

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 11, 2026**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, August 11, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the 3rd Floor Circuit Courtroom 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 6:00 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 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: July 6, 2026 Work Session; July 14, 2026 Regular Meeting

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2026 and the July 14, 2026 meetings as presented.

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

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Janssen requested #5 be removed from the agenda. Chairman Tikkanen requested the simple ballot language Resolution #26-18 be added and Gabby's Guppies Loan Closeout for a Public Hearing be added along with MACC Conference for Travel be added.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the Agenda with the one (1) deletion and the three (3) additions.

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

Public Comments-Agenda Items only *(3 minute limit):

Faith Morrison commented on Resolution #26-18.

Public Hearing-Gabby's Guppies Loan Closeout

1. Open Hearing

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.

1. Discussion and Public Comment

Jeff Ratcliffe stated Gabby's Guppies has 10 employees. Loan payments were on time. They are looking to expanding at the current location and add another location. They have 46 slots now and have 59 children attending their facility.

2. Close Hearing

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to close the public hearing.

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

Approval of Bills-\$2,588,508.43:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve paying the bills submitted of \$2,588,508.43 0as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

Reports:

Standing Committee:

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

The 75th Houghton County Fair will be from August 27-30, 2026.

Community Garden: He stated an appraisal would need to be done.

Commissioner Keranen reported to the Board on the following:

Transfer Station: He welcomed Jeff as the new Manager.

Jail: He commented on the Jail being on the November ballot.

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following:

Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District: They celebrated an anniversary.

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following:

He stated the Houghton County Road Commission received an award. He read the letter regarding safety efforts. He stated EGLE is looking to take down the Redridge Dam.

Chairman Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

Jail: He commented on the Jail being on the November ballot.

Special Committees:

None

County Officers:

Todd LaRoux, Building Department Manager, provided a handout to the Board and Clerk. Year to date are the following numbers for the Building Department:

Building Permits	276-64 new homes
Electrical Permits	321
Mechanical Permits	221
Plumbing Permit	132
Plan Review	113-commerical plans
911 Address	85
Total	1148

Adam Laplander, Canal View Manager, stated there are 133 residents, and they hope to have 140 by next year. The audit was completed in July.

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk, stated the Early Voting Center will be moving to the County Building on Sharon Avenue for the November election. This is a long term solution.

Unfinished Business

1. George Gipp Recreation Arena Annexation Request; tabled from the August Work Session

Commissioner Anderson gave the legal process for a Village Annexation. He is not sure if the process was done properly in 1975. He discussed asking the Village of Laurium what they have on record for a Resolution that should have been filed with the County Clerk. The County Clerk can go back in minutes. He questioned if the document was filed with the Secretary of State. The Gazette is asking the County to do research.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to have Administrator Rheault send a letter on what action the Village of Laurium took in 1975.

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

New Business:

1. Gabby's Guppies Loan Closeout

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to acknowledge the closeout of Gabby's Guppies Loan.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

2. Paul Putnam, District Director Michigan State University Extension, Updates

Paul Putnam stated he attended the Veteran's Fair and discussed the July 10th My fresh fish handout that promotes local commercial fishing. He provided another handout on aqua fisheries. Another handout was about the varieties of fish and this handout is available online with a pdf. He toured the Sharon Avenue property. He discussed the Houghton County Fair. Current there are 2 full time employees and 3 part time employees at the Extension Office.

3. Independent Auditing Services, Request for Information

Administrator Rheault stated the audit was due in March. They will be presenting at the September meeting. She is looking to do an RFP/RFI and post it on the county website to select new auditors. There would be a recommendation in September to the Board of Commissioners.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to do an RFP/RFI on the county website.

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

4. Resolution #26-16 Opposing Legislation to Dissolve the Upper Peninsula Community Mental Health System into a Single Specialized Regional Mental Health Authority; tabled from the August Work Session

Chairman Tikkanen stated this was tabled last month.

Commissioner Britz stated this would take away from the Mental Health Board and local government input.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve Resolution #26-16 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.



**HOUGHTON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

401 E. Houghton Avenue, Houghton, Michigan 49931
Telephone: (906) 482-8307

**RESOLUTION OPPOSING
LEGISLATION TO DISSOLVE THE UPPER PENINSULA COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH
SYSTEM INTO A SINGLE SPECIALIZED REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY
RESOLUTION #26-16**

WHEREAS, the Upper Peninsula Community Mental Health (CMH) and Prepaid Inpatient Health Plan (PIHP) system has historically operated under a decentralized, community-based model intended to preserve local control, responsiveness, and accountability to the residents of each county; and

WHEREAS, Senator McBroom's proposal would require the dissolution and consolidation of all five Upper Peninsula CMHs into a single specialized regional mental health authority, thereby transferring governance and operational authority from local entities to a centralized regional structure; and

WHEREAS, the Houghton County Board of Commissioners recognizes and appreciates efforts to improve behavioral health outcomes in the Upper Peninsula, including efforts to expand access to psychiatric inpatient services, the Board finds that the proposed legislation presents substantial governance, policy, and fiscal concerns; and

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation is inconsistent with the longstanding principles of the Michigan Mental Health Code, which has favored decentralized, community-driven CMH systems over centralized institutional models; and

WHEREAS, a single specialized regional authority serving all fifteen Upper Peninsula counties would reduce local responsiveness and community control by removing decision-making authority from locally based CMH programs that understand the distinct geographic, demographic, and service delivery needs of their communities; and

WHEREAS, the proposal would effectively expose counties to expanded and potentially uncapped fiscal liability by eliminating the current statutory framework that defines and limits county financial responsibility, including formula-based protections established under Michigan law; and

WHEREAS, under the proposed structure, counties could become jointly responsible for the financial performance and obligations of a single specialized regional entity without clear

statutory limits on deficits, extraordinary costs, capital obligations, or long-term psychiatric inpatient liabilities; and

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation would require the single specialized regional entity to assume responsibility for long-term psychiatric inpatient services, including facility ownership or leasing, staffing, and operations, without clearly identified and sustainable funding parameters; and

WHEREAS, psychiatric inpatient services are capital-intensive and historically underfunded, and any expansion of inpatient capacity must account for workforce constraints, regulatory requirements, and the limitations on the use of Medicaid and opioid settlement funds; and

WHEREAS, the County Board believes that durable improvements in behavioral health services in the Upper Peninsula should be developed through consultation with subject matter experts, local providers, county officials, and community stakeholders in a manner that strengthens services without undermining local governance or long-term sustainability; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Houghton County Board of Commissioners hereby opposes legislation that would dissolve the existing Upper Peninsula Community Mental Health system into a single specialized regional mental health authority; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Houghton County Board of Commissioners urges the Michigan Legislature and all relevant policymakers to reject any proposal that removes local control, weakens community responsiveness, or imposes uncertain and potentially unlimited fiscal liability upon counties; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Houghton County Board of Commissioners supports collaborative, sustainable, and community-driven approaches to strengthening behavioral health services in the Upper Peninsula, including solutions that address access, workforce, funding, and inpatient capacity without compromising local accountability.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, to send a copy of this resolution to the Governor of Michigan, the Michigan Senate, the Michigan House of Representatives, Senator Ed McBroom, and other interested parties.

Motion Made By: Britz

Motion Supported By: Janssen

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Britz, Janssen, Tikkanen, Keranen, Anderson (5).

Nays: None

Absent: None

Dated: _____

Tom Tikkanen, Chair

Houghton County Board of Commissioners

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

I, Jennifer Kelly, Clerk of Houghton County, do hereby certify and set my seal to the above Resolution as adopted August 11, 2026, at the Houghton County Courthouse, 401 East Houghton Avenue, Houghton, MI 49931.

Jennifer Kelly, Houghton County Clerk

5. Request from the Community Garden to acquire the 2 most western lots of the empty block west of the Courthouse, tabled from the August Work Session

This was removed from the agenda.

6. Tri-County Public Defenders, July 2026 Payment Request \$93,128.29

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve payment of \$93,128.29 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

7. Resolution #26-17 Naming Trustee and Alternative Trustee to the Western Michigan Health Insurance Pool

Administrator Rheault stated the Resolution is necessary as the previous Resolution was for her and a terminated employee. She is recommending Paige Setter-Hallwachs be approved. Commissioner Anderson asked if the rates may go up 20%.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve Chelsea Rheault be on the Board and Paige Setter-Hallwachs as the alternate for the Michigan Health Insurance Pool and to approve Resolution #26-17 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0



HOUGHTON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
401 E Houghton Avenue, Houghton, Michigan 49931
Telephone: (906) 482-8307

RESOLUTION NAMING TRUSTEE AND ALTERNATE TRUSTEE
Resolution # 26-17

PREMISES

- A. Article 6.1 of the Bylaws of the West Michigan Health Insurance Pool ("WMHIP") requires that each member entity name a Trustee and Alternate Trustee to serve on the Board of Trustees for the WMHIP.
- B. The Governing Body of the Member has chosen individuals in accordance with Article 6.1 to serve as Trustee and Alternate Trustee.
- C. The Governing Body of the Member believes that these individuals will represent the interests of the Member in the WMHIP.
- D. Neither of these individuals are an owner officer, or employee of any third-party administrator or any other third party providing services to WMHIP.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Governing Body of the Member hereby resolves:

- 1. The Governing Body hereby confirms its appointment of the following persons as Trustee and Alternate Trustee to serve as Trustee when the initial Trustee is not available or in attendance to carry out the Trustee’s duties:

Chelsea Rheault, Trustee	Paige Setter-Hallwachs, Alternate Trustee
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The Trustee and Alternate Trustee shall serve until replaced by action of the Governing Body of the Member. Failure of the Member to designate a Trustee, or the failure of that Trustee/Alternate Trustee to participate on the Board of Trustees, shall not affect the responsibilities or duties of the Member under the Amended Trust Agreement.

- 2. Once these appointments are made known to WMHIP, the above-named individuals shall remain in office until WMHIP receives evidence of appointment of other persons.
- 3. Evidence of these appointments shall be communicated to WMHIP by providing a certified copy of this resolution.
- 4. All resolutions and parts of resolutions insofar as they conflict with the provisions of this Resolution be and the same are hereby rescinded.

Motion Made By: Anderson

Motion Supported By: Janssen

Roll Call Vote:
Ayes: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Keranen, Britz (5)
Nays: None (0).
Absent: None (0).

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED

Dated: _____	Thomas Tikkanen, Board Chair Houghton County Board of Commissioners
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I, Jennifer Kelly, Clerk of Houghton County, do hereby certify and set my seal to the above Resolution as adopted August 11, 2026 at the Houghton County Courthouse, 401 East Houghton Avenue, Houghton, MI 49931.

Jennifer Kelly, Houghton County Clerk

8. Simplify ballot language-Resolution #26-18

Faith Morrison discussed the Resolution and the recommendation of the Jail Committee. The demolition was taken out, program spaces were added, a courtroom was added, pretrial detainees was added, and that the 1963 jail renovation will not be a part of the \$28 million.

Chairman Tikkanen stated Resolution #26-15 remains in full effect.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adopt Resolution #26-18 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Britz, Anderson, Tikkanen, Janssen 4.

NO: Keranen 1.



HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

401 E. Houghton Avenue, Houghton, Michigan 49931
Telephone: (906) 482-8307

RESOLUTION DESCRIBING IN PLAIN LANGUAGE THE JAIL AND COUNTY BUILDING IMPROVEMENT BOND PROPOSAL ON THE BALLOT AT THE ELECTION TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 3, 2026

RESOLUTION #26-18

COUNTY OF HOUGHTON State of Michigan

WHEREAS, the County Board of Commissioners (the "County Board") of the County of Houghton, Michigan (the "County"), has determined that it is necessary for the health, safety and welfare of the County and its residents and property owners that the County construct, furnish and equip new county jail/sheriff's office facilities, including site improvements, and parking improvements, together with rights-of-way, and appurtenances and attachments thereto, (the "Projects"); and

WHEREAS, the County Board passed RESOLUTION #26-15 JAIL AND COUNTY BUILDING IMPROVEMENT BOND PROPOSAL on August 5, 2026 (the "Build a New Jail Resolution") to authorize raising the funds for the Projects through the issuance of bonds, a way of borrowing the funds; and

WHEREAS, the text of Resolution #26-15 was written on the advice of counsel in a formal way to comply with requirements in the laws of Michigan for local bond proposal millages; and

WHEREAS, the County Board has determined that it is necessary to clarify the intentions of the County Board with respect to their plans for the Projects.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The following PLAIN LANGUAGE COUNTY JAIL AND SHERIFF'S OPERATIONS FACILITY MILLAGE DESCRIPTION represents the Project that the County Board is putting before the voters at the election to be held on November 3, 2026.

**PLAIN LANGUAGE COUNTY JAIL AND SHERIFF'S
OPERATIONS FACILITY MILLAGE DESCRIPTION**

Shall Houghton County borrow an amount not to exceed \$28,000,000 dollars and issue bonds repayable over 30 years to construct, equip, and finance a new County Jail and Sheriff's-Operations complex on the County-owned property at 19741 West Sharon Avenue in the city of Houghton, Michigan?

The new facility will replace the current jail and sheriff's operations building, built in 1963, and will provide:

- Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC)-compliant housing for at least 60 inmates of all classifications and so eliminate the risk of a jail shutdown and associated costs and loss of local control
- Be sited at a location that a) allows the sheriff to fulfill his jail oversight responsibilities while meeting the legal requirement of a primary office in city limits and b) moves the jail away from downtown while still allowing fast response to calls inside and outside city limits
- Be of a size that enables the mandated classification and separation of inmates by age, gender, etc. with only a modest increase in overall effective capacity. Including space for juveniles and proper separation of high, medium and low security inmates
- Include spaces that enable programs to reduce recidivism and address root-cause issues
- Ensure adequate space for safe and effective operations for the Sheriff's Office operations, including, but not limited to, booking, investigations, corrections, evidence storage, inmate medical care, and programs designed to reduce crime and repeat offending
- A courtroom to reduce transport costs between the new County Jail/Sheriff's office facility and the existing County Courthouse on Houghton Avenue
- Private consultation space for pre-trial detainees and their lawyers
- A larger drive-in garage (sally port) for safely securing inmate transfer in all kinds of weather

The current jail and sheriff's operations building on Houghton Avenue will be repurposed by the County, but the expense for doing so will not be part of this Project. The existing building at 19741 West Sharon Avenue will be repurposed by the County, but the expense for doing so will not be part of this Project. The current County Courthouse has been continuously upgraded in recent years, and these projects will continue, but the expenses for County Courthouse renovations will not be part of this Project.

If approved, the estimated millage to be levied in the first year of the levy in 2027 is 1.2726 mills (\$1.2726 per \$1,000 of taxable value) and the estimated simple average annual millage rate required to retire the bonds over 30 years is 1.2722 mills (\$1.2722 per \$1,000 of taxable value).

YES O
NO O

2. This resolution does not alter or repeal any aspect of Houghton County Resolution #26-15.

Motion Made By: Britz
Motion Supported By: Anderson

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Britz, Anderson, Tikkanen, Janssen (4).

Nays: Keranen

Absent: None

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Dated: _____
Tom Tikkanen
Chairman Houghton County Board of Commissioners

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the attached is a true and complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the County Board of Commissioners of the County of Houghton, State of Michigan, at a Regular meeting held on August 11, 2026 and that the meeting was conducted and public notice of the meeting was given pursuant to Act No. 267, Public Acts of Michigan, 1976, and that the minutes of the meeting were kept and will be or have been made available as required by the Act.

Dated: _____
Jennifer Kelly
Houghton County Clerk

9. MACC Conference

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the Commissioners, County Clerk and Administrator to attend the MACC Conference on September 9-11, 2026.

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

Travel:

- 1. Paige Setter-Hallwachs, The POOL’s Annual Summit, September 8-10, 2026
- 2. Chelsea Rheault, The POOL’s Annual Summit, September 8-10, 2026
- 3. Chelsea Rheault, MGFOA Fall Training Institute, September 13-17, 2026
- 4. Paige Setter-Hallwachs, MER’s Annual Conference, October 7-10, 2026
- 5. Chelsea Rheault, MER’s Annual Conference, October 7-10, 2026

6. Derrick Morris, 2 FOC Staff Members traveling to Michigan Family Child Support Conference, October 20-23, 2026

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

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

10. Appropriations

- a. Michigan Association of Counties, Annual Dues \$5,610.82**
- b. Copper Country Community Mental Health \$13,707.91**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve both above-mentioned Appropriations as presented.

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

Public Comments:

Amber Campbell addressed the Board regarding communism.
Faith Morrison addressed the Board regarding Resolution #26-18 and stated the Jail Committee is scheduled to meet next week if they need to meet.
Karen Timonen addressed the Board regarding the August 2024 election where Portage Township, Precinct 4 didn’t get to vote on the Portage Lake District Library millage.

Announcements:

None.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Chairman Anderson to adjourn at 7:17 p.m.

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

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk

APPROVED:_____

Clerk’s Initials