

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
ORGANIZATIONAL/REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 17, 2023**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held an Organizational/Regular Meeting on Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. in the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton with the public viewing in person and by Zoom.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly at 4:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly.

Moment of Silence for former Houghton County Commissioner Jackie “Bunny” Niemi

Clerk Kelly asked everyone to have a moment of silence for Jackie “Bunny” Niemi who was a Commissioner for 20 years and served as Chairman of the Houghton County Board of Commissioners for 16 years.

Roll call:

The following commissioners responded to roll call:

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

Election:

1. Chairperson-2 Year Term

Clerk Kelly, asked for nominations for Chairman. A nomination was made by Commissioner Britz, and seconded by Commissioner Keranen for Tom Tikkanen. Clerk Kelly, asked for any other nominations. No other nominations were made.

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

Clerk Kelly, turned the meeting over to Chairman Tikkanen.

2. Vice Chairperson-1 Year Term

Chairman Tikkanen asked for nominations for Vice Chair. A nomination was made by Commissioner Keranen, and seconded by Commissioner Anderson for Roy Britz. Chairman Tikkanen asked for any other nominations. No other nominations were made.

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

Approval of Minutes:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2022 minutes as presented.

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

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Britz requested adding Appropriations #13d to the Agenda for Sheriff Deputy training to become a certified law officer.

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

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

Public Comments:

None.

Approval of Bills:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve paying the bills submitted of \$1,119,033.16.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

Correspondence:

Administrator Bjorn discussed a lot of communication regarding the opioid litigation and the funding levels going to the Counties, and correspondence from Real People Media.

Reports:

Standing Committee:

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following:

Recycling: The total for 2022 was 51.6 tons.

Solid Waste Committee: The Committee will meet every other month. The next meeting will be in the breakroom on the first floor of the courthouse on Friday, January 20<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm.

Chairman Tikkanen welcomed Commissioner Keranen to the Board.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

Expressed his condolences to the Niemi family.

Recreation Authority: He stated two bid packages have been opened. The remaining five will be opened by the end of February. They will accept another bid in the winter and another one in the spring. The DNR has completed the temporary repairs on the Bill Nichols Trail, and that trail is now open. The DNR has applied for a FEMA grant, which would cover approximately 75% of the repairs.

Douglas Houghton Falls: They received a \$300,000 trust fund grant towards a \$1.5 million project. McLain State Park will manage the project.

WUPPDR: WUPPDR received 48 applications in Houghton County. People can still apply until January 25, 2023 on the WUPPDR website.

City of Hancock: The City received an EDC Grant. Bacco will be working on a 40-acre parcel near the Hancock High School.

He discussed copper mining projects with Highland Copper.

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following:

Houghton County Road Commission: The total snowfall is 108.5" through December. He discussed the \$1.3 million in ARPA funds for township roads and provided a report to the Board.

He commended the Road Commission for their labor and equipment and money they spent on the 2.7 miles on Green Acres Road.

Sheriff Department: He informed the Board that the jail camera and the courthouse camera are failing and obsolete. He stated it is a liability issue. Chris VanArsdale and Sheriff Saaranen are working on a plan and will get an estimate as to the cost. He discussed sending a corrections office to Oakland County for police officer training.

Chairman Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

WUPPDR: The Board has elected their officers. He congratulated Brad Barnette for being appointed to the State Board of Visitors Bureau.

County Officers:

Clerk Kelly informed the Board that cities and townships have been billed for the 2022 election year. The election vendor billed the one City and two Townships for their ballots for the May 2022 election directly. The County paid \$28,630.92 in ballots for August and November 2022 elections. The total reimbursement the County will receive from the 2 cities and 16 townships will be \$24,419.30 for the May, August and November 2022 elections.

Clerk Kelly informed the Board that she has been appointed to four Committees through the County Clerk's Association.

Sheriff Saaranen stated there have been 3,077 complaints for 2022, and currently there are 26 inmates. He discussed the police academy and stated this is budgeted under payroll and benefits to send a correction officer to the police academy. The corrections officer has been employed for 4 years with the Sheriff Department and has a criminal justice degree.

Kim from Canal View stated no masks were required on Monday at Canal View. Everyone was happy. They are looking to upgrade the calling system. She discussed the employee retention credit. The requirements for individuals checking into visit the Canal View are still in place.

Tanya Rule, Health Department discussed the code change. 770 people viewed the website, and 26 left public comment. 20 were in support, and 6 were opposed. She discussed the oversight committee for sewers. They received 40 telephone calls from septic installers.

Commissioner Keranen asked why a new code is needed. Tanya explained the old code was 20 years old, and a new one is needed under waste management. The DNR has sent them a letter of support. The next public hearing will be on Monday, January 23, 2023 at 6:00 pm at the Hancock office.

Dennis Hext, Airport Manager, stated the Charters are again happening. He discussed the new terminal project. Boarding's have been delayed at times, and the numbers have decreased some, but everything is going well.

Gene LaRochelle, VA Office, discussed the handout in the Boards packets. He stated they work one on one with Veterans and even knock on doors.

Joe Battsfore, VA Office, stated a new program has been implemented for Veterans to ride free. Effective 2019, Veteran spouses can now be on the marker at the cemeteries.

Todd LaRoux, Building Inspector, stated he was working with Tom Bingham and the new counter will begin to be put in on February 3<sup>rd</sup> in the County Clerk's Office.

Old Business:

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

a. Sharon Avenue Property Architectural/Engineering Professional Services

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to earmark \$25,000 in ARPA funds for a plan for when the church moves to the new facility and to be able to move District Court, and Probate/Family Court as soon as possible.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

Administrator Bjorn will follow up with OHM.

- b. Courthouse District Court Security Upgrades Architectural/Engineering Professional Services
- &
- c. Courthouse Single-Point Entry Architectural/Engineering Professional Services

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to have UP Engineering design the plans and accept bids for the District Court Security Upgrades and the Courthouse Single-Point Entry, and the 2 air conditioning upgrades in the building.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

New Business:

#### 1. Rules of Order

A Motion to adopt the Rules of Order as presented was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz.

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

#### 2. Houghton County Road Commission 10-year millage Renewal Resolution #23-1

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to adopt Resolution #23-1 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

#### 3. CDBG Homebuyer Program-Homeowner, Jessica Nicely

The Board discussed Jessica Nicely wanting to do an addition on her foster care home and have Houghton County placed 2<sup>nd</sup> as the lien holder.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve Houghton County being the 2<sup>nd</sup> lien holder on Jessica Nicely's home improvement loan.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

#### 4. UPCAP 2023 Board of Directors Nomination

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to appoint Gretchen Janssen to the UPCAP Board of Directors.

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

5. FY23 MSU Extension Agreement-\$42,500

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the MSU Extension Agreement for \$42,500 as presented for the 2023 Fiscal Year.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

6. FY23 Northcare Network Service Agreement

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the Northcare Agreement for the 2023 Fiscal Year.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

7. Medical Examiner Appointment-4 Year Appointment

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve Doctor Kotov for a 4-year appointment..

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

8. Laurium 911 Building

Commissioner Britz said a small portion of the building is used at this time. The building has a generator.

Sheriff Saaranen stated a site evaluation needs to be done to see if work needs to be done on the tower. The cost could be \$110,000 to \$130,000. Commissioner Janssen questioned if the tower makes the property less sellable. Commissioner Anderson said the tower could be worth more than the building. Chris VanArsdale stated the income from the tower could pay someone's mortgage. Chairman Tikkanen asked Commissioner Janssen to work with Chris VanArsdale and Sheriff Saaranen to follow up with the tenant and establish the value and contact Rangetown Communications.

9. 2023 MAC Legislative Conference April 24<sup>th</sup> thru the 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023-Lansing

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to authorize those Commissioners, Administrator Bjorn, and Clerk Kelly if they are able to attend the Conference.

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

Anyone interested must email Administrator Bjorn before February 15, 2023.

10. 2022 December Karhu Cyber Security Report-(FOUO not subject to FOIA)

Chairman Tikkanen advised the Board to review the December report.

11. Travel

- a. Equalization-Michigan Tax Commission Training and Exams

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the Equalization Department to use the County car.

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

### 13. Appropriations

- a. Quarterly Western UP Health Department- \$68,024.50

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the above-mentioned Appropriation as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

- b. Karhu Cyber ARPA Funds-\$8,118.30

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the ARPA Funds payment of \$8,118.30 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

- c. 2023 MI FOC Annual Dues \$625.00

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the above-mentioned Appropriation as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

- d. Sheriff Department-Corrections Officer to attend Police Academy

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to authorize Houghton County Sheriff Department to send Corrections Officer Brett Beauchamp to MCOLS.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

### Public Comments:

Tim Gasperich welcomed Commissioner Keranen.

### Announcements:

Administrator Bjorn wanted all Courthouse employees to know that the auditors are here for the next 2 weeks.

### Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adjourn at 5:50 p.m.

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