

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 15, 2022**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, November 15, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in the 5th 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. Approval of Minutes-9/29/22 Special, 10/11/22 Regular & 10/19/22 Special:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the minutes of the September 29, 2022, October 11, 2022 and the October 19, 2022 meetings as presented.

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

E. Approval of Agenda/Additions:

Commissioner Codere asked to add J1-d to the Agenda for \$30,000 ARPA monies for an emergency spill response unit.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz, seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the Agenda with the one (1) addition as presented.

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

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

Teresa Kariniemi discussed her letter to the Board regarding a recount of the November 8, 2022 election and asked the Board to fund it for transparency reasons. She stated there are many violations throughout the state of Michigan, and stated the tabulator images were not turned on in Houghton County and that would be a violation. She stated it was approximately \$12,000 in quotes from the city/township clerks from a 2020 FOIA.

Blanch Rautio commented on the black markers, and stated Herman Gundlach voted in 2020 and questioned how, and recommended the voter rolls be cleaned up.

Julie Carlton addressed the Board regarding the election and recommended the voter rolls be cleaned up.

Scott Juntikka addressed the Board regarding the election and stated he would donate \$2,000 of his money towards a recount.

Brian Harrison addressed the Board regarding the Resolution In Support to Amend the Michigan Automobile Insurance Reform Act.

County Clerk Kelly stated tabulator tapes are available on election night. Until the election security is released, nothing can be released.

She advised the Board that if a citizen can file for a recount and advised the Board to talk to Attorney Zappa. She advised the Board that Teresa was asking to review all the poll books, tabulator tapes, and ballots and recount the votes on the ballots. She advised that there are other counties still canvassing. Once the election is secured, the tabulator tapes would be able to be viewed. She advised the public to go to the Michigan.gov website for deadlines. She advised the Board she would be doing audits. In 2020 she did 14 or 17.

Teresa Kariniemi advised the Board that the Secretary of State had the images turned off. She would like them turned on for an audit trail.

Clerk Kelly explained that the tabulators tabulate the ballots.

Chairman Tikkanen discussed Teresa Kariniemi's letter and advised her to bring supporters to the next month's meeting and the Board will address the matter further.

Commissioner Anderson asked for cost estimates for what she is requesting. He suggested getting 3-4 precincts. Teresa said some areas could be looked at where there could be potential fraud.

County Clerk explained that the best thing we have is the ballots, and that is where we have transparency.

Steve DeLongchamp, Election Source Vice President, stated the proof of the election is in the paper ballots. A sharpie marker is recommended for use on Election Day as they are permanent and cannot be altered. There are no State or Federal requirements for imaging, and if the imaging is turned on, it slows down the machine. He advised the Board that a recount could only be done by a candidate or group to fund a recount. He discussed the upcoming audits that will be done. He discussed the pre and public testing done for every election, and recommended the Board talk to an Attorney and the Bureau of Elections.

Commissioner Codere requested clarification if images are required or not and ask for a legal opinion.

G. Approval of Bills:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Codere to approve paying the bills submitted of \$2,253,712.51.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

H. Correspondence:

Elizabeth Bjorn, Administrator, discussed the following correspondence that were in the Board's packets:

Under H.

- #1. Letter of support for Hulkkonen's farm.
- #2. Rev. Alan Salmi, letter of interest in volunteering to be on the Mental Health transportation panel.
- #3. Letter from Teresa Karinemi to the BOC regarding a recount of the November 8, 2022 election.
- #4. CMDA-not subject to FOIA.
- #5. Opiod litigation.
- #6. Letter from Calumet Township Clerk.

Commissioner Britz discussed the letter of support written for the Hulkkonen Farm. They applied for an \$80,000 Federal farm grant. There would be no cost to the County.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to support the expansion of the Hulkkonen Farm.

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

The Board discussed the letter from the Calumet Township Clerk. Tim Gasperich, Supervisor, stated no action is requested by the Board.

Reports:

1. Standing Committee:

Commissioner Codere reported to the Board on the following:

DNR update: Trail 3 is going slow, and there were 6 bid packages for the reconstruction of the trail.

Canal View: He stated Canal View is addressing the loss of possibly over 60 beds and lacking workers. CNA's are the biggest need.

KEDA: There will be a working session in November with MI Works, Gogebic and other places to find more workers. Chairman Tikkanen commented on how Michigan does not recognize Wisconsin nursing certificates.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

He congratulated the winners of the November 8, 2022 election.

Commissioner Britz had nothing to report to the Board.

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following:

Recycling: There has been over 43 tons of recycling done so far this year.

BHK: On Veteran's Day BHK recognized a new registration apprenticeship program to help keep young people in the UP. She congratulated them.

MSU Extension: There is offering a combat veteran's online class.

Chairman Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

Recreation Authority: The Bi-laws were adopted and the officers were elected. Chairman will be Tim Gasperich.

DNR: The stated the DNR gave an update on trail 3 between Dollar Bay and Lake Linden. They hope to have the Bill Nichols Trail from South Range to Houghton repaired and ready for this season.

Childcare: He commended KEDA on helping and maximizing the \$200,000 earmarked money. They are working on home based childcare and licensed daycare centers. He stated there is a waiting list of 600 kids in Houghton County.

3. County Officers:

Jake Djerf, Equalization Department, discussed the previously approved Apportionment Report. Requested an Amended Apportionment be approved due to the election results from November 8, 2022 that had millages pass in Adams, Stanton, and the City of Hancock.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the amended the apportionment report as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

Joshua Saaranen, Sheriff, stated they have had 2,700 complaints, and have 25 inmates.

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk/Register of Deeds, stated there would be two (2) online options for customers to request birth, death and marriage records coming very soon. There was \$0 cost to the County.

I. Old Business:

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

a. Airport Terminal Study

Commissioner Britz discussed a terminal study that would cost \$200,000. The County would pay the money and then be reimbursed through a Federal grant. The Airport has an old fuel system. It would cost approximately \$700,000 to move the fuel system.

Chairman Tikkanen stated the fuel system couldn't be moved without a terminal study.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz, and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to earmark \$200,000 of ARPA funds to initiate an Airport Terminal Study.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

b. Parking Deck & 5th Floor Admin Office a/c & Mini split a/c unit replacements

Commissioner Codere stated he did not receive information from the Building Manager.

Administrator Bjorn discussed the condenser under the parking deck that covers the a/c services in Probate Court. Tom Bingham is working with the HVAC companies. The radiated heat has been fixed in the hallway near Probate Court. Bids have come in way lower than anticipated for the rooftop.

Todd LaRoux, Building Department, discussed the mini split, and the stated the motor broke, and the vendor cannot get parts. The unit under the deck over the years have been ruined by water. The units are as old as the units on the roof. It is estimated to cost between \$22,000 and \$25,000 to update the entire system.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Codere, and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to earmark \$25,000 of ARPA funds for the parking deck and mini split in the Administrator's Office.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

c. Childcare Initiative

Tabled until the December 13, 2022 meeting.

d. Emergency Spill Response Unit

Chris VanArsdale, Emergency Measures, discussed the spill in 2018 by the Sturgeon River Bridge in Chassell and the spill in Hancock in June 2020. On both spills, the County was lucky the right people were there at the right time. He discussed the County having a countywide resource available for the public works to be able to grab the storm drain covers. A map of the storm drains was included. Covers are \$400.00. Equipment would be self-sustaining and a one (1) time purchase. A trailer will also be needed. In both cities, the public workers would deploy the storm drain covers. Some training would be required. It would cover land and water.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Codere, and seconded by Commissioner Britz to earmark \$30,000 of ARPA funds for an Emergency Spill Response Unit.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

2. Program E Defined Benefit Adoption Agreement 1 Jan 2023-\$161,237

Administrator Bjorn explained that the County does not have an option to reduce or eliminate the 2% for the retirees.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to authorize a payment of \$161,237 for the retirees as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Codere 4.

NO: None 0.

ABSTAIN: Britz 1.

New Business:

1. CCMH Presentation, Mike Bach Executive Director

Mike Bach, Executive Director at CCMH, gave a presentation/overview to the Board on the Copper Country Mental Health history. They currently have 200 employees and service four (4) counties. They have outpatient programs. 24/7 acute services. Community and residential services. 9 group homes. They are in need of workers.

2. Brian Harrison-Home Health Care and Auto Insurance Reform Presentation (Zoom)

Brian Harrison was by Zoom and discussed how Houghton County residents would go to their home and not a facility if they were in an auto accident. There is a reduction rate of 45% for home healthcare. 42 Counties have already adopted the Resolution.

3. Resolution #22-16 Support to Amend the Michigan Automobile Insurance Reform Act

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve Resolution #22-16 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

**RESOLUTION URGING STATE LEGISLATURE TO AMEND THE MICHIGAN
AUTO INSURANCE REFORM ACT TO AMEND THE REIMBURSEMENT CAP
FOR AUTO ACCIDENT VICTIMS AND HOME HEALTH CARE**

RESOLUTION #22-16

WHEREAS the Michigan No-Fault Auto Insurance Reform Act of 2019 introduced a fee cap, which took final effect on July 1, 2021; this cap set percentage limits on how much residential care facilities, home health care providers, and other persons can be reimbursed for providing treatment/care to auto accident victims; and

WHEREAS these reimbursement caps are 55% of the reimbursement rates that Home Care Providers were collecting in 2019;

WHEREAS, 55% of a Home Health Care provider’s 2019 collections, is an unsustainable reimbursement cap to continue caring for catastrophically injured individuals following an auto accident; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Houghton County Board of Commissioners hereby urges the Michigan Legislature to amend the Michigan No-Fault Auto Insurance Reform Act to address a sustainable fee cap (i.e. Michigan’s Workman’s Compensation Fee Cap for Ancillary Services) for Home Health Care providers, in order to uphold these benefits that have been paid for by the survivors who are currently receiving and who will receive in-home, long-term care, when purchasing an Unlimited PIP Auto Insurance policy, paid by the Michigan Catastrophic Claims Association.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Houghton County Clerk/Register of Deeds is requested to forward copies of the adopted resolution to Governor Whitmer, Senator Stabenow, Senator Peters, and Congressman Bergman.

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 November, 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 November, 2022.

Jennifer Kelly
Houghton County Clerk/Register of Deeds
County of Houghton

4. UPEA-Courthouse A/C Project Bids

Karin Cooper, UP Engineering, stated there were two (2) bids from Northern Heating and RC Mechanical. RC Mechanical was the low bid of \$39,525. RC Mechanical is about 30 weeks for scheduling. It should take 2 weeks to install and complete the job.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Codere to accept the low bid from RC Mechanical of \$39,525.00 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

5. Medical Examiner-Dr. Petio Kotav, MD-FY23 Fee Increase Request

The Board discussed the increase of \$600.00 per month. The current rate is \$2,400, and the new monthly rate requested is \$3,000.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the new rate of \$3,000 per month for Dr. Petio Kotav retroactive to October 1, 2022.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

The Board asked Administrator Bjorn to contact Dr. Kotav due to the lack of response to residents that has been reported to the Board of Commissioners.

6. Veteran's Affairs Board Appointment-Paul Kitti

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to re-appoint Paul Kitti to the Veteran's Affairs Board.

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

7. Houghton County Road Commissioner Board Appointment

There were three (3) applicants-Eugene Londo-currently serves on the Board, Mark Heinonen, and Douglas Cooper.

Commissioner Britz recommended Eugene Londo as he has not missed a meeting.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to reappoint Eugene Londo to the Houghton County Road Commission Board.

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

8. Houghton County Road Commissioners Annual Compensation and Benefits

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to adopt the Houghton County Road Commissioners Annual Compensation and Benefits package as presented.

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

9. Houghton County RLF Loan Review Committee Appointments (2)

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to appoint Tracey Ward and Nathan Sturos to the Houghton County RLF Loan Review Committee.

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

10. Houghton County Arena

Mary Babcock, City of Hancock Manager, and Lisa McKenzie, Council Member, discussed the City of Hancock purchasing the Houghton County Arena for \$1.00. The MSU Extension Office and the Houghton County Fair Board will have office space for 10 years.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Codere to amend the General Fund Budget and pay the balance for the Houghton County Arena of \$380,000. The Board agrees to sell the Houghton County Arena to the City of Hancock for \$1.00 with the following deed stipulations:

1. City to provide up to 10 years of no cost to the MSU Extension Office for office space and utilities.
2. If the City of Hancock were to sell the Houghton County Arena in the future, the County retains the option to require the Houghton County Arena for \$1.00.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

11. Treasurer's Position Classification MP-10

Administrator Bjorn stated Treasurer Mattila was currently the lowest level of classification of all Elected Officials in the County.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to accept Administrator Bjorn's recommendation to reclassify Treasurer Mattila's position to a MP-10 retroactive to October 1, 2022.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

12. MIDC Contract Renewal 2022/2023

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Codere to renew the MDIC Contract for the 2022/2023 year.

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

13. Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting Schedule CY 2023

Chairman Tikkanen suggested moving the meeting time to 4:00 pm.

Commissioner Janssen suggested leaving it at 5:00 pm or later for the working people.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to accept the meeting dates as presented and change the meeting times to 4:00 pm.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 1.

14. Karhu Cyber-October 2022 Cyber Security Report-(not subject to FOIA)

Chairman Tikkanen discussed the monthly Karhu Cyber Security Report.

15. Appropriations

- a. TK Elevator Initial ARP Project Payment - \$60,307.19

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve \$60,307.19. The amount of the invoice is half of the total project costs for a prior Board approved ARP Funded Elevator Modernization Project.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

- b. National Association of Counties NACo Annual Dues-\$733.00
- c. MI Association of County Clerks-2023 Annual Dues-\$225.00

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the above as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

- d. Karhu Cyber-FY23-\$6,948.79

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve \$6,948.79 from the ARPA Funds as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

- e. IT ARP Invoices-Provantage & CDW-G Total All Invoices \$42,474.92

A Motion was made by Commissioner Codere, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve \$42,474.92 in ARPA Funds as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

L. Public Comments: (5 minute limit)

Dan Niemela addressed the Board regarding the meeting time, and congratulated the Board on their re-elections.

M. Announcements:

Commissioner Janssen had a conflict for the January meeting. The Board had discussion.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and second by Commissioner Anderson to change the January 2023 meeting date to January 17, 2023.

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

N. Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Codere and seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to adjourn at 7:25 pm.

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

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk