

JAIL NEEDS SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING-5th Floor-Conference Room
FEBRUARY 11, 2026 – 9:30 AM
MINUTES

Call to Order:

Sheriff Saaranen called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

Roll Call:

The following responded to County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly:

Sheriff Josh Saaranen, Captain Travis Dessellier, Susanna Peters, and Faith Morrison.

By Microsoft Teams: Valorie Troesch, Mike Hamilton

Absent: Justin LaCosse

Approval of Agenda/Additions:

Faith Morrison requested her memo on the square footage be added as item “F.d”.

Motion was made by Faith Morrison and seconded by Susanna Peters to approve the agenda with the one addition as presented.

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

Approval of January 29, 2026 minutes:

Motion was made by Faith Morrison and seconded by Susanna Peters to approve the January 29, 2026 minutes as presented.

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

Public Comments:

Krissy Sundstrom introduced herself and stated she was helping the Jail Committee with their Facebook account and taking pictures of the jail for the committees.

New Business:

A. Update on Jail Committee/ Board of Commissioners

Faith Morrison updated the Subcommittee on the Commissioners’ February 2nd meeting. She stated the Board Chair Tom Tikkanen has directed the (3) committees to file their reports prior to the April 2026 Board meeting. The Commissioners voted to schedule a jail millage on the November 3, 2026 ballot with a vote of 3 to 1. Commissioner Keranen voted no. At the July regular board meeting the Commissioners will have to pass the millage language to get it on the November ballot. She discussed getting feedback from the public.

Sheriff Saaranen stated the Committee needs to work to obtain full Board of Commissioner’s support for the millage. He commented the Needs Subcommittee will have to give the report to the Jail Committee in March and present good data that they can use to go forward with the millage discussion.

Valorie Troesch stated the committee needs to emphasize the needs of the jail so the critical components can be figured out so a plan can be made that the public can support.

Faith Morrison discussed the press releases she has done through the League of Women Voters, which trace the current discussions on the jail issue. These are posted online. The consultants' Master Plan was for a new jail with 60-80 beds and the design was conceptual, drawing on their experience and allowing them to give an estimated cost. It was not a detailed design. This year we are seeking to get to a more detailed design, to the level that RFP's could be done to build a jail. The public asked for more detail. We need to convince the public that we need to build a new jail of a certain size and design and why the costs are what they are.

B. Dessellier's scenarios

Travis Dessellier stated he did not have any new scenarios at this time.

Faith Morrison requested a scenario be done on the evidence room issues discussed by Detective Charlie Klein.

Sheriff Saaranen agreed it would be good to describe the record storage area, the weapons vault and to give an overview of what it looks like now in that portion of the jail.

Faith Morrison stated spaces/beds cannot be added to the current jail without increasing staffing, which would be an ongoing expense even after the construction. This is because of the current cramped design where the work spaces are surrounded by the cells. This design locks in the sizes of the work spaces. She suggested getting help to get information out on social media. She suggested the Sheriff and his staff speak directly with the public and discuss the working conditions outlined in the scenarios.

Valorie Troesch said people will not watch more than a one (1) minute long video.

Krissy Sundstrom stated she has been working with the Recycling Initiative. They had a great, professional, 7-minute video with over 800 views, but people did not watch more than 30 seconds to 3 minutes of the video.

Sheriff Saaranen asked Krissy Sundstrom to tour the jail and give some ideas. Krissy Sundstrom stated a young MTU student may be able to assist with doing a video. She feels the committee needs a social media influencer(s).

Faith Morrison stated there needs to be an opportunity for dialogue with the public. She has emailed the Chamber of Commerce, but has not yet received a response.

Sheriff Saaranen agreed that he preferred more of a discussion format with the public, over a presentation.

C. LaCosse's system

Sheriff Saaranen stated he had no update at this time.

D. Faith Morrison's Memo on square footage

Faith Morrison discussed the data in her handout (appended to these minutes), which she emailed this morning to the committee. The data she used was from the consultants' Master Plan. The Master Plan also contained some square footages for office space, conference rooms, inmate housing, and some other spaces. Some details were missing, however. She asked the Sheriff to consider her worksheet a draft and asked if they could breakdown what officers and programs need what spaces in a new jail plan. Everything needs to be bigger according to the consultants. The total amount of increased size is in the Master Plan, but not the detailed breakdown. It's recommended an inmate's area be 50 square feet, and the dayroom(s) to be 35 square feet per inmate. She suggested identifying things that go under heading "investigation."

Mike Hamilton asked if anyone knows current construction costs per square foot.

Sheriff Saaranen stated there are no costs yet to the jail plan. Costs will be given when the RFP's go out and come back in showing the updated costs. The previous costs are in the PowerPoint.

The committee discussed adjusting the net square footage in the 3 columns on Morrison's calculations and discussed the Architectural Summary Page, page 102.

Susanna Peters discussed where the female and juveniles are kept. Travis Dessellier stated they are kept separate on different wings. They only expect to hold juveniles on a temporary hold. Sheriff Saaranen stated there are state specifications on juveniles. They have their own rules-amenities. They must be kept out of sight and sound of adult inmates.

Faith Morrison noted that there are three versions of the space data she provided. One region of the jail could be a dorm style or could be broken down in two other ways (2-person cells, 6-person cells). The costs to do these designs will be different, and the dorm gives the most beds.

Sheriff Saaranen stated he is not opposed to dorm style. It is a good option, but the main area would have to be pod style.

Faith Morrison discussed the prior work camp that the county had and the bunk style that had a living room area.

Sheriff Saaranen discussed the need for inmates being able to move around. Travis Dessellier discussed the multi-purpose rooms.

Faith Morrison stated it should be determined what spaces can be used for multi-use. If a space can have multiple purposes, this can save construction costs.

Susanna Peters stated numbers 13 & 16 were duplicates for the sally port.

Faith Morrison stated the information was pulled together quickly and may have errors; this can be improved. The committee needs to identify the areas, the critical adjacencies, the location of the small court room and the juvenile area.

Susanna Peters asked the Sheriff if there is any U.P. jail that you like?

Sheriff Saaranen stated Delta County's Jail is more modern. He may be able to arrange for a tour. Faith Morrison stated Delta County built their jail for \$17 million. Sheriff Saaranen stated they have 156 beds. He is unsure if they contract with anyone to house additional prisoners. Chippewa County has 170 beds, and they contract with the federal government to house their prisoners. Baraga is 20 years old.

Faith Morrison stated it is confusing to understand the size of UP county jails and the fact that some may be accepting contract prisoners explains that a little bit.

Sheriff Saaranen stated some counties are more aggressive in the judicial system, and that leads to higher average daily populations. He stated he and Travis Dessellier will go over the chart. Travis Dessellier discussed the need for fresh air in the rec area and natural lighting.

Faith Morrison commented how a county jail differs from a prison for their rec areas. She discussed the need to talk with the public and inform them that inmates are held at the county jail awaiting trial or inmates are held at the county jail if they are sentenced under 1 year. The public needs to know what a county jail is. It is a flexible facility. The county jail must deal with anyone and cannot exclude juveniles or women. Prisons can be built to house only one specific kind of inmate whereas county jails must address everything that comes through the county. This makes a county jail more expensive to build.

Susanna Peters stated it may be an option to explore an outdoor rec area.

Sheriff Saaranen discussed the day room area and classifications and privileges. He is not opposed to outdoor recreation, gardens, but it has to be staffed.

Faith Morrison stated there is a mental health cell in the Master Plan. We would likely need that as well.

Sheriff Saarinen made an appointment with Mike Hamilton to follow up on the construction costs per square foot number.

Old Business:

a. Update on Action Items from January 12, 2026

The Committee retired many of the previous action items and tabled the rest until the next meeting.

Action Items from Last Meeting (tabled/retired/done):

1. Faith Morrison will ask Administrator Rheault, Roy Britz, and Tom Tikkanen if the county's audit document contains the values of all of its properties. **Tabled.**
2. Sheriff will talk to Administrator Rheault, Roy Britz, Jared Hyrkas, and Joel Keranen to consider running a public event to let the public weigh in on the location of the jail before action is taken to decide on the location. **Retired**
3. The Sheriff will check on the challenges of designing a courtroom at the new jail so that members of the public could attend hearings at the jail. **Retired.**
4. The Sheriff said he would need to talk to legal advisors about the proposed videos. **Retired**
5. Morrison will work with the Sheriff to see if we can make a video as a proof of concept. Would have to pass legal muster, however. **DONE**
6. Sheriff will track down narratives of how the job of law enforcement in Houghton County has evolved over the last 20 years. **Tabled**
7. Morrison will consider a press release with the inmate history discussed above. **DONE**
8. Sheriff will have an update on the police blotter at a later date. **Tabled**
9. Morrison will stop and see Todd VanDyke and request a series of public service announcements. **DONE**
10. Sheriff will get a more in-depth list of spaces the current jail has and what they should be together. **BEING DONE**
11. Morrison will continue looking into the square footages listed in the Master Plan. **DONE**

Sheriff Saarinen and Travis Dessellier will work on a list of corrected square footages based on Morrison's Excel file and will send an email to the committee and then it can be presented to the Jail Committee.

Next meeting date and time:

The Committee agreed to meet next on **Monday, March 16, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.** in the 5th floor conference room, with Teams available.

Public Comments

None.

Adjournment:

Motion was made by Faith Morrison and seconded by Travis Dessellier to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

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

Memo

To: Jail Needs Subcommittee
 From: Faith Morrison
 Date: February 11, 2026
 Subject: Square Footages from Abonmarch/Byce with my interpretations

Committee,

As you know I have been working to reconcile the NSF (net square feet) numbers in the Abonmarch/Byce document with specific spaces within the jail. I have a first draft of that calculation in Excel. The Abonmarch numbers are based on 51 inmate beds in a facility.

Attached are three pages of the results. They are broken down into the Sheriff's office, Corrections, and Support, following Abonmarch/Byce.

With the assumed spaces that I have assigned it almost adds up to their total (off by 218 nsf once the addition of the courtroom and video arraignment is considered).

I'm hoping we can talk about this today. If someone can print out copies for the committee that would be great.

Charette pdf page 56; Faith Morrison, 2-11-2026

	net sq ft PER			Adjusted NSF
B	A Offices and workstations	Executive Administration	#	NSF Abon/Byce51
	1. Private office, type A, modified			
	2. Private office Type A			
	3. Private office Type B	Sheriff	1	192
	4. Private office Type B, modified	UnderSheriff, Jail Captain	2	336
	5. Private office type C	Lieutenant, Detective, Counselor	3	360
	6. Workstation Type D			
	7. Workstation Type E	Detective, Sargent	2	160
	8. Workstation Type E, modified	Corporal, Nurse	2	120
	9. Workstation Type F			
	B. Conference/Meeting rooms (Capacity=			
	max capacity 4			
	max capacity 6			
	max capacity 8			
	max capacity 10			
	max capacity 12	Sheriff's conference room	1	240
	max capacity 14			
	max capacity 16			
	max capacity over 16			
A	Public		times 4.0	1088
C	Road Patrol		times 1.8	4350
D	Investigations		times 2.4	2708
E	Marine/ORV/Snowmobile		times 1.0	2000
3	public toilet rooms (under misc in Abonmarche)		67	2
				134

				#	Adjusted NSF NSF Abon/Byce51
CORRECTIONS (18 staff)					
C. Conference/Training					
	Large (150)	3000			
	Medium (70)	1400			
	Small(35)	750	Training/program room	1	750
D. Court and Hearing Rooms					
	Small; gallery seating for 40; 5 person jury with 2 alternates	1425		1	1425
	Video Arraignment	300		1	300
E. Adult detention					
	ACA stf				
1	One man cell, accessible	80			
2	One man cell, accessible with shower	106			
3	One man cell, with shower	94			
4	One man cell	70			
5	2 man cell, accessible	80	80	0	0
6	2 man cell, accessible, with shower	106	106	1	106
7	2 man cell	94			0
8	2 man cell with shower	103	103	25	2575
9	4 man cell, accessible	188	188	0	0
10	4 man cell, accessible, with shower	197	197	1	197
11	4 man cell, accessible	194	194	0	0
12	4 man cell	185	185	0	0
13	8 man cell, accessible, with shower	372			
14	8 man cell, with shower	366			
15	Dorm	50 sf per inmate	50	24	1200
16	toilet fixtures				
17	sinks				
18	showers				
19	dayroom	35 sf per inmate	35	51	1785
20	indoor recreation	15 sf per; 500min	15	51	765
21	outdoor recreation	15 sf per 750 min	15	51	765
22	program classroom	15 sf per	15	51	765
23	kitchen	15 sf per	15	51	765
24	multipurpose	600	600	1	600
F. Miscellaneous					
1	Workroom/Galley	120	120	1	120
2	unisex, accessible	64	64	2	128
4	stairs	144 per floor			
5	elevator	64 sf/floor			
6	elevator equipment	80			
7	janitor's closet	60	60	1	60
8	hard interview	100	100	1	100
9	soft interview	160	160	1	160
10	evidence transfer vestibule	160	160	1	160
11	evidence storage	14 sf/office	14	1	14
12	fitness	10 sf/staff	10	18	180
13	Vehicular sally port, maintenance, wash bays	540	540	1	540
14	locker room	6 sf per staff	6	18	108
15	toilets/showers	4 sf per staff	4	18	72
16	sallyport (20' wide by 26' wide)	588	588	1	588
17	laundry	1.5 per inmate	1.5	51	76.5
18	lab	200-600	200	1	200
19	intake booking counter	200-400	200	1	200

Total Corrections		14,705	11,960
Total Sheriff's office		11,688	12,490
Total support		2,288	2,288
	Grand total	28,681	26,738
	check	28,681	

1,943 difference
1725 courtroom
218 accounting for courtroom

APPENDIX

JOSH SAARANEN
Sheriff

JENNIFER KELLY
COUNTY CLERK/REGISTER OF DEEDS

APPROVED: _____
JK