

Minutes
Chequamegon Democrats Membership Meeting
Chequamegon Dems Office, Ashland, Wisconsin
January 10, 2026

1. **Call to Order.** Chairperson Kathleen Adee called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.
2. **Introductions.** We went around the room (and the Zoom screen) and introduced ourselves.
3. **Approval of December 13, 2025, Minutes.** Our meeting notice provided a link to our website page where members can review our minutes. **Motion (Joyce Neumann), second (Ken Simon) to approve the minutes for December 13, 2025. Carried unanimously.**
4. **Treasurer's report.** Kathleen proposed tabling the review of the Treasurer's Report until the February meeting as we were not able to get it up on the screen. No objection was heard. Sandy Raspotnik, Treasurer, commented that it looked pretty much like the past few Treasurer's Reports.
5. **Office painting.** Kathleen announced that we have approval from our landlord to paint over the wallpaper. Kathy Radtke will be in charge. More info to come.
6. **Spring election.** There will no primary in the Supreme Court race, so our next election day is in April. We will need volunteers for canvassing and other campaign jobs. We will discuss more in February.
6. **Secretary's report.** David Siegler, Secretary, (1) announced the results of the 2025 grocery price survey. In all three communities where we did the survey (Ashland, Washburn, and Bayfield), prices came down moderately over the year. David thanked all the volunteers who did the shopping. We will not be continuing the survey in 2026, as the discussion on affordability has moved on to health care and housing costs, with groceries now getting ss attention than a year ago. (2) David noted that the office remodel has given us more usable space for meetings, so we now could use more chairs. He invited anyone who had chairs that might be suitable to drop them off at the office. (3) David invited volunteers to sign up for Saturday morning office staffing, and explained what the volunteers do.
7. **Communications Committee.** Our "Comms" Committee is composed, right now, of Jeremy Oswald, Maddy Kemp, and David Siegler. They will be meeting on Monday, January 12.

8. Angela Stroud. Angela Stroud, Representative for the 73rd Assembly District (which includes northern Bayfield and Ashland Counties), was present and gave a report on the latest goings-on at the State Capitol. Among the topics she discussed were a proposed sandhill crane hunt, the current ban by Republican leadership on video recording state legislative proceedings, Chanz Green’s proposed no-permit concealed carry law—something on which Angela is something of an expert, hemp regulation, and data centers - with a particular concern about municipalities entering into NDAs with companies proposing them.

9. Flock Camera presentation by Bayfield County Sheriff Tony Williams. Sheriff Williams (Tony) noted that the cameras were ordered in 2022 (before his term as Sheriff began) and were installed in 2023. There are cameras in Port Wing, Iron River, Cable, and at the Highway 2/13 roundabout. Red Cliff has requested one near the Casino. There previously was one in Bayfield but, ironically, it was stolen. The cameras cost \$3,000 per year per camera. They take pictures of each car (and of its license plate) that passes by.

The images are automatically compared against license plate numbers on a “hot list” compiled by NCIC of plates associated with missing persons, silver alerts, and amber alerts. Otherwise, the Bayfield County Sheriff’s Department can access the images as can cooperating state and local law enforcement agencies (those that share their images with Bayfield County), who can request the images for their own searches. Bayfield County cooperates with state and local agencies across the country. A record is kept of all requests: the request, who made the request, and the reason for the request. This information is maintained indefinitely and is subject to audit. The images are deleted after 30 days.

Tony detailed the kinds of activities the Flock cameras help in: locating missing children, stolen vehicles, missing adults, people experiencing mental health crises, people at risk of suicide, and crime solving. He noted that a burglary in Port Wing was solved through use of the camera. He also noted that the Brown University shooter was found using a Flock camera. He said the Bayfield County Sheriff’s Department uses the system at least once a week.

Tony addressed the concerns he’s heard voiced about the system.

Hacking. Tony said that the data was protected under security protocols that are compliant with federal law enforcement data protection standards, the same security protections that are used for all of Bayfield County’s law enforcement records.

Improper searches. Whenever a search is initiated, a reason must be given. Previously, the “reason” field for a Flock search was an open field that could be filled in with random letters. Now one of the options in a drop-down menu must be selected. One of the options is for immigration related searches. Bayfield County does not allow immigration related searches, so if that option is selected (by any cooperating agency in the country), no images are returned. All searches can be audited to determine if there were improper searches. This would include, for instance, if a Sheriff’s Department employee were searching a particular license plate repeatedly.

Sale of data by Flock. All data collected in Bayfield County is owned by Bayfield County. Flock has no rights in it, and cannot sell it.

ICE or other federal access to data. Bayfield County chooses to whom it gives access to the camera data. ICE does not have access, nor does any other federal agency. Were ICE to ask for access, Tony would turn them down.

Tony then answered questions.

A number of questions were asked about accountability. Tony replied that all searches can be audited. He said he is the one in charge of the program, and is responsible for it. He gave his word that as long as he is Sheriff, ICE will not be allowed to have access. There is no written policy on access or on the frequency with which audits are made.

A number of questions were asked about ways that ICE could access the system indirectly through other agencies, or through some back door defect in the security of the system. Tony said that if another agency suddenly started asking for a series of license plates giving the same or suspicious reasons for the requests, the Department could look into that, and they could always cancel their sharing agreement with that agency. Tony said he would not succumb to pressure to let ICE into the system. Mixed federal-state task forces, where a state party may get information that is then shared with a federal agency as part of the task force creates a problem that Tony has not really gotten an answer to. Some concern was expressed that the “deleted” images may not be totally wiped from the system. Tony believes that they are.

As to internal misuse, each County employee with access to the system has an individual log-in, and suspicious search patterns can be investigated.

A question was asked of Angela and of the local government officials present whether there is any state or local regulation of public or private surveillance cameras. Angela said there was a Democratic bill on that topic.

A couple of people stated that the cameras would not have been a concern a few years ago, but with the authoritarian turn in our federal government, they were not quite frightened as to how they could be used. People stressed that they believed in Tony's integrity, but were concerned that there could be factors beyond Tony's control. Questions were raised about who decides if the cameras stay or go and one person asked Tony straight out to take them down. Tony noted that in three years of camera use they have done a lot of good and their data have never been misused. He said it was his decision to use the cameras. He was open to making changes to make them more acceptable to the community but he was not open to taking them down altogether. Mary Dougherty, Bayfield County Board member, noted that while the Sheriff does get to decide law enforcement matters, the County Board approves the budget, so there is some shared responsibility.

The discussion between Tony and the group started coalescing around the idea of limiting the geographic reach to which the camera data was accessible. The question was asked, do we really need to have access to cameras all across the country, and if not, can we limit access to our cameras to jurisdictions that are nearby? If the cameras are a valuable tool, how do we use them so that everybody wins? Tony said that he would meet on Monday with his chief deputy to discuss trimming the jurisdictions with which we share data. Tony asked for a contact with the Cheq Dems, and Kelly Westlund volunteered.

One last question for Tony came from a Zoom participant: How has the Sheriff's Department worked with ICE or been informed of their activities in the County? Tony responded that the Department has not worked at all with ICE and has never been informed by ICE of any of their activities here.

A final note: The Bayfield County Board's Sheriff's Committee has regular public meetings, at the annex across the street from the Courthouse. The next one is January 19 at 4:00 p.m.

10. Renée Nicole Good. Jeremy helped us remember the death of Renée Good at the hands of an ICE agent in Minneapolis earlier in the week. He expressed the sorrow that many of us have felt, but noted that what gave him strength and the thing that was our reason to exist as an organization was our ability to vote for people who will put an end to these horrors.

11. Adjournment. Motion (David Siegler), second (Jamie Paterson) to adjourn. Carried unanimously. We adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

David Siegler
Secretary