees and elected officials. The updated policy covers conflicts of interest including required disclosures, proper use of public resources including IT systems, personal behavior toward others, privacy and confidentiality of records, and accepting gifts of value. Complaints will initially go to the county administrator or HR director, who can investigate and resolve complaints or dismiss them internally. The new policy creates a three-member ad hoc ethics panel to investigate allegations that need additional review.

911 System

Commissioners voted to terminate the Intergovernmental Agreement for the county's 911 system to allow an upgrade to a more modernized system for managing emergency calls. Since 2018 the county has shared the 911 system with other regional centers. These partners are beginning to move away from the "problem-plagued system," except for Petoskey.

The termination notice will give the county a year to find a replacement system. Moving to a new system won't affect operations since Grand Traverse County is part of a statewide network that allows 911 centers to back up any other center. The county is currently in the design phase of an eventual move of 911/Central Dispatch to the LaFranier campus (Project Alpha).

Community Connections

Commissioners voted to approve an Interlocal Agreement for the Community Connections program between the Grand Traverse County Health Department and Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department. The free program helps residents access services related to medical care, transportation, food, utilities, and housing, with help from a community health worker, nurse, or social worker. Since it was established in 2016, the program has been financially supported by Michigan Department of Health and Human Services funding, plus fees from health and insurance plans.

According to Deputy Health Officer Mike Lahey, the elimination of state funding last year created a shortfall of \$220,000, which was offset with several smaller grants and a Benzie-Leelanau Health Department allocation. The projected 2025 shortfall is \$138,000. While they continue to lobby for increased state funding, the county agreed to contribute up to \$95,500 annually for services, based on county residents served (76 percent of the clients or 1,112 out of 1,471 total referrals in 2024).

Other business:

- Commissioner Morris proposed a collaborative discussion with a facilitator to discuss the county's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (a SWOT Analysis). A session like this was held in 2021 and participants found it a worthwhile exercise that helped promote collaboration.
- The next general meeting of the Grand Traverse County Commission is May 7 at 9:00 am at the Governmental Center, 400 Boardman Ave., in downtown Traverse City.

BOC Studies Septic Ordinance, Project Alpha Costs Increases at April 23 Study Session

by Bruce Moore

During the April 23, 2025 BOC Study Session, the Board conducted a public hearing for the proposed septic ordinance, and got an update on the Project Alpha—an Emergency Communications Center (911 dispatch), Emergency Operations Center, and shared storage building. In closed session, the board consulted with attorneys regarding the ongoing litigation with PACE North, while a discussion of a condensed Facility Master Plan was postponed to May 7.

Proposed Septic Ordinance

During the septic ordinance public hearing, eight people spoke in favor of the ordinance and one person spoke in opposition to the ordinance, which would require septic inspections at time of sale or transfer for structures within 300 feet of surface water. In letters to the Board, Aspire North (Realtor professional/lobby organization) and For the Love of Water (FLOW) sent letters requesting the inclusion and clarification of definitions in the ordinance, which is expected to occur before the ordinance comes up for a vote. This is currently scheduled for the May 21 BOC meeting. Aspire North also requested that the County develop a map showing properties that are within 300 feet of surface water. Since this was a study session, the Board could take no action, but it was clear that the Board was amenable to both the addition of definitions and to developing a map showing properties within 300 feet of surface water.

During public comment, a Spider Lake area resident indicated that a survey of his homeowners association members indicated that 27% have no septic system records, 11% have antiquated dry wells, and 14% were built in the 1970s. Of the eight who spoke in favor of the ordinance, several indicated that it was a step in the right direction, but did not go far enough. The ordinance would go into effect on January 1, 2026.

Project Alpha—Dispatch and Emergency Operations Center

The discussion on the planning for a replacement Emergency Communications Center (ECC, also known as 911 Dispatch), a replacement Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and a shared storage building centered around why cost estimates have increased even as the planned size has decreased. The planning firm, Cunningham-Limp, indicated that construction costs have changed significantly since historical projects that

Towers Pinkster used for estimates in Facility Master Plan, and that some mechanical systems must be housed inside the ECC/EOC building to meet the 200-mph wind requirement for that building.

Much of the remaining discussion focused on building lifespan and how long it would support the County as the population grows and the number of dispatchers and support personnel increases; the building is expected to last 75 years, but it will probably need replacement at 50 years due to population growth.

There were many questions about the payback time for various energy efficiency and building operation items that would increase cost initially but reduce costs in the long term. The sloped roof shown in renderings is strictly for aesthetic reasons; a flat roof would be less expensive. A flat “green” roof would be about the same as a sloped roof.

Coffee Accepts Concessions on Kingsley Building Price Due to Unknown Soil Contamination

by Jim Storey

The old GTCRC Kingsley maintenance facility was sold in February, 2025 for \$615K. At the 24 April 2025 GTCRC meeting, the buyer’s representative proposed a purchase agreement addendum reducing the sale price to \$550K due to petroleum contamination and a heretofore unrealized “restrictive covenant” governing half the property. The buyer’s representative indicated that the building’s water supply tastes like diesel, and the restrictive covenant limits what can be built or added on half the property. Evidently, even the appraiser wasn’t aware of the restrictive covenant. Where the fuel came from, exactly, is unknown, but the Road Commission removed the site’s underground fuel tank in the 1980s. It’s unclear what other agency might have occupied the site before the Road Commission. The Road Commission acknowledged during the meeting that the contamination was likely known (though the extent was not) because of the site’s long-term use as a maintenance / servicing / fueling facility, and this knowledge influenced establishing the property’s sale price. The buyer is satisfied the reduced price will compensate for their expenses and the cost to drill a new water well.

The GTCRC voted to accept the addendum. There was no discussion on how to avoid future contamination issues at other facilities.

In other actions, the Road Commission is investigating changing its health insurance provider due to dissatisfaction with the provider (Guardian), approved East Bay Township’s preferred design for a TART trail crossing of 3 Mile Road, approved a bid for traffic data collection on roads where no data was available and discussed grants/bids/progress on various projects. See the meeting packet [here](#).

Trump Cuts AmeriCorps: Blow to Grand Traverse County and Our Young Folks!

by Harold Lassers

The Trump administration has cut the AmeriCorps program. “National Civilian Community Corps informed volunteers Tuesday that they would exit the program early “due to programmatic circumstances beyond your control,” according to an email obtained by [The Associated Press](#).”

This directly affects the plans for the Greilick Park. According to John Chase, Director of Parks and Facilities, AmeriCorps was to provide 2800 volunteer hours to open the trails with an economic value “in the six-figure range”. Director Chase remains bravely committed to opening the park this year but indicated that this will slow the effort. He is working with other community organizations to find other resources to assist. This was also reported by [UpNorth Live](#) and the [Record-Eagle](#).

One of the projects supported by AmeriCorps in Michigan is [YouthWork](#). As their website shows, YouthWork gets things done for Michigan: “YouthWork is a unique program designed to strengthen young people and their communities by completing conservation and skilled trades projects for nonprofits and government agencies.”



Examples of YouthWork partnerships *in our area* include Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Grand Traverse County Parks and Rec, Hickory Hills, Little Traverse Bay Conservancy, Leelanau Conservancy, HeadWaters Land Conservancy, Upper Manistee River Association, Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes, Inland Seas, Oryana Natural Foods Co-Op, Benzie Area Christian Neighbors, Grow Benzie, Goodwill, Watershed Center Grand Traverse, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Antrim Conservation District, Benzie Conservation District, Grand Traverse Conservation District, Traverse City Parks & Recreation, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

This is an unconscionable cut of dedicated employees and programs that directly affects our community.

[Congressman Bergman is on the YouthWork webpage](#) proudly presenting them with a National Project of the Year award, time to call him up and ask him to stand with AmeriCorps and YouthWork!



Pavilions Plan for CEO Interviews at April 24 Meeting

by Linda Pepper

The Pavilions Board is interviewing for a new CEO on April 26th, 29th, 30th and May 5th. There was a special meeting on April 13th to finalize questions and set up interviews. The agendas for these special meetings only give a first name and last name initial. I counted 6 interviewees. Here is the link if you are interested.

<https://www.gtpavilions.org/about-us/dhhs-board/dhhs-board-minutes/>

We are all hoping for the decision to hire an excellent leader for this precious resource of our community.

The highlight of the meeting was the description by the new Director of Nursing, Holly Edmondson, who spoke about the strides they are making in their nursing care. Holly is an almost 20 year employee of the Pavilions and understands the progress that has been made and still can be made. They have a grant for leadership training, and many of the nurses are taking advantage of that opportunity. They are now working with 4 different hospice servicers to give patients more choice.

When Holly was asked about what assets a CEO needs to bring, she had two:

- Be relatable and be involved with the patients.
- Understand the clinical aspects of skilled nursing units and the financial/management aspects also.

Quick takeaways:

- The net loss for March was \$63,773 for the combined Cottages and Skilled Nursing Unit. This resulted because of some extra expenses such as paying one third of the yearly general insurance for \$97K and buying a new Kubota for \$28K.
- The census for April to date was 180 patients (March 178, February 180 and January 178).
- They are finding it easier to hire workers than in the past. They often start as universal workers and then take the CNA training.
- The Aspen pavilion is being refurbished and will open July 1st. Most of the rooms there will be private rooms. The cost for the reconditioning is about \$40K.
- They did receive a check from PACE North (They are still involved in a legal case with them) for \$103K, but it has some unacceptable terms and is being held while that is being resolved.

TVC Hits Record 58,110 Passengers in March—½ of August Passenger Count

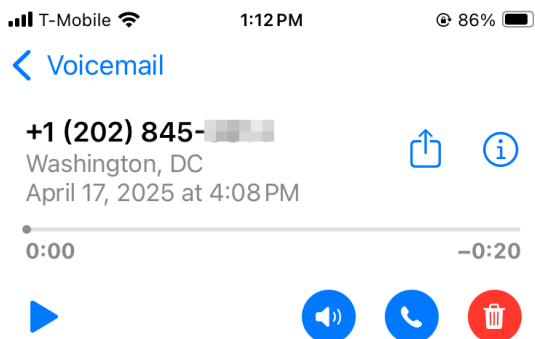
By Bruce Moore and Jim Horn

At the April 22 meeting, the NRAA Board discussed a Federal program as a potential source for financing of the planned terminal expansion project, and indicated that it is progressing with planning for an in-house police force. Hiring for the police force is expected to start in the summer. The Board approved a design contract for the addition of a new 500-space parking lot north of Costco. The new lot will be served by a shuttle bus and offer discounted rates. The board also approved the renewal of a \$13,300 monthly public relations contract with Grand Bay Promotions.

The airport had a record passenger volume for March—58,110—which is about half of the peak traffic in August, but reached capacity for parking.

Bergman Sends Phones to Voicemail

by Bruce Moore



Transcription

"Hi Mr. Moore this is Jake from Congressman Bergman's office just following up on a message regarding some concerns about staffing changes at the national park and happy to touch base with you on that matter feel free to give me a call back at 2:02-845-... if not I hope you have a great rest of your day thanks..."

Was this transcription [useful](#) or [not useful](#)?

While he has studiously avoided town hall meetings, Congressman Bergman has kept his phones open--until now. It appears to have changed on Tuesday, April 17. Now it is strictly a voicemail black hole. I don't know of anyone who has talked to a live person since the 17th.

While on a recent trip to several western National Parks, I called Bergman's office from each park and gave the call-taker a running tally of the chaos Musk's layoffs at the NPS had caused--closures of facilities, cancelled tours, restricted Visitor Center hours, newspapers with outdated closure information--you name it. I pointed out that there are four NPS sites in the Congressman's district, and that chaos would be a problem for the tourism industry in the summer months if Musk's actions continue.

On April 17, "Jake" from Bergmans Office called. I've returned the call twice, but no one answers the phone, nor responds to my messages. Not "Jake," nor anyone on his main number. It is worth noting that the April 17th Beacon published the Congressman's constituent letter on Trump's tariffs--a letter that looked pretty bad.

It appears that the Congressman's answer to poorly managed constituent communications is no constituent communications.

If you have received a response to a call or letter, please send a copy to communications@gtdems.org.

Indivisible Flag Day Event to Celebrate Flag–Not Trump



Traverse Indivisible and Leelanau Indivisible are staging a gigantic Flag Day event to celebrate our beautiful Stars and Stripes, and to tell the world that we will not stand for Trump's desecration of our flag, of our institutions, of our country!

June 14. Save the date, plan to demonstrate against the Trump administration with thousands of your neighbors. Spread the word and put it on your calendars.

Why June 14?

- June 14 is a Saturday.
- June 14 is Flag Day.
- June 14 is Donald Trump's birthday.
- June 14 is the day that Trump plans to have a big military parade, Soviet Union-style, ostensibly to mark the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Army, but in reality he'll see it as a way to glorify himself and his regime.

What: Flag Day 2025 - No Kings! celebration and parade, with participation and fun for the whole family.

When: Saturday, June 14, noon to 3 pm

Where: F & M Park in Traverse City

Register for the event here: <https://www.mobilize.us/traverseindivisible/event/785444/>

ACTION For the Week

On Sunday, April 27 two citizens, acting in consultation with Immigration Law and Justice, placed [this ad](#) in the Record Eagle.


We have immigrants and law-abiding guest workers in our community that need our support. People here legally and under threat in their home countries and people who are here legally to support our agriculture all live in our county. They have a right to live without fear and they have the right of free speech.

- Support Immigration Law and Justice and if you can donate. <https://www.iljmi.org>
- Call our Congressman Jack Bergman and tell him how you feel about our unlawful deportations. 231-944-7633
- Support ACLU <https://www.aclu.org>



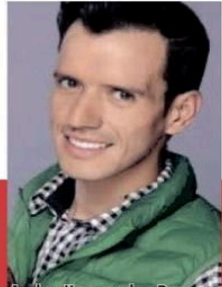
PAID ADVERTISEMENT

OUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS ARE BEING VIOLATED



Kilmar Abrego Garcia

- Picked up by ICE, detained and deported to an El Salvadoran prison within 2 days with no contact with family or attorney
- No criminal record and
- No criminal charges pending
- He had an order from the judge since 2019 that he not be deported to El Salvador for safety reasons.
- He has an American family with a wife and 3 special needs children
- Dept of Justice Attorney stated it was administrative error to detain and deport him. Supreme Court, 9 to 0, ordered Administration to facilitate his return. No action has been taken to date.



Andry Hernandez Romero

- He fled from Venezuela because of his sexual orientation and political views.
- He entered the US legally and began the judicial process for asylum
- He was detained and was illegally transported to an El Salvadoran prison
- At the time he was picked up, he had
- No criminal record
- No criminal charges pending


He was afforded NO DUE PROCESS as required by our Constitution!

236 additional Venezuelans were sent to the El Salvador prison. None of these men were afforded DUE PROCESS as required by our Constitution!

President Trump wants to be able to do the same to "homegrown criminals" (U.S. Citizens)

WHAT IS DUE PROCESS?
The Fifth Amendment's Due Process Clause guarantees that no person shall be deprived of "life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." This means the federal government must adhere to fair legal procedures before taking action that affects someone's fundamental rights, including notice and the opportunity to be heard. The clause applies to all people within U.S. territory, including corporations and aliens.

DUE PROCESS IS GUARANTEED BY THE 5TH AMENDMENT OF THE US CONSTITUTION



Could your neighbor be next?

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Contact The Bureau of Public Affairs/State Department
- Jack Bergman-Bergman.constituent@mail.house.gov
- Gary Peters 231-947-7773 • Elissa Slotkin 231-929-1031
- Support ACLU
- Support Immigration Law & Justice Michigan - 222 Cass St. Traverse City
- Write Letters to the editors of the Traverse City Record Eagle and Northern Express

Approved by Immigration Law & Justice Michigan • 222 Cass St. Traverse City
Paid for by JLB Bergman and Julie Tolson

HELPFUL LINKS & INFO

BOC meetings are usually held at 9 am on the first and third Wednesday of the month. You can find a link to the agenda and minutes at:

<https://grandtraversecounty.civicweb.net/Portal/>

You can watch a livestream of the meetings at:

<https://www.tacm.tv/govtvnow.asp>

The BOC permits public comment up to three minutes each at the beginning and end of each meeting. Public comment remotely is not allowed. If you wish to make a public comment, then you will have to attend the in-person meeting.

The BOC has nine commissioners – five Republicans and four Democrats – each of whom represents a district. You can find your commissioner at this link:

<https://www.gtcountymi.gov/184/Board-of-Commissioners>

You can email all the commissioners at this address: commissioners@gtcountymi.gov