

Board Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2026

Present were:

Sarah Godlewski, Board Chair	Secretary of State
John Leiber, Commissioner	State Treasurer
Josh Kaul, Commissioner	Attorney General
Tia Nelson, Executive Secretary	Board of Commissioners of Public Lands
Rich Sneider, Chief Investment Officer	Board of Commissioners of Public Lands
Denise Nechvatal, Controller	Board of Commissioners of Public Lands
Chuck Failing, IT Manager	Board of Commissioners of Public Lands
Thuy Nguyen, Office Manager	Board of Commissioners of Public Lands

ITEM 1. CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Godlewski called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. She welcomed our new Executive Secretary, Tia Nelson, who has started today.

Executive Secretary Nelson thanked the board, and expressed her pleasure, and honor to be back at the coolest state agency. She met with staff this morning and is getting onboarded. She loves the work BCPL does - producing earnings for the schools. She thanked Board Chair Godlewski and Commissioner Leiber for attending the meeting in-person and thanked all the commissioners for their support. She is ready to get to work.

ITEM 2. APPROVE MINUTES (January 6th board meeting)

MOTION: Board Chair Godlewski moved to approve the minutes; Commissioner Leiber seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: The motion passed 3-0.

ITEM 3. APPROVE LOANS

MOTION: Board Chair Godlewski moved to approve the loans; Commissioner Leiber seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Sneider reported that we have three communities borrowing money to buy trucks. These are 'bread and butter' loans.

VOTE: The motion to approve the loans passed 3-0.

The Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL) unanimously approved **\$415,722.50** in State Trust Fund Loans to support 3 community projects in Wisconsin.

1. Town of Namakagon / Bayfield County / Finance purchase of firetruck / \$100,000.00
2. Town of Phelps / Vilas County / Finance purchase of dump truck / \$221,893.00
3. Town of Concord / Jefferson / Finance purchase of highway truck / \$93,829.50

ITEM 4. NEW BUSINESS – WE ENERGIES EASEMENT

Meeting rules are temporarily suspended to describe and discuss this item before a motion is made and vote is taken.

DISCUSSION: Executive Secretary Nelson shared that she believes this easement was negotiated by Secretary German, BCPL's recently retired Executive Secretary. Based on the resolution, she understands there is potential increase in value for the BCPL property adjacent to the proposed power line, which will run directly alongside Highway 55. It is her understanding from Kevin Burns, of the northern office, that this is the first of multiple easements We Energies is seeking, but this is a priority for them. The line has no negative impact on our land or land value, only the potential to increase the value of those two adjacent parcels. She is uncertain how the payment of \$500 was calculated.

Commissioner Leiber noted that Secretary German had previously mentioned bringing this easement before the board. He recalled other easements BCPL has done where the cost has been nominal every time. This is not out of the norm.

Board Chair Godlewski asked if, regarding the easement increasing the value of our land, We Energies will do all the work and then pays BCPL.

Executive Secretary Nelson noted that burying the We Energies power line could reduce storm-related damage. However, the project will require road access for maintenance purposes. Kevin believes the line will run directly adjacent to Highway 55 and will not otherwise impact BCPL land. Secretary Nelson did not discuss the specific details with Secretary German, but she believes the easement to be straightforward.

Commissioner Leiber asked if the Board needs to vote on improving the proposed easement or if the item is just informational.

Board Chair Godlewski explained that the easement resolution is written as the board approving the utility easement for payment of \$500.

Commissioner Leiber asked about the timing and urgency of the easement.

Board Chair Godlewski questioned whether the board should vote on the resolution today. She suggested it might be helpful to get more information and vote on it at the next board meeting.

Thuy explained that the intention was to approved the resolution today. We Energies has drafted an easement, but it will not be signed until corrections are made to it. Once the resolution is approved, we move forward with signing the corrected easement and she will invoice We Energies for the \$500.00 fee.

Executive Secretary Nelson asked if Thuy has the easement document.

Thuy replied yes.

Executive Secretary Nelson asked why it is being revised and if there is urgency to execute the easement.

Thuy clarified that the easement document contained an incorrect legal description. She could not confirm the exact level of urgency but shared that the request from We Energies arrived about a month ago and has been pending for some time.

Commissioner Kaul asked whether approving the resolution simply delegates the decision-making authority to BCPL staff. He indicated that if the resolution functions as a delegation of authority, he is comfortable with that.

Board Chair Godlewski commented that the current resolution is prescriptive, authorizing the We Energies easement for \$500 in accordance state statutes.

Commissioner Leiber explained that the resolution states, "...on terms and conditions the Executive Secretary determines reasonable and necessary." He does not see any problem with voting on the resolution now. The resolution gives authorization to the Executive Secretary to work out the details.

Commissioner Kaul shared that if Secretary Nelson is comfortable with the fee of \$500 then he is comfortable voting on the resolution. If Secretary Nelson believes a little more due diligence is needed, then the board can vote on the resolution at the next meeting and have Kevin part of the conversation.

Executive Secretary Nelson wanted to know how one comes up with easement values. She would like a minute to figure out how the fee came to be and how We Energy customers are impacted. The important thing is that we are basing the value of the easement with the fee.

Board Chair Godlewski agreed and commented that Executive Secretary Nelson has had about six hours in her new role and perhaps needs more time to review the easement.

Commissioner Leiber shared that the resolution states, "BCPL staff recommends a minimum fee of \$500.00." It appears that the fee has been worked out already. He does not believe that we need to deep dive into a \$500 easement.

Executive Secretary Nelson commented that Secretary German was very diligent in that regard.

Thuy explained that that \$500 has been the historical base fee for similar easements.

Commissioner Leiber stated he would be fine moving forward on this. If we want to look at stuff in the future, fine but he thinks this has already been set up and does not want to cause a big mess. We'll have more easements in the future but this one has already been reviewed and it's come to us for final approval.

Commissioner Kaul agreed. If staff has reviewed the easement and this is the recommendation, and it gives discretion to Secretary Nelson to set the final terms, he's comfortable with it.

MOTION: Commissioner Leiber moved to approve the resolution to grant We Energies an easement as written in the packet: Board Chair Godlewski seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion to approve the resolution passed 3-0.

ITEM 5. CHIEF INVESTMENT OFFICER'S REPORT

None

ITEM 6. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT

Executive Secretary Nelson shared that it was very exciting to see the growth in library school aid distribution since she was last at BCPL. She expressed her gratitude to the board and staff for the distribution of \$73.5 million.

She reported that she is successfully connected to e-mail and that Chuck and Thuy have been very helpful. Everyone has made her feel at home and is helping her get onboarded. She has begun triaging the priority files left by Secretary German and working with staff to get her feet under her. She has been in touch with WEMTA regarding the March 3rd event. She looks forward to supporting the commissioners as they participate in the events to announce the record-breaking distribution.

Board Chair Godlewski shared that the library aid distributions keeps increasing so Secretary Nelson should get used to the words record-breaking.

Executive Secretary Nelson shared that her phone is not yet set up and to contact Thuy by phone, if needed.

ITEM 7. BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT

Board Chair Godlewski reported that there are two opportunities to share the library aid distribution from the Common School Fund.

- 1) The annual WEMTA Conference on March 3rd. As previously done, the 'big check' will be presented during the lunch hour. She shared that she may not be able to attend the check presentation on March 3rd and asks Commissioners Leiber and Kaul to represent the board. Please let her know if the commissioners are unable to attend.
- 2) Press Conference on February 4th. In the past a press conference was held in December, but with the appointment of a new Executive Secretary, we wanted to make sure she was included. WEMTA reached out and identified February 4th in the Chippewa Valley, likely late morning, for the official record-breaking announcement. Students and librarians will share how the funds are used and how their schools benefit from them. Someone from her team will reach out to Commissioners Kaul and Leiber regarding this event.

She will continue to connect and talk with Secretary Nelson to ensure her success in her role as the Executive Secretary of BCPL.

ITEM 8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

4th Quarter Investment Report

ITEM 9. OLD BUSINESS

None

ITEM 10. ADJOURN

Board Chair Godlewski moved to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Leiber seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0; the meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.



Tia Nelson, Executive Secretary

Link to audio recording:

<https://bcpl.wisconsin.gov/Shared Documents/Board Meeting Docs/2026/2026-01-20 BoardMtgRecording.mp3>