

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
NOVEMBER 13, 2019**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular meeting on Wednesday, November 13, 2019, in the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Albert Koskela at 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Koskela.

Roll call:

The following commissioners responded to roll call:

Tom Tikkanen, District 1; Albert Koskela, District 2; Glenn Anderson, District 3; Gretchen Janssen, District 4; Roy Britz, District 5.

Approval of Minutes:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the minutes of the October 24, 2019 meeting as presented.

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

Approval of Agenda/Additions:

Chairman Koskela recommended #6 be added to the Agenda for a revised Apportionment.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen, seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the Agenda as presented with the one (1) addition for the revised Apportionment.

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

Public Comments:

Evan McDonald addressed the Board.

Approval of Bills:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve paying the bills submitted of \$3,069,431.76 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

Correspondence:

Eric Forsberg, Administrator, advised the Board that Mr. Capello put it in writing that he is not completing his term on the DHHS Board. The vacancy has been posted in the Daily Mining Gazette.

Reports:

Standing Committee:

Commissioner Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following: Recreation Authority, Upward Talent Council, and Solid Waste Committee.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following: Recreation Authority, Michigan employment-applauded employers and the different Economic Development Agencies, discussed the Governor's vetoes, and the NACo scholarship-leadership program.

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following: Health Department.

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following: The Pilgrim River Bridge is now open.

Chairman Koskela reported to the Board on the following: Lift Bridge outage plan.

County Officers:

Dennis Hext, Airport Manager, advised the Board of the construction for an eight (8) hanger building. Traverse Engineering won the bid. The numbers look good at the airport for flights the last 8 months. There is a 92% load factor. SkyWest was the only bid for the EAS. Delta was not interested. The contract will be for 3 years.

Old Business:

1. Houghton County Jail

Commissioner Tikkanen discussed the proposal from UP Engineers.

Commissioners Janssen and Britz met with the City of Houghton. They discussed available sites and a few parcels in Portage Township. Kevin Coppo also visited the sites. Nothing was decided.

Commissioner Britz met with Portage Township, and stated the City of Houghton does not wish to partner with the County.

Commissioner Janssen stated she has been in contact with Delta County. Delta County started a community concerned citizens group that had the group promote the proposed jail project. The group raised money for mailers, sent absentee ballot application mailings, and the group went to functions such as sporting events to hand out flyers. Commissioner Tikkanen suggested asking the Houghton County Planning Commission to start a concerned citizens group. Commissioner Janssen will approach them. Commissioner Janssen suggested Karin Cooper to look at properties with Commissioner Britz and herself.

Commissioner Anderson encouraged Commissioner Janssen and Britz to contact the Houghton Portage Township School.

The Board agreed to table this Agenda item until the December Board meeting.

New Business:

1. Houghton County Department of Veterans Affairs

Gene LaRoche addressed the Board regarding the service contract with Keweenaw and Houghton Counties. He stated there are approximately 300 veterans in Keweenaw County and approximately 2,600 veterans in Houghton County. In 2019, they assisted approximately 1,289 people. In 4 years the amount of traffic coming into the office has doubled. He discussed getting Veteran banners that will be put on telephone poles that will be paid for by families of Veterans that will be put up on Memorial Day and taken down on Labor Day. Calumet Village has agreed to support the banners being put up. The Veteran's Office will contact the cities and townships directly to participate in this.

Michael Bjorn addressed the board and stated he has gone through State training, and was accredited in Cleveland.

Joseph Battisfore stated there has been an increase in assisting individuals in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. He stated they had success with the TV and radio campaign. He provided a handout to the board, and discussed everything the Veteran's Office provides to individuals.

## 2. 2020 Remonumentation Grant

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the 2020 Remonumentation Grant as presented.

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

## 3. Complete Count Committee

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen, seconded by Commissioner Britz to appoint Commissioner Anderson as the Chairman of the Complete Count Committee for the 2020 Census.

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

Commissioner Anderson suggested informing snowbirds and college students of the importance to make sure they fill out the form if they live in Houghton County for more than 6 months and 1 day.

## 4. Houghton County Road Commissioner's compensation

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the Houghton County Road Commissioner's compensation as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

## 5. Request to close Courthouse for active shooter training

Eric Forsberg, Administrator, requested closing the courthouse on Thursday, December 12, 2019 from 1:30-4:30 pm for training.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz, seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to close the courthouse on Thursday, December 12, 2019 from 1:30-4:30 pm for training.

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

Chairman Koskela encouraged Dennis Hext to set up this training in May 2020.

## 6. Revised Apportionment

Cheryl Patrick, Equalization Director advised the Board that due to meetings being held this past Monday in Franklin and Quincy Townships the Apportionment needs to be

amended. Franklin Township Fire taxable value went from 21,592,468 to 22,564,619, and Quincy Township Fire taxable value went from 7,310,456 to 7,866,589. Quincy Township Fire millage rate when from 1.45 mills to 1.3 mills.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Janssen to revise the Apportionment Report as presented.

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

Public Comments:

Evan McDonald addressed the Board.

Announcements:

None.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to adjourn at 5:22 pm.

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

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Albert Koskela, Chairman

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Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk