

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 14, 2023**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. in the 5th 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 Chairman Tikkanen at 4:00 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; Joel Keranen, District 2; Glenn Anderson, District 3; Gretchen Janssen, District 4; Roy Britz, District 5.

Approval of Minutes February 14th Regular Meeting & March 2nd Special Meeting:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2023 and March 2, 2023 minutes as presented.

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

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Anderson requested a moment of silence be added to the Agenda for former Drain Commissioner, Ray Niemi, who passed away, and K12 be added for a Motion of appreciation and recognition for Judge Goodman for 14 years and 3 months of service.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to adopt the Agenda as presented with the two (2) additions.

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

Moment of Silence:

The Board had a moment of silence for former Drain Commissioner Ray Niemi.

Public Comments:

None.

Approval of Bills -\$2,852,265.17:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve paying the bills submitted of \$2,852,265.17.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

Correspondence:

Administrator Bjorn discussed the Building Department handout, and an OEM update in the board's packets.

Reports:

Standing Committee:

Commissioner Keranen had nothing to report to the Board.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

He discussed the passing of Ray Niemi. He was a teacher and the Drain Commissioner for Houghton County for 20 years.

Houghton County Arena: The City of Hancock now owns the Houghton County Arena.

There should be one (1) more recreational marijuana facility starting in 2023, and maybe one (1) more. During 2021-2022 counties in Michigan received \$60 million in recreational marijuana monies.

The DNR is waiting on engineers and bid packages regarding the trails.

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following:

Houghton County Road Commission: There has been 147.7" of snow through January 2023. Four (4) road projects have been completed and twelve (12) more townships have signed agreements in place that should be completed in the next couple of years.

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following:

Recycling: The total for February 2023 was 4.58 tons. In 2022, February's total was 2.41. This year we are at 9.9 tons compared to 4.89 tons last year.

Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District: There will be a tree sale with on April 15th. People can visit their website for more information. Tree pick up will be in May.

There will be a rally on March 15th on the corner of M-26 and Razorback Drive regarding Walmart. David Sim is the contact person and can be reached at 482-2000.

Chairman Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

Jail: There is a leak in the jail roof. Traverse Engineering will inspect the roof soon.

Canal View: Kim Salmi resigned. A retired Administrator may serve as an interim Administrator until one (1) is hired.

He discussed the handout in the Board's packets for a Road to Recovery program showing that nursing homes need approximately four (4) years to get back to normal. He encourages everyone to contact the legislatures to vote for the Care for our Seniors Act.

He discussed correspondence from the Department of Agriculture for 78 acres of land in Duncan Township that the State is looking to purchase. The property is on the East Branch of the Ontonagon River.

He received an unsigned Gazette article from someone in Calumet Township. He stated he wanted to respond publicly. He said the Houghton County Building Department is functioning fantastically. If anyone has problems with their local municipalities.

County Officers:

Sheriff Saaranen stated there have been 460 complaints for 2023, and currently there are 24 inmates. There will be two (2) correction officer positions opening due to them retiring. He

received 14 applications and will begin interviews on Wednesday. MCOLS had agreed to reimburse Houghton County \$4,000 towards the current person going to training, but now MCOLS increased it \$20,000, so Houghton County will receive \$24,000.

Todd LaRoux, Building Inspector, discussed the handout he provided to the Board on the 2017-2022 Annual totals for the Building Department.

Old Business:

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

Nothing was discussed by the Board.

2. Waste Management Service Agreement Amendment eff. April 1, 2023

Commissioner Janssen stated Waste Management responded to the Houghton County Agreement. They amended the agreement with giving Waste Management right for first refusal.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the amended agreement by Waste Management effective April 1, 2023.

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

New Business:

1. WUPHD-Environmental Health Code

Tanya Rule updated the Board on the Health Code that is done approximately every 20 years. Previous Codes have been done in 1974, 1998 and 2023. She stated she provided the Board with letters of support, and a summary of documents that were also made available to the public.

Commissioner Keranen stated he voted against the code as he never saw a printed version of the revised Code.

Commissioner Britz discussed the \$500 appeal fee.

Tanya Rules discussed the codes for septic that were given to the Board as a handout in their packets.

Chairman Tikkanen stated the Board will address this matter next month.

2. Darkstore Legislation Support Resolution #23-4

Commissioner Anderson discussed the contract between Walmart and the City of Houghton. There will be a protest on Wednesday, March 15th at 2:00 pm at the corner of Razorback Drive and M-26.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to adopt Resolution #23-4 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

**RESOLUTION 23-04
SUPPORTING DARK STORE LEGISLATION**

WHEREAS, Representative of Michigan's 38th Senate District, Senator Ed McBroom, seeks to introduce two bills, Senate Bill Numbers 19 and 20, intended to address the method by which the Michigan Tax Tribunal values certain properties, including big box and junior box stores, commonly referred to as the "Dark Store" theory of value; and

WHEREAS, the Tax Tribunal, on numerous occasions, has valued such properties through comparisons to sales of other big box or junior box stores that have “gone dark,” i.e., have failed to produce retail sales due to their location in the market; and

WHEREAS, the Tax Tribunal has also valued box stores by comparisons to sales of other box stores that were sold within a private deed restriction in place, which precluded the use of the sold box store for use as a box store; and

WHEREAS, these Tax Tribunal decisions across the state have resulted in artificially reduced values for thriving box stores due to comparisons to stores that either failed or were sold for some other secondary purpose, such as redevelopment for some other commercial use; and

WHEREAS, in Houghton County the application of the “Dark Store” method will lead to the reduction of funding for certain County programs; and

WHEREAS, the legislation seeks to remedy these issues by requiring the Tax Tribunal to assure that box stores are valid according to their “highest and best use” by excluding the use of sale comparables sold with private restrictions in place if those restrictions substantially impair the comparable’s highest and best use as compared to the property being valued; and

WHEREAS, the legislation seeks to require the use of sale comparable that are adequately comparable to the property being valued.

THEREFORE, the Board of Commissioners of Houghton County, Michigan, resolves as follows:

1. The Houghton County Board of Commissioners hereby supports the legislation to be introduced by Senator McBroom, Senate Bill Numbers 19 and 20.
2. Any resolutions that are inconsistent with this Resolution are hereby repealed to the extent necessary to give this Resolution full force and effect.

Adopted this 14th day of March, 2023.

Motion Moved By: Commissioner Anderson

Motion Supported By: Commissioner Janssen

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Keranen, Britz (5).

No: None (0).

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 14th day of March, 2023 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 14th day of March, 2023.

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

3. Houghton County 911 Advisory Board

Commissioner Britz discussed the 911 Advisory Board looking to move the one tower from the Laurium property to the Centennial (Bumbletown) location. It will require some new equipment.

Undersheriff, Jon Giachino stated it would cost \$100,000.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to approve \$100,385 for movement of the tower from Laurium to the Centennial location from the 911 Fund. This includes all equipment and the movement of the tower.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

Commissioner Britz discussed Hancock City supplying 3 radios and 2 mobile car tablets for the vehicles for \$48,000.00, and \$7,000.00 for a mobile radio for Mercy Ambulance.

He also stated the 911 Board approved a \$3.00 an hour wage increase for the 911 Assistant Coordinator.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to approve all of the above-items per the 911 Advisory Boards recommendations.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Britz, Keranen, Anderson, Janssen 4.

NO: Tikkanen 1.

Commissioner Janssen asked how many hours Todd LaRoux worked on nights and weekend as the 911 Coordinator. Todd stated he works 80-100 hours per year.

4. Portage Canal Feasibility Study Application

Administrator Bjorn discussed letters of support for the feasibility study and reaching out to Senator Debbie Stabenow.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to apply for the Portage Canal Feasibility Study Application through Senator Debbie Stabenow's Office as presented.

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

5. Karhu Cyber February Report-(FOUO) not subject to FOIA

Chairman Tikkanen stated the report was confidential and not subject to FOIA.

6. Houghton County Jury Board Appointments

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to reappoint Joan Antila, Becky Bruin-Slot and Linda Neumann for six (6) year terms to the Houghton County Jury Board per Judge Goodman's recommendation.

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

7. Budget Amendments-2nd Qtr

Administrator Bjorn informed the Board of the budget amendments for Solid Waste Transfer Fund and the Treatment Court.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the 2nd Quarter Budget Amendments as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

8. Opioid Participate CVS, Walgreens, WalMart, Teva and Allergan

Administrator Bjorn advised the Board to review the information in their packets.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to join the class action lawsuit with the four (4) pharmacies through Smith and Johnson as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

Commissioner Britz will follow up with Judge Daavettila and Keith Anderson to coordinate programs for the future monies.

9. VA Board Re-Appointments

Administrator Bjorn stated the VA Services Board was looking to reappoint Joe Snow and Robert Jeannotte who is deployed at this time to two (2) year appointments to the VA Board.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to reappoint Joe Snow and Master Sargent Robert Jeannotte to the VA Board for two (2) year terms.

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

10. Travel

- a. Todd LaRoux-Building Official Required Training \$1,045.00**
- b. Jennifer Kelly-UCOA Annual Legislative Conference \$1,573.00**
- c. District Court \$1,635.00**

Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to authorize the above-mentioned Travel requests as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

11. Appropriations:

- a. 2023 UPACC dues \$174.00**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the 2023 UPACC dues of \$174.00 as presented.

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

b. OHM Professional Services Agreement-ARPA Funds \$25K

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the OHM payment of \$25,000 with ARPA funds as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

c. Karhu Cyber-ARPA Funds \$8,809.30

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the \$8,809.30 payment to Karhu Cyber with ARPA funds as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

d. Copper Country Community Mental Health \$41,123.73

Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the payment of \$41,123.73 to Copper Country Community Mental Health as presented.

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

12. Recognition of Honorable Charles Goodman

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to do a recognition and appreciation for Honorable Charles Goodman for his 14 years and 3 months of service.

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

Commissioner Anderson stated Judge Goodman covered Houghton, Baraga and Keweenaw Counties. The Governor will appoint the new Houghton County Circuit Court Judge. The appointed Judge will have to run in 2024 for a 2-year term, and then run again in 2026 for a 6-year term.

Public Comments:

Teresa Kariniemi encouraged the Board to vote no on the proposed Health Code.

Derek Bradway provided the Board with a handout regarding the proposed Health Code.

Karen Timmonen the hazards with the proposed Health Code.

Keith Wanhala addressed the Board regarding the roads in Portage Township.

Iola Brubaker stated she would have a childcare update at the April Board meeting.

Announcements:

Commissioner Janssen stated the flyers on the table were for the public if anyone was interested.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adjourn at 5:58 p.m.

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

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk