

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
ORGANIZATIONAL/REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 12, 2021**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held an Organizational/Regular Meeting on Tuesday, January 12, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. in the 5th Floor Conference Room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton. The public was able to attend by Zoom.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly at 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly.

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.

Election:

County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly, asked for nominations for Chairman. A nomination was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, and seconded by Commissioner Britz to have Albert Koskela stay on as Chairman. County Clerk, Kelly, asked for any other nominations. No other nominations were made.

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

County Clerk, Kelly, turned the meeting over to Chairman Koskela.

Chairman Koskela asked for nominations for Vice Chairman. A nomination was made by Commissioner Britz, and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to have Tom Tikkanen stay on as Vice Chairman. Chairman Koskela asked for any other nominations. No other nominations were made.

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

Approval of Minutes:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2020 Meeting as presented.

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

Approval of Agenda:

Chairman Koskela requested #8 be added to the Agenda for a Resolution.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to accept the Agenda with the one (1) addition as presented.

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

Public Comments:

None.

Approval of Bills:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve paying the bills submitted of \$1,131,047.31.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

Correspondence:

None.

Reports:

Standing Committee:

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following: Health Department. She discussed the Press Release for Phase 1 B and the lack of vaccines. Vaccines are by appointment only and are for people over 65 and essential workers. General public should have vaccines in the spring. They are looking into a testing lab using grant money and will certify after it is built using services through Michigan Tech University. She stated she supports the UP Environmental Health Code. She thanked Janet Fox for her years of service and wished her well on her retirement.

Commissioner Anderson had nothing to report to the Board.

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following: Houghton County Road Commission. He stated the 2021-2025 plan was approved, and stated we are approximately 20” behind last year in snow totals. He further commented on four (4) workers being out of work from the Houghton County Sheriff Department due to COVID. He stated the employees would all be back to work next week.

Commissioner Tikkanen had nothing to report to the Board.

Chairman Koskela had nothing to report to the Board.

County Officers:

None.

New Business:

1. Meeting dates/times.

Commissioner Britz requested changing the February 9, 2021 meeting time from 5:00 pm to 3:00 pm.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to change the next Board meeting time February 9, 2021 to 3:00 pm.

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

County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly, will forward another proposed 2021 meeting calendar to the Board and the Administrator to be on the Agenda at the February meeting.

2. Rules of Order.

Commissioner Janssen requested the Agenda and board packet be online. Administrator, Ben Larson stated he will have the packets and Agenda online the Friday before the Board meetings.

No Motions or voting was done to adopt the Rules of Order.

3. Commissioner Committee Appointments.

- a. Mental Health: A nomination/Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to reappoint Chairman Koskela to the Mental Health Board.

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

- b. District Health: A nomination/Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to reappoint Commissioners Britz, Anderson, and Janssen to the District Health Board.

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

4. Pandemic Pay Personnel Policy

Ben Larson, Administrator, stated he had spoken to the Association of Counties and to County Attorney, Roger Zappa, and the Department of Labor to make a formal Pandemic Pay Personnel Policy. He commented on Article 46 that will be used when an employee must stay home.

Commissioner Anderson commented on what if an employee elected to not take the vaccine when offered and then tested positive for COVID. He stated the policy should not apply if the employee elected to not take the vaccine, and the employee should then use their sick leave. The policy would be for 80 hours of COVID time.

Commissioner Britz discussed the health of an employee and not being able to take the vaccine.

Ben Larson stated that all administrators are talking daily, and he will stay current with what is happening in regards to this and all federal, state and local labor laws with the change to President Biden in Washington DC.

Commissioner Tikkanen stated the policy should be refined as needed.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to adopt the Pandemic Pay Personnel Policy as presented.

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

The Board discussed that the vaccine is available and has been administered to many at the Houghton County Sheriff Department and who are 911 First Responders.

5. Substitute Magistrate Appointment of Nickole Jollimore

Ben Larson, Administrator, discussed the packet from Judge Daavettila. He stated no additional pay would be made to Nickole Jollimore, but she would have more duties. He stated Ginger Sulisz, Magistrate, may retire in 2021. They need a minimum of 3 Magistrates.

Ginger Sulisz, Magistrate, addressed the Board and stated the importance of having Nickole become a Magistrate.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to appoint Nickole Jollimore as a substitute Magistrate.

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

6. Dominion Representative Kurt Knowles

Kurt Knowles with Election Source and a representative of Dominion addressed the Board and explained that they represent 65 out of 83 counties in Michigan. He stated Houghton County received the new Dominion equipment in 2018.

Commissioner Anderson asked Kurt what happened in Antrim County. Kurt explained it was a problem that happened after the ballots were printed and everything was programmed. There were two (2) problems. One was because the ballot had the wrong school district on it, and the other was because a Village forgot an opening that they had on their Board. They had to reprint the ballots. Normally a clerk remembers to reprogram the cards used at the precincts. The Antrim Clerk forgot to do this step. The election results were posted at approximately 4:30 am by the Antrim County Clerk. The error was caught in the morning.

Kurt explained that the Chinese did not hack Keweenaw County.

Commissioner Anderson asked if there are other election vendors. Kurt explained there are three (3) which are ES&S, Hart, and Dominion. ES&S has 7 Michigan Counties, Hart has 11, and Dominion has 65. Dominion has local representation living in Michigan.

Erik Kiilunen asked Kurt who does the programming. Kurt responded that the programmers Mike Kaleva and Shannon Strigel do the programming. Erik asked what Kurt's role is with Houghton County elections. He stated he works with Jennifer to obtain the Houghton County candidate information, and the vote for 1 or vote for multiple candidates. He does proofing of the ballots, and receives calls from the city/township clerks with programs, and provides help to all clerks on election day.

Clerk Kelly reminded Kurt that he also receives and proofs the ballot languages that Clerk Kelly sends to him for every election. Kurt stated that is also something he does.

Erik asked Kurt the requirements of the public accuracy testing. Kurt stated the State of Michigan does the requirements.

Erik asked who defines the programming. Kurt stated the programmers do all programming for Houghton County.

Erik asked how many ballots were in the test decks? Kurt explained there were 64 ballots of each ballot style.

Erik asked how many ballots were in the QR Code? Kurt commented that the compartment to be able to send any results through the internet are all sealed on all tabulators. He explained that County Clerk Kelly's election computer does not and has not ever had any internet connected to it.

7. NorthCare Network Agreement for Services \$37,615

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve paying \$37,615 for the NorthCare Network Agreement for Services as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

8. Resolution

Commissioner Britz stated he had questions on the word "unconstitutional" in the sample Resolution. 1 paragraph is hearsay, and questioned how the Commissioners can agree to a Resolution.

Commissioner Anderson stated everyone is frustrated and this sample Resolution is poorly written.

Commissioner Britz stated the Commissioner's letter that the Board agreed to send to the Governor was not sent. He commented on the use of a gun outside of a building can be considered intimidation. He had worked many hours and cannot see any illegal activity done by the Health Department. He agreed everyone wants businesses to reopen. He believes we need healing.

Commissioner Tikkanen suggested someone read the Resolution. Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk, volunteered to read the Delta County Resolution. She read the Resolution to the Board and the public.

9. Appropriations

- a. Western Upper Peninsula Health Department Quarterly Appropriation-
\$66,680.75
- b. CC Mental Health 1/12th Appropriation \$13,707.91

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve paying the above-mentioned appropriations.

The Motion died as no one voted.

Commissioner Britz commented that the agreement with the Health Department punishes the people of Houghton County.

Commissioner Anderson stated the Health Department is the “key driver” for vaccines, and there is a poor public policy.

Chairman Koskela stated the Health Department needs to stop harassing business owners in Houghton County. Commissioner Anderson asked Chairman Koskela what businesses did the Health Department shut down? Chairman Koskela stated Café Rosetta, Candy’s, Lindell’s, Denali. He further stated they cannot open because of the Health Department. Commissioner Anderson stated this is an issue with the State of Michigan not the local Health Department.

Commissioner Britz discussed a letter to Tuscola County from Kate Beer. He stated he felt the Health Department is doing their job and being responsible.

Chairman Koskela stated the Health Department is getting paid, and the businesses are not.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to pay the CC Mental Health 1/12 Appropriation of \$13,707.91 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to pay the Western Upper Peninsula Health Department Quarterly Appropriate of \$66,680.75 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Janssen, Anderson, Britz 3.

NO: Tikkanen, Koskela 2.

Public Comments:

Barry Fink of the League of Women Voters read a Resolution to the Board.

Horst Schmidt stated he was an election worker in the past and believes elections are honest, and he supports the Health Department.

Mark Wisti commented on the Boards role in government and stated the Board has no right to pass a Resolution and there is no legal effect. He stated they should refer to their great County Attorney, Roger Zappa.

Randy McClellan asked where the money goes for the six (6) rentals at the Health Department. Kate Beers responded that the money offsets the expenses at the Hancock building.

Bruce Woodry commented on how the Resolution will be handled by the Board.

Erik Kiilunen stated the Health Department is not stopping businesses and agrees with Commissioner Britz that we need healing in the County.

William Keith stated the mandate is with the state not the Health Department.

Chris DeForge commented on the lack of snow, and the video of Erik Kiilunen bullying a man by Café Rosetta. She stated she is ashamed to be a Copper Country resident.

Randy McClellan had another question for the Health Department. He was told to address the Health Department directly, and told Commissioner Britz it is the 2nd Amendment to carry a firearm.

Commissioner Tikkanen discussed the Facebook video, and stated people are willing to do business in Calumet. He supports a Resolution on behalf of the businesses.

Commissioners Britz and Tikkanen agreed to discuss a Resolution if the Board wishes. Commissioner Tikkanen said the residents want a statement from the Board to send to Lansing.

Commissioner Britz stated it is improper and intimidating to carry a gun by businesses, but agrees it is a 2nd Amendment right.

Commissioner Tikkanen stated the gun carrier at the Café Rosetta was not from Houghton County.

Commissioner Janssen expressed her support to the Health Department.

Announcements:

The Board discussed a meeting with Senator, Ed McBroom on January 29th at 10:00 am. Clerk Kelly will post the special meeting notice.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adjourn at 6:40 p.m.

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

Albert Koskela, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk