

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners, held at the Chippewa County Building, 325 Court St., Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan on the 16th day of October 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Jim Martin, Scott Shackleton, Justin Knepper and Jim Traynor

ABSENT: Damon Lieurance

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Commissioner Knepper and seconded by Commissioner Traynor.

CHIPPEWA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RESOLUTION # 2025-22

**A Resolution in Support of House Bills 4503 and 4504 for the Expansion of the
Michigan State Historic Preservation Tax Credits Established
under Public Act 343 of 2020.**

WHEREAS, the historic buildings, residential neighborhoods, traditional downtowns, and older manufacturing facilities in Michigan's cities, towns, villages, and rural areas distinguish each community and provide character, beauty, and a sense of place that contributes to the quality of life enjoyed by each community and its residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the preservation and rehabilitation of these historic buildings, residential neighborhoods, traditional downtowns, and older manufacturing facilities contribute to the economic vitality of Michigan's cities, towns, villages, and rural areas; and

WHEREAS, Michigan greatly benefitted from the state historic preservation tax credit program available from 1999-2011 that leveraged \$71 M in credits to generate \$1.46 B of investment in rehabilitation projects, leveraged \$251 M in federal tax credits that brought back federal dollars that would not otherwise have returned to the state, created 36,000 jobs, and resulted in each \$1.00 of credit leveraging \$10.56 in direct economic impact; and

WHEREAS, preservation projects are effective at creating much-needed housing, providing options at all price-points of affordable and market-rate housing, accommodating all age-groups, and sustainably recycling all types of historic buildings – from schools to mills to factories; and

WHEREAS, preservation projects are often the best fit for rural areas, small towns, and mid-sized cities where funding gaps are left unaddressed, thus providing balance to the big economic development programs needed in Michigan's larger cities; and

WHEREAS, a preservation project's return on investment provides local benefits because smaller projects tap local suppliers for construction materials, employ professionals and skilled tradespeople who spend locally and pay local taxes, and have greater economic impact than equivalent new construction because rehabilitation is more labor-intensive; and

WHEREAS, preservation projects are recognized for advancing sustainability by keeping demolition waste out of landfills, curbing urban sprawl by utilizing existing infrastructure, eliminating the carbon released during both demolition and new construction, conserving the embodied energy invested during initial construction, retrofitting older buildings to make them energy efficient, and recycling all kinds of historic buildings for new uses; and

WHEREAS, preservationists have succeeded in keeping traditional downtowns and neighborhoods vibrant, returning valuable real estate to local and state tax rolls, attracting both young professionals and retirees – and everyone in between – to authentic, walkable places that become cultural centers for their regions and heritage tourism destinations; and

WHEREAS, the historic preservation tax credit is the only program singularly focused on the state's oldest real estate that often exhibits the most intractable problems deemed too risky for traditional financing, providing a program underpinned by the simple provision of tax credits made available only after the owner has incurred all the risk, covered all the costs, and returned their property to use; and

WHEREAS, the current historic preservation tax credit program under Public Act 343 of 2020 did reinstate the 25% credit for both historic income-producing and residential projects, the Act allowed only for a \$5 M annual credit cap that, within hours of the program opening for the first time, had applications representing \$368 M in qualified work translating into \$92 M of credit requests – over 18 times what was available, and continues to be unable to meet the demand of worthwhile projects; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Legislature presently is considering House Bill 4503 and House Bill 4504 that will increase the annual credits from \$5 M to \$100 M made available to owners of both historic income-producing and residential properties who complete their work in keeping with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*; and

WHEREAS, these House Bills propose additional improvements to the current tax credit program such as sorting applicants into four groups so their applications are compared with projects of similar size, increasing the 25% credit to 30% for residential and small income-producing projects, expanding eligibility so that projects from the smallest towns and unincorporated, often rural, areas of the state have access to the program, and more;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners supports House Bill 4503 and House Bill 4504 and calls upon the Michigan Legislature to vote approval of this important legislation and Gov. Whitmer to sign it, to stimulate economic development while also protecting irreplaceable historic buildings and enhancing the quality-of-life in Michigan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Chippewa County Clerk is authorized to forward a copy of this Resolution to the Michigan Historic Preservation Network for broad distribution, as well as copies to Governor Gretchen Whitmer, House Economic Competitiveness Committee, Chair Mike Hoadley, Representative Parker Fairbairn and Senator John Damoose.

Adopted 16th day of October 2025

A VOTE WAS TAKEN AS FOLLOWS

AYES: Jim Martin, Scott Shackleton, Justin Knepper and Jim Traynor

NAYS: None

STATE OF MICHIGAN)
) ss.
COUNTY OF CHIPPEWA)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of the resolution adopted by the County Board of Commissioners of Chippewa County at a regular meeting held on the date first stated above, and I further certify that public notice of such meeting was given as provided by law.



Steven Woodgate, County Clerk