



Manistee County GOP Membership Meeting

July 14, 2026

6:00 pm

West Shore College Building

400 River St.

Manistee, Michigan 49660

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Approve/Amend Agenda

Secretary Report

Treasurer Report (interim)

Old Business

1) HQ status

2) Parades

3) August Convention

4) Candidate Meet & Greet

New Business

Adjourn

June 11th Manistee GOP Regular Meeting Minutes

Chairman, Duane Jones opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. This was followed by an invocation by David Niedzielski.

After amending the agenda to add a short video (to become the first agenda item) by SOS Rubio ref. rationale for the Iran war, the agenda was approved.

Treasurer's Report

Steve Wheeler gave the treasurer's report for the YTD, May and the Lincoln Day Dinner. The Lincoln Day Dinner generated approximately \$2,973 in net revenue and was viewed as a successful fundraiser.

Discussion of Iran Video

Members viewed a video featuring comments from Secretary of State Marco Rubio regarding Iran's nuclear program and recent U.S. actions toward Iran.

Following the video, one attendee expressed disagreement with the rationale presented and shared personal views on U.S.-Iran relations.

County Fair Participation

The committee approved spending \$500 to sponsor and maintain a presence at the Manistee County Fair, rather than matching a reported \$1,000 Democratic Party sponsorship.

Volunteers will be needed to staff a booth during the fair.

The fair dates discussed were July 28 through August 1.

Lincoln Day Dinner Follow-Up

Organizers reported positive feedback from guest speaker Susan Kokinda.

Members praised the event organizers and noted strong attendance and favorable reviews.

Headquarters and Outreach Activities

Ongoing street construction is affecting access to the current headquarters location.

Members discussed alternative outreach methods, including temporary "pop-up" locations along US-31 and other high-visibility areas.

Volunteers were encouraged to sign up for outreach activities.

Parades and America 250 Activities

Upcoming parades and events celebrating America's 250th anniversary were discussed.

A Revolutionary War-themed parade float is being redesigned.

Volunteers are being recruited to portray historical figures and assist with float operations.

A discussion regarding whether to purchase and distribute candy during parades occurred and generally favored saving those funds for other campaign activities.

New patriotic billboards, yard signs, and promotional materials are being deployed.

A series of billboards will run throughout the election season.

New signs with the slogan “Stop Socialism, Vote Republican” were ordered.

Election Strategy and Political Outlook

The group discussed preparations for the upcoming midterm elections and emphasized voter turnout efforts.

Topics included:

Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, legislative races, and local contests.

Assessments of Republican candidates and statewide competitiveness.

Plans for voter outreach through mailers, phone calls, signs, and targeted turnout efforts.

Discussion of previous successful voter-information mailings and interest in repeating similar efforts.

Featured Presentation: Railroad Relocation Project

Manistee County Board of Commissioners Chair, Jeff Dontz, made a presentation about a proposed railroad bypass project around the south end of Manistee Lake.

Key points included:

The project has been discussed for decades but has faced repeated obstacles.

The preferred option would build a rail bridge from the PCA area to the Stronach Park area.

Estimated bridge cost was discussed as approximately \$63–65 million before additional project costs.

A \$3.4 million federal environmental grant application has been submitted.

The project would require local matching funds.

Support letters have been obtained from several organizations and stakeholders.

Supporters argued the project could:

- Eliminate rail traffic around Manistee Lake.

- Improve traffic flow and safety.

- Open redevelopment opportunities along the existing rail corridor.

- Enhance tourism and economic development.

- Potentially allow conversion of unused rail corridors into trails.

Questions from attendees covered:

Economic impacts.

Environmental considerations.

Effects on industry and transportation.

Potential trail development.

Tribal and local government support.

Adjournment

Members briefly discussed Representative John Moolenaar's past Ukraine-related votes.

The meeting concluded with a motion to adjourn and reminders about volunteer sign-ups and committee resources available on the organization's website.