

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
PUBLIC HEARINGS & REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2023**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Public Hearing and a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, September 12, 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 through Microsoft Teams.

**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 August 15, 2023 Regular Meeting:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2023 minutes as presented.

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

**Approval of Agenda/Additions:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the Agenda as presented.

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

**Public Comments:**

None.

**Public Hearing-CDBG Closeout Quincy MFG, LLC:**

a. Open Hearing

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to open the Public Hearing.

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

b. Discussion and Public Comment

Sam with KEDA discussed the Closeout of the \$70,000 Loan for Quincy MFG, LLC and the 3 jobs.

c. Close Hearing

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

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

**Approval of Bills -\$6,170,178.39:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to approve paying the bills submitted of \$6,170,178.39.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

**Correspondence:**

Administrator Larson discussed correspondence from the Keweenaw Waterway website stating the bridge will not go up or down at the top and bottom of the hour and this will be permanent with a Federal CFR on September 29, 2023.

**Reports:**

**Standing Committee:**

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following:

Transfer Station: She congratulated Curt Judson and his team for taking in 2,000 tons of garbage. There were 93 loads sent to Greenland. Recycling totals were 4.8 tons in August 2023 compared to 3.24 tons in August 2022.

WUPPDR-She discussed a Michigan First Housing Plan that was done in 2022. There is a Wester UP Action Plan and survey that will be available on September 25<sup>th</sup>.

UPCAP Meeting: She stated Houghton County will receive \$239,000 in 2023 for Community Action Senior Citizen meals. There is \$300,000 grant available to apply at UPCAP for an accessibility ramp. One million dollars is available to promote farmers and fisheries.

Joel Keranen reported to the Board on the following:

Houghton County Planning Commission: He felt there were good candidates who applied for the vacancies.

Transfer Station: There is a leak in the plow truck.

Health Department: No meeting was held due to no quorum.

Treatment Court/District Court: He attended a graduation day in Treatment Court.

Commissioner Anderson had nothing to report to the Board.

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following:

Treatment Court/District Court: He stated he had positive feedback from a Treatment Court participant and enjoyed attending the graduation ceremony.

Chairman Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

Village of Calumet: Architects are redeveloping a concept for the fire site. There is a tentatively set date of October 30 for a community event that will be held in the Calumet Theatre Ballroom.

County Recreation Authority: During a meeting, the DNR stated the trail between Dollar Bay and Lake Linden will be open for this year's snowmobile season. He thanked the Legislatures and the DNR.

Douglas Houghton Falls: The DNR is working on a community forum in late October 2023 for phased development and parking.

Canal View: He congratulated Adam Laplander on being the new Administrator. There are currently 123 residents and about 90 people on a waiting list.

Veterans Office: He attended the Veteran Resource Fair at the Colosseum. There was a large attendance. The Veterans Office applied for a \$50,000 grant for next year's event. Amy Gregersen applied for a Humana Scholarship. If she is successful, she will receive VFW skill level training.

### **County Officers:**

Josh Saaranen, Sheriff, stated the department has been on the roads and working at the schools. There are currently 20 inmates and they have had 1940 calls.

Chris VanArsdale, Direct of the Office of Emergency Measures, discussed Section 19 for a Army Corp of Engineers grant project for a watershed. It will take 5-6 years to complete the projects.

Todd LaRoux, Building Department Manager, there have been 340 building permits this year. Kentucky Fried Chicken is close to opening.

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk/Register of Deeds, informed the Board she had submitted a Grant Application to the State for the 9 Day Early Voting Center in the amount of \$85,000 plus an additional \$40,000 for vendor support. The Voting Center will be at the City of Houghton Center from 8 am to 4 pm for the 9 days prior to the state and federal elections in 2024. There must be new equipment. The County Election Commission was meeting on Thursday to approve a Resolution for the Voting Center. She stated she saved the County an additional \$32,000 with her software vendor.

### **Old Business:**

None.

### **New Business:**

#### **1. Resolution 23-16 State Disaster Fund Grant**

Chris VanArsdale discussed the Resolution, application, estimates and receipts. It is a \$500,000 reimbursement for the 2023 flood. FEMA has denied Houghton's request and the State is appealing the decision.

Commissioner Keranen asked to add a 0 to the Resolution , so the correct Houghton County total is \$18.073.066.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve Resolution #23-16 with the 1 correction as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

## **STATE DISASTER CONTINGENCY FUND GRANT RESOLUTION Resolution #23-16**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF HOUGHTON  
COUNTY,**

**WHEREAS**, HOUGHTON COUNTY, Michigan, is a political subdivision within the State of Michigan with an official Emergency Operations plan in compliance with Section 19 of the Emergency Management Act, Act 390, Public Acts of 1976, as amended.

**WHEREAS**, HOUGHTON COUNTY, sustained severe losses of major proportions brought on by the Spring 2023 Flooding resulting in the following conditions: infrastructure damage caused by rapid snow melt causing abandoned railroad grades- acting as earthen dams- to fail. Significant erosion caused by fast moving melt waters overwhelmed storm sewer and storm water systems causing road damage, including washouts and closures due to debris deposited on the roadways (in excess of 12” of silt in some locations).

**WHEREAS**, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS certifies that the County Emergency Operations Plan was implemented at the onset of the disaster at 18:00 April 11, 2023 and all applicable disaster relief forces identified therein were exhausted.

**WHEREAS**, as a direct result of the disaster, public damage and expenditures were extraordinary and place an unreasonably great financial burden on HOUGHTON COUNTY totaling \$18,073,066

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** THAT THE HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS requests the Governor authorize a grant to the COUNTY OF HOUGHTON from the State Disaster Contingency Fund pursuant to Section 19, Act 390, Public Acts of 1976, as amended.

**FURTHERMORE**, Kevin Harju, Houghton County Road Engineer is authorized to execute for and on behalf of Houghton County the application for financial assistance and to provide to the State any information required for that purpose.  
Moved by Commissioner:

Supported by Commissioner:

Roll Call Vote:  
Yes:  
No:  
Motion Carried.

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Tikkanen, Chairman  
Houghton County Board of Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I, Jennifer Kelly, Clerk of Houghton County, do hereby certify and set my seal to the above Resolution as adopted September 12, 2023, at the Houghton County Courthouse, 401 East Houghton Avenue, Houghton, MI 49931.

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Jennifer Kelly, Houghton County Clerk

## **2. MDIC Contract Approval**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the MDIC Contract as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Janssen, Britz, Tikkanen, Anderson, Keranen 5.  
NO: None. 0

### **3. 2024 County Veteran Service Fund Grant Approval**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the 2024 County Veteran Service Fund Grant as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

### **4. Planning Commission Appointment(s)**

Commissioner Keranen stated Diane St. Amour has moved away and that getting a quorum has been difficult due to a lack of attendance. Evan McDonald's position was also to be filled.

#### **Environmental:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to appoint Michael J. Erickson to the Houghton County Planning Commission.

Commissioner Anderson stated he did not know Mike Erickson, but knows Mary Kaminski.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Keranen, Britz, Tikkanen 3.

NO: Anderson, Janssen 2.

#### **Economic Development & Tourism:**

The applicants were Mark Larson, Frank Fiala and Steven Aho

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to appoint Steve Aho to the Houghton County Planning Commission.

Commissioner Anderson stated he preferred Frank Fiala with his tourism experience.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Keranen, Britz, Tikkanen 3.

NO: Anderson, Janssen 2.

### **5. County Canvassers Seats**

The Board voted by paper ballot.

Sharon Foix and Joan Antila received the most votes, and were therefore reappointed to the Houghton County Canvassing Board for four (4) year terms.

Clerk Kelly will inform the Canvassers.

### **6. UPCAP Dues 2024 Request**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the 2024 UPCAP Dues of \$1,100.00 as presented.

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

### **7. Schedule FY 24 Budget Public Hearing**

The Board agreed to schedule a Special meeting on Thursday, September 21, 2023 at 12:00 pm.

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

**8. Travel**

- a. **Todd LaRoux-Code Officials Annual Conference-\$1,000**
- b. **IT Department UP Cyber Security and Incident Response Workshop \$450**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the travel requests as presented.

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

**9. Appropriations**

- a. **Karhu Cyber \$9,030.94**
- b. **Copper Country Community Mental Health \$41,123.73**
- c. **Michigan Association of Townships-\$505**

**a. Karhu Cyber**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve Karhu Cyber payment as presented. We should receive cyber grants through MMMRA, and any future payments shall go through the General Fund effective October 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

**b & c. Copper Country Community Mental Health \$41,123.73 & Michigan Association of Townships \$505.00.**

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

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

**Public Comments:**

Martha Dugdale addressed the Board about a Bill Governor Whitmer signed about Solar and Wind Developments. Administrator Larson stated the Board could consider a Resolution in opposition when the Bill is passed as other Counties are also addressing this matter.

Faith Morrison asked the Board if the Budget will put on the website in advance of the Special meeting. Administrator Larson stated he would have it on the website prior to the meeting.

Jay Ruohonen from Stanton Township stated MTA is in favor of opposing the Solar and Wind Development Bill also.

Chairman Tikkanen congratulated the Four Season Recreational efforts for the development of Swedetown. He thanked the Board, Administrator Larson and the Register of Deeds Office.

**Announcements:**

None.

**Adjournment:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adjourn at 5:07 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