

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MAY 29, 2025**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Special Meeting on Thursday, May 29, 2025 at 3:00 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 Microsoft Teams.

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tikkanen at 3:00 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 County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly:

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

Absent: Joel Keranen, District 2.

**Approval of Minutes: May 13, 2025, Regular Meeting**

Commissioner Janssen asked that a correction be made under her report. It should say 61% of adults who work for UPCAP are on Medicaid.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the May 13<sup>th</sup> minutes with the 1 change as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

**Approval of Agenda/Additions:**

Commissioner Anderson asked for his 6 Motions be added to the agenda and for the closed session be eliminated.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the agenda with adding the 6 Motions and eliminating the closed session as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

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

Faith Morrison requested the Motions be read.

Administrator Rheault read the 6 Motions. Clerk Kelly informed the Board that people could not hear on Microsoft Teams. Administrator Rheault confirmed that everything was working and read the 6 Motions again.

David Gemignani stated their business would close on Friday if they did not receive money from Houghton County.

Nicholas Daavettila, 97<sup>th</sup> District Court Judge, stated he read the contact with the Tri County Public Defenders and stated any discrepancies could be dealt with the District or Circuit Court Judge and attempt mediation to find out where the dispute lies, who is at fault. He feels the Board needs to sit down with everyone and resolve this matter.

Timothy Brennan, Chief Circuit Court Judge, stated he has concerns for indigent defense.

**Approval of Bills:**

None.

**Correspondence:**

None.

**Old Business:**

None.

**New Business:**

**1. Closed Session-TCPD Update**

The Closed Session was eliminated.

Commissioner Anderson stated the MDIC froze the County grant money. The County had been requesting documents from Tri County Public Defenders for three (3) months. Those requested document have now been received, and the audit can begin. MDIC wants all documents from 2018 until now. This is a county problem. No one is questioning the quality or competency of the Tri County Public Defenders.

Chairman Tikkanen discussed an Ad Hoc Committee. He stated the Finance Committee, County Treasurer and Administrator, Joe Magnan, Tri County Public Defenders and the Judges should be all on the Committee.

Commissioner Anderson stated the new contract should include a report/review must be done quarterly.

**Motion #5**

Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to appoint Commissioner Keranen, Commissioner Anderson and Treasurer Mattila to be a part of the Ad Hoc Committee to review and amend the FY2026 TCP County contract.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

**Motion #6**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve paying \$103,717.79 to the Tri County Public Defenders for the January 2025 expenses.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Britz 4.

NO: None 0.

ABSENT: Keranen 1.

**Motion #2**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to have Joe Mangan continue working and submit the FSR's to MDIC for review and computation for the years 2018 until now. The County agrees to \$4,595.00 per month for a maximum of two (2) months.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

**Motion #4-**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to authorize payment of \$649,904.50 to Tri County Public Defenders for FY2024-2025 contingent upon any adjustments for the financial audit that is currently underway.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Britz 4.

NO: None 0.

ABSENT: Keranen 1.

Motion #3-

Commissioner Anderson discussed the repayment of \$149,294.43 to the County from the Tri County Public Defenders. They would pay \$74,647.22 by the end of the fiscal year (9/30/25), and \$74,647.21 by the end of the next fiscal year (9/30/26). MDIC has said that they cannot use MDIC money to pay the County back.

## 2. Houghton County Phone Line Quotes

Chairman Tikkanen discussed problems with the phone system. The County will work with Baraga Telephone Company. The estimated cost for new telephones is \$50,000.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to agree to a service contract with Baraga Telephone to install and maintain our telephone system for up to \$50,000.00.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Britz, Tikkanen, Janssen 4.

NO: None 0.

ABSENT: Keranen 1.

### **Public Comments:**

Dave Gemignani thanked the Board.

Becky Wakeham asked if everyone was getting new telephones.

Timothy Brennan, Chief Circuit Court Judge, asked that Houghton, Baraga and Keweenaw County Courts be included in the Ad Hoc Committee.

### **Announcements:**

None.

### **Adjournment:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to adjourn at 3:39 p.m.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

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Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

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Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk