

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PUBLIC HEARING/SPECIAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 29, 2022**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Public Hearing/Special Meeting on Thursday, September 29, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. in the 5th Floor Conference Room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton and public viewing in person and by Zoom.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tom Tikkanen at 9:33 a.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, District 3; Gretchen Janssen, District 4 and Roy Britz, District 5.

Approval of Minutes:

The Board tables the minutes until the next meeting.

Approval of Agenda/Additions:

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

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

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

Brittany Bulleit, Prosecutor, addressed the Board and thanked the Board for her two (2) new employees.

Commissioner Anderson asked her if she can fill the positions for \$70,000. Prosecutor Bulleit stated she hoped she can, or she would restart thinking.

Public Hearing-Houghton County 2022-2023 Budget

a. Open Hearing

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

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

b. Discussion and Public Comment

Administrator, Elizabeth Bjorn, discussed the different numbers on the general fund this Year and Treasurer, Lisa Mattila, would transfer \$50,000 of the DTR money for the position movements. Expenditures are looking good. Fuel was a big factor this year in

the budget. Revenues were reduced. State and Federal monies are down due to funding levels. There is not much money left for emergency repairs.

Commissioner Anderson stated that KEDA was approved previously for \$20,000, and the budget report states \$10,000.

Commissioner Codere commented on the Solid Waste, and Administrator Bjorn provided the Board with a Solid Waste report. Commissioner Codere stated Waste Management is the only competition to service the community and would like to see a report on what the County pays out, and a full depreciation of expenses. Administrator Bjorn stated the auditor does the accounting depreciation for the enterprises. Commissioner Codere stated the County could not be charging enough to cover expenses, and may need to do a Capital or Sinking Fund, and that approximately \$100,000 should go into a Sinking Fund and have reinvestment terms, so the Transfer Station could go forward being self-supporting. He discussed the equipment life at the Transfer Station.

Commissioner Tikkanen stated he didn't feel the County should be in the trash business. If the County did a rate increase, it could result in illegal dumping and not all tax payers are Transfer Station users. He feels the residents want the County to go forward and keep the area clean.

Commissioner Codere discussed a 7% rate increase, if it is not correct, the County would have 15 years to correct it.

Donna Moilanen, District Court Criminal Clerk, asked by zoom why a copy of the budget is not on the County website. Administrator Bjorn stated a copy was on the table at the meeting.

c. Close hearing

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

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

Correspondence:

Administrator Bjorn stated she received an email from County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly, that she put in the Board's packet regarding reclassification for two (2) employees. Commissioner Anderson asked if both employees had between 10-20 years. Administrator Bjorn discussed the justification and funding source. Chairman Tikkanen wanted the email included in correspondence and referred the matter to the Personnel Committee.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to refer the matter to the Personnel Committee and Union and revenue source.

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

Reports:

1. Standing Committee:

Commissioner Codere reported to the Board on the following:

Canal View Board: He attended a meeting. Canal View is running low on staff. He discussed the facility being down to 127 beds, and not having enough staff to operate. They are short on CNAs and RNs. If this is not fixed within 3-4 years, the cash balance of the Canal View facility will be affected. The millage supports 9% of the revenue stream. He will meet with Chairman Tikkanen and keep him updated. He talked to Jeff Ratcliffe at KEDA this morning. He stated three (3) options were presented to the Board to reduce costs as much as possible. One was to combine the kitchens.

County Officers:

None.

Old Business:

1. American Rescue Plan (CSLFRF) \$6.8 million
 - a. Courthouse Rooftop AC Unit Replacement-UPEA

Administrator Bjorn stated UPEA did a site visit, and she talked to Karin Cooper. She discussed the preliminary engineering report provided by UPEA.

Todd LaRoux, Building Department, stated the AC Unit would cover about 60% of the building. He stated he worked with Tom Bingham and cannot find serial numbers on the current units.

Chairman Tikkanen stated the current unit is not operating adequately.

Administrator Bjorn stated the project is estimated to cost \$250,000 for engineering and equipment. She would work with UPEA to bring the numbers down, but needs the Board approval to proceed with bids. She stated she could use the emergency repairs budget to limp along the current AC unit.

Chairman Tikkanen stated it could be a \$500,000 project.

Administrator Bjorn stated \$500,000 is in the ballpark, and she would like to see a decent HVAC system in the building with good air quality.

Commissioner Codere discussed shutting down 2 floors, and discussed the air filtration system on the first and second floors.

Chairman Tikkanen stated the second floor has AC units, and there are approximately 13 AC units in the building.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to budget \$500,000 with the APRA funds and to authorize UPEA to get bids.

The Motion CARRIED by the following vote.

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

NO: None (0).

- b. Sharon Avenue Purchase Agreement

Commissioner Britz stated the new purchase price is \$1,200,000.00. He stated on Page 3, item 9, there is a November 30, 2022 contingency date, and that the Church could use the property until August 31, 2026. Item 9 states the church will pay the utilities. The County would insure the building. He discussed the Portage Township 425 Agreement, and stated he would look into it.

Commissioner Anderson stated the County should request 9 years be used now, and that the County could use the building as an Annex Building, and the County could sell the property if the jail cannot be built.

Commissioner Britz stated according to the City of Houghton minutes, the City is willing to work with the County on the Annexation.

Commissioner Codere asked if the kitchen supplies remain with the building.

Commissioner Britz stated everything remains except for the pews, and the Church will repair the roof.

The Board discussed the insurance and liability. The County would insure the building, and work with our insurance provider on this matter.

Administrator Bjorn stated MMMRA covers our buildings.

Commissioner Anderson recommended having the church add the County as an additional member on their insurance policy.

Chairman Tikkanen stated the property needs an appraisal. The Board had discussion.

Commissioner Anderson discussed editing the agreement to 9 years and wait on the appraisal. Administrator Bjorn will correct the agreement.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to authorize the Purchase Agreement with the one (1) edit of 9 years v. 50 years and earmark \$1,200,000.00 in ARPA funds contingent on the appraisal.

The Motion CARRIED by the following vote.

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

NO: None (0).

Chairman Tikkanen discussed the November 30, 2022 deadline.

Commissioner Janssen will work with Administrator Bjorn to do an appraisal.

Commissioner Codere asked what is left in the ARPA funds. Administrator Bjorn stated \$1.7 million is left.

New Business:

1. Resolution #22-14 2022-2023 General Appropriations Act

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to adopt Resolution #22-14 and to include the additional \$10,000 to KEDA for a total of \$20,000 in the budget.

The Motion CARRIED by the following vote.

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

NO: None (0).

2. Budget Amendments-4th Quarter

Administrator Bjorn requested this be postponed until the October board meeting, and the auditors are ok with this.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Codere to table the 4th Quarter Budget Amendments until the October Board meeting.

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

3. Foreclosure Sale Updates-Treasurer

Lisa Mattila, Treasurer, gave a handout to the Board, and stated by law she must give the Foreclosing Governmental Unit Report of Real Property Foreclosure Sales to the Board by September 30th. She stated for the 2020 Foreclosure year, there was 1 claim on the 2017 taxes in the amount of \$53,559.31. She discussed the balance of \$83,512.05. She

stated the Supreme Court decided anyone can go retroactive, and she currently has \$1,330,000.00 in the account, and hopes she can recoup attorney fees.

4. 911 Fund Request-Centennial Tower Study

Commissioner Britz stated the 911 Board discussed moving the equipment to the Calumet MSP tower, and that a structural analysis is needed which would cost \$2,900.00.

Undersheriff, Jon Giachino, stated the coverage should be the same.

Commissioner Anderson discussed getting a cost of the demolition of the tower or a current market value of the tower.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Codere to approve \$2,900.00 of 911 Funds for the Centennial Tower Study.

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

5. Copper Country Great Start Collaborative Presentation

Iola Brubaker gave a presentation to the Board on childcare shortage. She stated out of 1,300 children, approximately 300 have childcare, and 1,000 do not have childcare. She discussed property that is for sale next to the Canal View by Gloria Dei Church, and they are willing to sell it back for \$1.00. She is working on a Keweenaw Endowment Fund.

Commissioner Anderson asked how many square feet are needed for 60 children. Iola estimated a 5,000 to 6,000 square foot facility would be adequate.

She stated the Canal View needs 20-30 slots for children and school age children also. Most parents are in need of childcare until 8-9 pm. Canal View workers in need of daycare would get priority. Glad Tidings has a 25-30 seat childcare center. Calumet has home based providers, and there are 2 in Lake Linden. They believe Calumet, Houghton and Hancock need to expand, and the Hancock school has a plan that is in the board's packet. Michigan Tech has 2 programs, one for preschool children, and the other is the Little Huskies program. This is a for profit organization for about 48 children.

Commissioner Anderson requested seeing a business plan.

Public Comments:

Dan Niemela stated he does not agree with spending of the APRA money on the AC unit.

Nikki Jollimore, Magistrate, requested the Board put the courthouse and District Court security requests back on the table for the APRA funds, and encouraged the Board to talk to Judge Nicholas Daavettila.

Announcements:

None.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Codere and seconded by Commissioner Britz to adjourn at 11:18 am.

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

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk