

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
PUBLIC HEARING/REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 13, 2022**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton and public viewing in person and by Zoom.

A. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tikkanen at 5:00 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Tikkanen.

C. Roll call:

The following Commissioners responded to roll call done by the County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly:

Tom Tikkanen, District 1; Kevin Codere, District 2; Glenn Anderson, District 3; Gretchen Janssen, District 4; Roy Britz, District 5.

D. Public Hearing-CDBG Program Income-Houghton County Emergency Repair Program

a. Open Hearing

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, and seconded by Commissioner Britz to open the hearing.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

b. Discussion and Public Comment

Mary Ellen Hyttinen, WUPPDR, stated this program has been done a couple times for repairing roofs. Not replacing roofs. WUPPDR needs the Counties approval before they can move forward. It would be a maximum of \$5,000 per house. Only licensed contractors would be used. The program is income qualified and first come first served. Anyone interested should submit their names to WUPPDR.

c. Close hearing

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to close the hearing.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

E. Approval of Minutes-August 9, 2022 Regular & August 22, 2022 Special Meeting

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2022 meeting and the August 22, 2002 Special meeting as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

F. Approval of Agenda/Additions:

Commissioner Anderson requested #3 under New Business include the City of Hancock's proposal. Commissioner Britz requested #17 be added for the Board's consideration of 911 Fund purchases.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Codere, seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the Agenda with the two (2) additions as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote: Ayes 5, Nays 0.

G. Public Comments-Agenda Items only \*(5 minute limit):

None.

H. Approval of Bills:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve paying the bills submitted of \$1,853,220.41.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Codere, Britz 5.

NO: None 0.

I. Correspondence:

The Board discussed correspondence.

Reports:

1. Standing Committee:

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following:

Transfer Station: Copper Country Recycling Initiative won a \$10,000 grant. They will use the money for signage and mailings. Kurt Judson received a \$5,000 tire recycling grant. They will collect tires on October 19, 2022, and anyone in Houghton County can bring tires. There may be a limit per person. There has been 3.24 tons of recycling in August.

MSU Extension: She attended a meeting. They are working on tourism pressures. They are getting an area workgroup together and prepare an education handout.

UPCAP: Discussed appointing staff on the recommendation of Aging Commission Act, \$129,000 for general services and up to \$200,000 for senior meals.

Commissioner Codere reported to the Board on the following:

KEDA meeting: He discussed manufacturers are having trouble in obtaining qualified employees. He encourages schools to encourage students to work locally.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

Houghton County Fair: He thanked the volunteers and the Fair Board for a wonderful fair this year.

Chairman Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

Veterans Office: The Veterans Office received a \$59,231 grant.

2. Special Committees

None.

3. County Officers-Cyber Security Report August 2022 (FOUO) Not subject to FOIA

County Officers:

Josh Saaranen, Sheriff, stated there are 22 inmates, 6 are females, and 6 inmates are at the work camp. There have been approximately 2,200 complaints this year. They served dinner to runners last night for the Torch Run.

Lisa Mattila, Treasurer, stated there would be pre-bidding at 2:00 pm at 246 Fifth Street.

Todd LaRoux, Building Department, stated from January to August 2022 there have been 260 permits, and 38 commercial permits with an estimated cost of construction being valued at \$8.7 million. There have also been 222 residential and miscellaneous permits with an estimated cost of improvements being \$23 million for Houghton County.

Dennis Hext, Airport Manager, updated the Board of Commissioners regarding commercial services at the Airport, and stated SkyWest is not leaving in January.

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk/Register of Deeds stated she attended the County Clerk Conference in Traverse City. She learned a lot. The local media had asked Jennifer to find out how the Board could vote at a work group session. Jennifer informed the Board that she was informed that voting should not take place at a work group session. Jennifer informed the Board that she is down to herself and her Chief Deputy, Renee Cunningham due to someone retiring. She asked the Board to expedite the hiring process and discussed having an employee in place in the future prior to someone retiring especially during a General Election year like it has been done in many offices in the courthouse.

Chairman Tikkanen advised the Board to read the Cyber Security Report in their packet.

Administrator Bjorn stated the report is not subject to FOIA.

K. Old Business:

1. American Rescue Plan (CSLFRF) \$6.8 million

a. Sheriff's Department Vehicle Purchases (2)

Administrator Bjorn submitted ARP requests to the Board of Commissioners for 2 additional Sheriff Department vehicles. The 1<sup>st</sup> vehicle cost is \$34,000 with \$9,000 to partial equip the vehicle for a total of \$43,000.00. The 1<sup>st</sup> vehicle is available now and would be used for investigations and for the Houghton County Emergency Manager. The 2<sup>nd</sup> vehicle would replace the highest mileage vehicle within the Sheriff Department's fleet. The cost for vehicle #2 is \$42,000 with an additional \$20,000 to fully equip the vehicle for a total of \$62,000.

Commissioner Anderson asked if the Board historically purchases 2 vehicles per year.

Commissioner Britz stated the Sheriff does things to extend the vehicles life.

Commissioner Codere discussed the County purchasing five (5) vehicles this year.

Sheriff Saaranen stated they have been waiting years for 2 to 3 cars. USDA grants are available. Building of vehicles stopped for a while. The County should be reimbursed after the purchase. Two (2) of the cars have been received, and two (2) are being built.

Chairman Tikkanen stated he recommended using ARPA funds to purchase two (2) vehicles according to the Law Enforcement Board's recommendation.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, and seconded by Commissioner Britz to purchase two (2) vehicles for the Sheriff Department for a total of \$105,000 with ARPA funds.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Britz, Tikkanen, Codere, Janssen 5.  
NO: None 0.

New Business:

1. CDBG-Program Income Local Emergency Repair Program \$41,228

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the CDBG program and WUPPDR to administer the program.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

2. Jay Parent (EGLE) –Buffalo Reef Analysis Presentation

Jay Parent from EGLE gave a presentation to the Board regarding the stamp sands. Their committee looks at 13-14 alternatives, and 3 were feasible. Option 1 was to haul to White Pine. Option 2 was to leave the sand by Gay and build a rock wall. Option 3 was to dredge and start a land fill in the hardwoods. The committee agreed Option 3 was the best option. It would cost approximately \$1 billion to do this. They do not have a local sponsor yet, and the feds require it. It costs approximately \$1.5 million per year to keep the Harbor open. It will cost \$10 million for construction and a Jetty to get the landfill ready. The timeline depends on funding. They will need 200 acres about 100' high.

3. FY23-Portage Lake Multi-Educational Services – Termination of Arena Operations & City of Hancock Proposal

Commissioner Anderson stated the Portage Lake Multi-Educational Services has operated the Houghton County Arena for many years and will be turning the billing and scheduling over to the County. They received a \$500,000 trust fund grant. The County paid \$500,000 in investments the last few years.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Codere to accept the termination of the Portage Lake Multi-Educational Services as of July 1, 2023.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

Hancock City proposal

The County received a proposal from the City of Hancock. Mary Babcock, City of Hancock Manager, addressed the Board and discussed the Arena and the importance to the community, Hancock Bulldogs and Finlandia University for the ice rink. She discussed a 10-year investment, and to keep the MSU Extension Office, and the Houghton County Fair the same.

Commissioner Anderson stated the County still has a debt of \$390,000 for the Houghton County Arena, and the City of Hancock would purchase it for \$1.00.

Mary Babcock stated they have maintained the parking lot at the Houghton County Arena.

Paul LaBine, Mayor for the City of Hancock, stated he is in favor of the proposal and asked for the Board's consideration.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to table the proposal and assign the subcommittee of Commissioners Janssen and Britz to work with Mary Babcock.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

Chairman Tikkanen thanked Mary Babcock for the proposal.

4. Houghton County RLF Amendment #1

Chairman Tikkanen stated this was a proposal by KEDA asking for an increase in the rate to \$77.00 per hour retroactive to January 1, 2022.

Commissioner Codere stated he is the KEDA Chair, and this is a normal increase and benefits the County and he will abstain from voting.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to accept the Houghton County RLF Amendment #1 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Britz, Tikkanen, Janssen 4.

NO: None 0.

ABTAIN: Codere 1.

5. Mental Health Senate Bill No. 101

Administrator Bjorn discussed if a panel should be required.

Sheriff Saaranen recommended the Board establish/create a panel now.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Codere to create a Mental Health transport panel.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

The Board will appoint the Mental Health transport panel next month.

6. Airport Committee Recommendation-Additional Capacity for Sewer System

Dennis Hext, Airport Manager, stated he is in agreement with the Torch Lake Sewage Authority to expand and purchase an extra 10,000 gallons per day for a total of 20,000 gallons per day. Currently the average is 12,000. The Airport Committee advised to go into this agreement and purchase up to 20,000 gallons per day.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the Airport Manager and the Airport Board to enter into an agreement to purchase an additional 10,000 gallons per day

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

7. Resolution #22-12 Airport Sale Lot 26

Dennis Hext, Airport Manager, stated he received three (3) bids on Lot 26. The successful bid was \$50,800.00 from Copper Island Academy.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to adopt Resolution #22-12 and sell Lot 26 to William Hyrkas/Copper Island Academy for \$50,800.00.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Britz, Tikkanen, Codere, Janssen 5.

NO: None 0.

**Sale of Lot 26 to William Hyrkas**  
**RESOLUTION #22-12**

**WHEREAS**, The Houghton County Board of Commissioners, as successor in interest to the dissolved Houghton County Airport Authority on July 24, 1989 is authorized to all rights of interest and statutory authority granted to the dissolved Houghton County Airport Authority.

**WHEREAS**, The Houghton County Memorial Airport Committee, created on July 26, 1989, under the Authority of the Houghton County Board of Commissioners, pursuant to Act 73 of the Public Acts of 1970 and Act 327 of the Public Acts of 1945, and pursuant to the authority vested in the County of Houghton by the Aeronautics Code of the State of Michigan has the authority to adopt rules and regulations for the management, government and the use of said airport property.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, Tom Tikkanen, Houghton County Board Chairman, is authorized to sign all closing documents for the sale of Lot 26 of Houghton County Airpark Plat, to William Hyrkas.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, at a Houghton County Board of Commissioners Meeting held on September 13, 2022, a resolution was adopted to approve the conditions set forth in the purchase agreement presented on September 6, 2022 from William Hyrkas, for Lot 26, Airpark Plat, for the purchase price of \$50,800.00 pursuant to the Airport Industrial Park Covenants Section 5, Resale Rights, contained within the Houghton County Airpark Plat, September 12, 1973, in Liber 23 of Miscellaneous Records, Page 157, Houghton County Register of Deeds Records.

**Motion Moved By:**

**Motion Supported By:**

**Roll Call Vote:      Yes:\_\_\_\_\_**

**No:\_\_\_\_\_**

**Motion Carried:**

**RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Tikkanen, Chairman  
Houghton County Board of Commissioners

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

STATE OF MICHIGAN            )  
  ) ss.  
COUNTY OF HOUGHTON        )

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the County of Houghton, Michigan at a meeting of its Board of Commissioners on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of September, 2022 the original of which Resolution is on file in my office. I further certify that the meeting was held and the minutes therefore were filed in compliance with Act No. 267 of the Public acts of 1976.

\_\_\_\_\_  
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereinto affixed my official signature this \_\_\_\_\_ day of September, 2022.

\_\_\_\_\_  
JENNIFER KELLY  
Houghton County Clerk/Register of Deeds  
County of Houghton

8. Equalization Proposal Coleman Engineering \$20K

Jacob Djerf, Property Appraiser, discussed the JIS cost of \$10,000 and \$10,000 for contingency for updating maps on the tax roll. He stated this is an excellent resource for the County. WUPPDR did this for the County through 2016. In the future, it would be on the County website, but may take up to a year to have it in place, and be able to have County employees to maintain it.

Commissioner Janssen stated a neighboring County already has this program.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Codere and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve spending up to \$20,000.00 for the Coleman Engineering Proposal as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Codere, Janssen, Tikkanen, Anderson, Britz 5.

NO: None 0.

9. Prosecuting Attorney-Request for Additional Staff

Brittany Bulleit, Prosecutor, requested two (2) additional staff. One would be a fulltime Assistant Prosecutor MP10-Non-Union, and the other would be a crime victim advocate/legal assistant T-9 Union.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Codere for Prosecutor Bulleit to give Administrator Bjorn a cost estimate with fringe benefits at the September budget meeting.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

10. Sheriff's Department Appointed-Election MP re-classifications

Administrator Bjorn discussed reclassifications in the Sheriff Department, and recommended a wage increase effective 1/1/2023 for the Captain MP 10, Under Sheriff MP11, and Sheriff MP12. The Law Enforcement Board is recommending the change.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Codere and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the reclassifications for the Captain to a MP 10, the Under Sheriff to a MP11, and the Sheriff to a MP12.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Codere, Janssen, Tikkanen, Anderson, Britz 5.

NO: None 0.

11. 2022 Houghton County Sheriff's Department-Jail Inspection Final Report

Sheriff Saaranen stated the Jail is in compliance. There is concern in the classification in the future with inmates.

Chairman Tikkanen stated Captain Hebner is doing a great job.

12. UP Association of County Commissioners Fall Conference-October 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Administrator Bjorn discussed the upcoming conference and who would be attending.

County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly, informed the Board she found out at her County Clerk's Conference that several County Clerks attend the Conference with the Commissioners

and asked if this is something she should attend. Commissioner Anderson stated other County Clerks do attend.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to authorize as many Commissioners and the County Clerk that can attend.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

#### 13. 911 Fund Purchases-(Vehicle)

Administrator Bjorn discussed trading in a vehicle, and to see what is available.

Sheriff Saaranen stated the vehicle is not fully built with 911 funds, and would be used as a limited partial patrol car. The Law Enforcement Board is approving and recommending the purchase of a 911 vehicle.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen approve the purchase of a 911 vehicle.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Codere, Britz 5.

NO: None 0.

#### 14. Resolution #22-13 Canal View In-Person Compliance Requirements

Kim Salmi, Canal View Administrator, addressed the Board regarding the Covid pandemic. She stated there was one (1) death and the person was not vaccinated. She requested the Board to lessen the requirements. They must follow the CMS and CDC guidelines. She stated the requirements are effecting the staff.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Chairman Tikkanen to support Resolution #22-13 as presented.

Commissioner Anderson stated he felt the Resolution was misguided, and staffing is a Federal issue and should not involve the Board of Commissioners.

The Motion FAILED by the following vote:

YES: Britz, Tikkanen 2.

NO: Codere, Anderson Janssen 3.

#### 15. Schedule of Budget Public Hearing/Budget Adoption FY23-Proposed Date September 28, 2022

Administrator Bjorn discussed having a ARPA Funds and budget hearing on September 29, 2022 at 9:30 am.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to schedule a public hearing, adopt the budget, and a ARPA workgroup session.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

#### 16. Houghton County Veterans Affairs Office-FY23 County Veterans Service Fund Grant

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to accept the FY23 County Veterans Service Fund Grant in the amount of \$59,231 for the dates of October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023 as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.



17. 911 Advisory Board Recommendations

Commissioner Britz discussed the vehicle purchase with the 911 funds, the purchase of 100 batteries for the fire departments, \$42,000 for radios, the I am Responding program that the Emergency Manager can email, text and communicate with the Board of Commissioners \$30,500 and \$8,000 annually, and \$31,100 for mobil unit-radios are needed.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve \$111,730 and purchase all of the above using 911 funds.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Britz, Anderson, Tikkanen, Codere, Janssen 5.

NO: None 0.

18. Travel

- a. Jennifer Kelly-Clerk's Meeting-Marquette \$125.00

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Codere to approve the above-mentioned travel request.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

19. Appropriations

- a. Copper Country Community Mental Health- \$41,123.73

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz, seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the above-mentioned appropriation as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

L. Public Comments: (5 minute limit)

Mary Sears addressed the Board and was upset with the Board for not passing the Canal View's Resolution. She stated the Resolution is needed.

Dan Niemela addressed the Board and stated he was disappointed with the vote on the Resolution, and encouraged the Board to reconsider the Resolution.

M. Announcements:

None.

N. Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Codere and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adjourn at 7:39 pm.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

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Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

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Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk