

**HOUGHTON COUNTY APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 21, 2025**

The Houghton County Appointment Committee held an Appointment Committee meeting on Monday, April 21, 2025, in the 5th Floor Conference room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton with public attending in person and by Microsoft Teams.

Call to Order:

Judge Strome called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

The Committee did the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call:

The following Committee members responded to roll call done by Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk:

Fraser Strome-Probate Judge, Dan Helmer-Prosecuting Attorney and Jennifer Kelly-County Clerk.

Also in attendance was Todd LaRoux-Building Department Manager, Lindsay Ringuette from EGLE, John Pekkala-Drain Commissioner and Renee Cunningham, Chief Deputy County Clerk who was doing the minutes. We had Max Jouppe by Microsoft Teams.

Approval of Agenda:

The Committee agreed to add 4a to the Agenda to approve minutes.

Motion was made by Daniel Helmer and seconded by Fraser Strome to approve the Agenda with the one (1) correction.

The Motion carried by a voice vote: Ayes 3, Nays 0.

Approval of 4/10/25 Minutes:

Motion was made by Daniel Helmer and seconded by Fraser Strome to approve the April 10, 2025 minutes as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote of: Ayes 3, Nays 0.

Public Comments:

Judge Strome discussed and reviewed the 5 previous applications from the first meeting. He stated that Jenifer had received 5 additional applications with John Gierke also in the first set of applications.

Clerk Kelly opened the envelopes and presented them to the Committee. First was from Max Jouppe and he has both certifications, second was Tony Laux and did not state if he has certifications or is taking the certification, third was from Brian Therrian and is taking the certification, fourth was Todd Larson and is taking the certification, and fifth was John Gierke and is taking the certification and included a letter with his application.

John Pekkala commented that among other duties, he must follow Court Ordered duties other then certifications. The Drain Commissioner must abide by Court Orders.

Review applications and resumes for Houghton County Drain Commissioner:

The Committee received a total of 9 candidates. Judge Strome discussed the first 5 candidates who submitted applications before the first meeting. Prosecutor Helmer stated out of the first 5 candidates 2 are experienced in this area and recommended interviewing John Gierke and Nolan Miles. He wanted everyone to know that Nolan Miles's wife, Angela, works in his office.

Motion was made by Daniel Helmer and seconded by Fraser Strome to interview Nolan Miles and John Gierke.

The Motion carried by a voice vote of: Ayes 3, Nays 0.

The Committee discussed Max Jouppe who has both certifications.

Motion was made by Daniel Helmer and seconded by Fraser Strome to interview Max Jouppe.

The Motion carried by a voice vote of: Ayes 3, Nays 0.

The Committee discussed Todd Larson. He has signed up for both tests and is a life long resident of the area and has experience in the field.

Motion was made by Daniel Helmer and seconded by Fraser Strome to interview Todd Larson.

The Motion carried by a voice vote of: Ayes 3, Nays 0.

The Committee discussed Brian Therrian. He has a graduate of MTU and has experience in construction.

Motion was made by Daniel Helmer and seconded by Fraser Strome to interview Brian Therrian.

The Motion carried by a voice vote of: Ayes 3, Nays 0.

The Committee discussed Tony Laux. None of his documents stated that he is signed up for the certifications or if he has the certifications.

Motion was made by Daniel Helmer and seconded by Fraser Strome to not interview Tony Laux.

The Motion carried by a voice vote of: Ayes 3, Nays 0.

Prosecutor Helmer stated that he received a call from Nolan Miles before the meeting.

The Committee discussed the interview questions. Clerk Kelly will type up the questions and provide them to the candidates and schedule their interviews.

John Pekkala discussed how the Drain Commissioner should be able to write grants and get monies. He agreed to attend the April 28th meeting and answer questions and give a brief explanation as to his job to each candidate.

The Committee agreed to one-half hour interview per candidate.

Next Meeting-April 28, 2025 at 10:00 am for interviews:

The Committee will meet on April 28th at 10:00 am to conduct the 5 interviews.

Public Comments:

Judge Strome thanked John Pekkala for all of his hard work and stated that if someone is not certified, Prosecutor Helmer and Clerk Kelly have the approval to have John Pekkala to do permit work and have a service agreement in place,

but to wait until the new person is hired to see how qualified they are.

Judge Strome discussed the possibility of the appointed candidate not possessing the certifications. John Pekkala stated he is willing to help, but he will only work for so many hours.

John Pekkala stated he averaged 30 hours per week at times.

The Committee discussed that most candidates have full time jobs and that the appointed candidate will have to run in 2026 and 2028.

Todd LaRoux stated the Drain Commissioner works with the Building Department, and they communicate by email with the Drain Commissioner. The SESE permits are done by the Drain Commissioner. The candidate could do them after working hours, and Sarah can complete her side the next morning.

Adjournment:

Prosecutor Helmer made a Motion to close the meeting with a second from Judge Strome at 4:15 p.m..

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 3, Nays 0.

Fraser Strome

Daniel Helmer

Jennifer Kelly