

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MAY 26, 2022**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Special meeting on Thursday, May 26, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. in the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton with the public in person and by Zoom.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tom Tikkanen at 1:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Tikkanen.

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 (By Zoom), District 3, Gretchen Janssen, District 4; Roy Britz, District 5.

Approval of Agenda/Additions:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz, seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the Agenda as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote: Ayes 4, Nays 0.

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

None.

F. Correspondence:

None.

G. Old Business:

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

Elizabeth Bjorn, Administrator, discussed three (3) new requests. She discussed the five (5) police cars for \$180,000 without being equipped, and \$240,000-250,000 obligated.

She explained to Commissioner Codere what the process has been for the ARPA monies. The monies must be obligated by 2024 and spent by 2025.

Commissioner Anderson discussed prioritizing funds for the IT Department, Sheriff-body cams-discussed looking into a refund by our insurance company and stated he supports the transfer station and sheriff department items.

H. New Business

1. Airport Operations

Commissioner Janssen stated a decision needs to be made by the end of the May 22, 2022. Kurt Judson stated the Western Start due date on the quote is 5/31/22. A wait list for a vehicle is approximately 18 months. The transfer station is in need of a road worthy truck. The third truck they current have is just a yard truck. There are approximately six (6) runs a day to the landfill. The total tonnage is going up. There is a need for a new

trailer as one (1) trailer was in an accident a year ago. There are 6 trips to the landfill on Mondays, and then 4-6 runs on Tuesdays-Fridays. It is an average of 90 miles for a round trip that takes 1 ½-3 hours. They currently have four (4) qualified drivers. The 1988 vehicle is not being used. The 2018 truck has approximately 140,000 miles. The 1999 truck will need to be replaced in 5-10 years.

The quote on the Benlee trailer has gone up \$6,000-7,000 since the last meeting.

There is a need for an open top container, and an oil burner for waste oil. No permits are needed.

Commissioner Codere asked the delivery date for the trailer. Kurt Judson stated it would be approximately 16-18 weeks.

Elizabeth Bjorn, Administrator, stated if no action is taken, the truck available dates change to 2025.

Chairman Tikkanen commented on the transfer station being 12-13 years old, tonnage is up, and discussed what would happen if the transfer station was shut down. It would have huge impact on the community. No investments have been done for the transfer station for a while.

The Board discussed a house being torn down in June, and 2 others before that. They also discussed concrete work needed to be done by the bins.

Chairman Tikkanen stated the operators need to be safe.

The total expenditures for the Transfer Station is approximately \$550,000.00.

Commissioner Britz commented on how the Transfer Station would not charge for oil disposal.

The Board discussed recycling and looking for positive feedback.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the requested items for the Transfer Station.

The Motion carried by the following voice vote:

YES: Janssen, Britz, Tikkanen, Codere 4.

NO: None 0.

Kurt Judson will provide Administrator Bjorn with 1 more quote.

## 2. Houghton County Sheriff Department

Chairman Tikkanen discussed four (4) requests for the following:

1. Body cameras with updating the cameras in the cars \$59,000 or \$70,000
2. Huron Street door replacement-\$10,454
3. Tasers -\$12,056
4. Radios for schools -\$101,880.00. 2 radios per school are needed. Current radios are 10 years old.

\$22,000 for all program obligations requested underneath MMRMA for body cameras, tasers, and cyber security program.

Sheriff Saaranen stated some radios currently do not work. He discussed training staff, and educating children. He feels a strong need to communicate with the schools if something happens for the safety of the children. He would like to have a deputy in every school. Body cameras have never been in cars. Cameras would be beneficial for the safety of the officers, and for the courts for evidence. He discussed a rap on a vehicle. \$12,000 for a MSP Mobile Command Center. A1998 freightliner which is a \$1

million dollar vehicle that the Sheriff Department received for free. It will arrive Saturday. He thanked the MSP for the donation. A Mobile Command Center could have been used 12-15 times in the past. Houghton County would assist other counties. The Command Center is 12' tall and 38' long. The Houghton County Road Commission has offered space to store it. He discussed radios and body cams. He would have an office policy in place requiring the officers to use them.

Administrator Bjorn discussed two (2) separate body cam quotes. Commissioner Anderson asked if some money will be reimbursed to the county for the Tasers and body cameras. It is possible for \$22,000 to be refunded to the County.

Chairman Tikkanen commented on the large efforts by Sheriff Saaranen for working on emergency communications with the schools.

Corey Rowe from the MSP initiated the Mobil Command Center for Houghton County.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve \$218,000 for all items for the Sheriff Department.

The Motion carried by the following voice vote:

YES: Britz, Janssen, Tikkanen, Codere 4.

NO: None 0.

Commissioner Britz discussed the road repair discussion with the Houghton County Road Commission and the townships.

The Board discussed scheduling a special meeting for the airport.

Kevin Harju, Houghton County Road Commission Manager, discussed a proposal for the Road Commission to match funds with the townships. He stated 9 out of 14 agreed to participate.

The Board agreed to a meeting on June 3, 2022 at 11:00 am to discuss ARPA monies. The Airport has deadlines in June.

Public Comments: \*(5 minute limit)

Joshua Saaranen, Sheriff, thanked the Board.

Kurt Judson, Transfer Station Manager, thanked the Board.

Announcements:

None.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Codere and seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to adjourn at 4:10 pm.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

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Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

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Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk