

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PUBLIC HEARINGS & REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 13, 2023**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held two (2) Public Hearings and a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. in the 5th floor Conference Room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton with the public viewing in person and through Microsoft Teams.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tikkanen at 4:00 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 the 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 9, 2023 Regular Meeting:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the minutes of the May 9, 2023 minutes as presented.

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

Approval of Agenda:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the Agenda as presented.

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

Public Hearing-Truth in Taxation:

a. Open Hearing

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to open the Public Hearing.

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

b. Discussion and Public Comment

Jaikob Djerf, Interim Equalization Director, stated Houghton County is required to hold a Truth in Taxation hearing in order to collect the maximum allowable millage rate of 6.2220 mills for the 2023 levy.

The Millage Reduction Fraction (MRF) is 1.0000.

The Base Tax Fraction (BTRF) is 0.9475.

The 2023 taxable value is 1,148,188,883.

The Base Tax Rate (after application of the BTRF) is 5.89535.

After adjusting the Base Tax Rate, the estimated Convention/Facilities Tax is 184,336. The resulting Base Tax Rate is 5.8952.

The difference between the Maximum allowable rate of 6.2220 and the adjusted Base Tax Rate of 5.8952 is 0.3268 mills.

If approved, that difference nets a 5.54% increase in operating revenue from last year or approximately \$375,228 beyond last year's levy.

Dan Niemela asked if the County would receive \$375,228 more. Jaikob Djerf stated it would be an increase in the revenue side, and not an increase to the taxpayers as reported in the media previously to this meeting.

c. Close Hearing

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to close the Public Hearing.

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

Public Hearing-CDBG Loan:

a. Open Hearing

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to open the Public Hearing.

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

b. Discussion and Public Comment

Jeff Ratcliffe from KEDA discussed the federal requirements through the State of Michigan. He stated the \$70,000 loan request is from Quincy MFG, LLC formerly Quincy Woodwrights, LLC through the Revolving Loan Fund. This would create three (3) new jobs. The loan would be at an interest rate of 8 ¼% for a 5 year term.

Commissioner Britz asked where they are located and who reviews the loan for accuracy/payments. Jeff stated the business is on Gundlach Road and the Revolving Loan Committee would review it, and they recommended approving this loan.

Chairman Tikkanen asked if all loans are current. Jeff Ratcliffe stated all loans are current.

c. Close Hearing

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz seconded by Commissioner Anderson to close the Public Hearing.

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

Public Comments:

None.

Approval of Bills -\$3,646,329.48:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve paying the bills submitted of \$3,646,329.48.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Janssen, Britz, Tikkanen, Anderson 4.

NO: None 0.
ABSENT: Keranen 1.

Correspondence:

Chairman Tikkanen discussed a letter that was sent to the Road Commission praising the Road Commission. The County Board received a copy.

Reports:

Standing Committee:

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

He congratulated Brittany Bulleit on her appointment to Houghton County Circuit Court Judge by Governor Whitmer. Judge Bulleit's appointment takes effect on June 26, 2023 and Judge Bulleit will have to run for election in 2 years.

He attended the May UP County Commissioner's Conference.

He discussed the priorities of the Michigan Association of Counties. \$172,000 Michigan Grant for Michigan salary and expenses for Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys for up to \$200,000 and he suggested Houghton County try for \$100,000. They are working on Trial Court and Juvenile reform. He stated there is discussion about creating a Revolving Revenue County Trust Fund to receive a portion of the Sales tax.

He discussed the Open Meetings Act and allowing Zoom from elected officials as long as a quorum is present.

He discussed a House Bill that would require statewide septic inspections once every 5 years.

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following:

She stated an inspector from EGLE did the inspection at the Transfer Station and everything was in compliance. Marquette County is not currently accepting recycling.

In Houghton County as of May 2023, there was 4.91 tons compared to 3.95 tons in 2022 of recycling. The year to date totals for recycling are 23.54 tons in 2023 compared to 16.7 tons in 2022. The garbage and recycling rates were recently raised at the Transfer Station to correct the deficit.

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following:

He stated he had a meeting with Judge Daavettila and Keith Anderson regarding the Treatment Court. He will be scheduling a meeting with Keith Anderson and Sheriff Saaranen regarding possible uses for the opioid settlement.

Commissioner Anderson stated Baraga and Keweenaw Counties did not join the Walgreens lawsuit. Administrator Larson stated the County would receive 18 more years of funding from the opioid settlement.

Commissioner Anderson discussed the Health Department's Septic Inspector.

Chairman Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

He discussed the OHM discussions on the renovations at the Sharon Avenue property within 2 years. He stated District Court, Family Court, the Friend of the Court and the Prosecutors Offices would be moved up first to the Sharon Avenue property. The jail would be in phase 2. He hopes to take action and have a regional mental health center also located at the Sharon Avenue property. There will no longer be Zoom for Board meetings. The County will now use Microsoft Teams.

County Officers:

Dennis Hext, Airport Manager, discussed the structure removal for the terminal, and commented on the runway phase 1 is complete and they are onto phase 2. Skywest was able to land on runway 25. The grant has been closed out.

Todd LaRoux, Building Department Manager, provided a handout to the Board from 2017 to date. From January 2022 to June 2022 there were 103 building permits. 139 permits so far this year. We are 36 building permits ahead of last year.

Chris VanArsdale, Direct of the Office of Emergency Measures, gave a written report to the Board. He discussed FEMA in Houghton County and possible funding.

Commissioner Anderson asked how much money Houghton County should receive from FEMA. Chris VanArsdale stated he heard \$30,000.

Jaikob Djerf, Interim Equalization Director, stated that Mike and Trent have been attending a MCAO license program and will take the final exam on July 26. They will all be licensed assessors. The contract with Coleman runs through this year for GIS mapping.

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk/Register of Deeds, informed the Board there will be changes with the passing of Proposal 2 for the 9-day early voting. A lot of the changes are unknown yet. The Cities and Township Clerks chose Clerk Kelly to be the Administrator for the Voting Center(s). The State will be purchasing the required equipment for the Voting Center(s). We will start with 1 Voting Center in 2024 for the Presidential Primary and possibly work up to 3 Voting Centers.

Clerk Kelly provided a large stack of completed the reports that she received from Erik Kiilunen for the Countywide Voter Clean Up. Clerk Kelly found 61 deceased voters who passed away in many states throughout the United States through Google. Those voters have been removed from the State voting system. None of the deceased voters had voted after the dates of death. On the reports, Clerk Kelly wrote down the last date each voter voted. She supplied death information to the local clerks. Clerk Kelly requested a meeting with Erik Kiilunen to go over the reports several times, but no meeting was scheduled. She also told Erik that Stanton and Torch Lake Townships did not have a report, and to date, no reports were received. Clerk Kelly will turn over the reports to the local clerks to work and review them. The voter clean-up is now complete.

Ben Larson, Administrator, reported on the following:

Met with Paul Putnam from MSU Extension, and talked about the new agreement with the City of Hancock for their office spaces at the former Houghton County Arena.

Had a phone call with Senator Stabenow's office about the Second Crossing Initiative. They requested a letter from the MDOT, so I sent that to them and had a good talk with her Staffer over in the Sault named Jay Gage.

Met with a concerned citizen regarding some Open Mine Shafts on his property, and reached out to our legislators and the Governor's Office to see if there are options and funds to pay for caps or other solutions

Recent call with Lee Soule from the 9th District Commander's Office of the Coast Guard in Ohio. We should be getting our long awaited CFR for the Lift Bridge. This will permanently restrict lifts to the top and bottom of the hour. He is writing the Rule, and he said that after 30 days it would be in force. The bridge will then be going up just on the 30 and top of hour, meaning that if you need to get to get across you can do so at 415 or 445 without worrying about being stuck. Planning will be important, though, as if you are angry at 430 or 5 the Rule will call for lifts then. This is for Pleasure Craft, so if a big steamer or other large Commercial Vessel comes down the water, it will go up regardless. See it here:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/04/12/2023-07647/drawbridge-operation-regulation-keweenaw-waterway-between-houghton-and-hancock-mi>

We had our LARA State Inspections made of our Underground Storage tanks, and Becky has now gained Class A certification to join as our Third member with Certs. Dennis and Jeff have them from the Airport and Marina, but it was advised to get a third so Becky Ylitalo now has completed the training.

Working on many grant opportunities now from Federal, State and at places like our Insurer, MMRMA.

The Courthouse was closed this past Monday, June 19 for Juneteenth

Congratulated Brittany Bulleit on her appointment on the Houghton County Circuit Court bench, echoing Glenn's comments.

Looking into Courthouse Security measures, encouraged all to get their Badges from the Sheriff as they will work with the entry gates and

The Courthouse Improvement Bond was finally paid off last month. This age-old Bond payment has been active since 1986 and the final \$70,000 was paid to SNB last month.

Congratulated Clerk Kelly on being named the District 1 Register of Deeds Chairwoman.

Thanked Lisa Mattila and Jaikob Djerf for the campus grounds beautification that they have done on our plaza and side lawn.

Shared some recent work that has been done at the Marina in the form of security cameras throughout, and High Speed Wifi finally working. Also reminded all that the spillway needs to be cleaned out again of silt, and that we have a permit to do that through 2026 with EGLE and the Army Corps of Engineers. MDOT has agreed to help us with that project this summer sometime. We also removed a post that has been dinging boats for a number of years, and a section of fencing to make for better left turns with long boats on trailers. Pictures were shared of these projects.

The Transfer Station has security cameras now installed, and I thanked them for letting us use the End Loader to remove the post at the Marina.

Reminded all that we are heading into the last Quarter of the Fiscal Year Budget.

Mentioned the Enduring Gifts Fund Raising initiative, and my desire to get that going again. Also that I am working on getting a list of items that could be Named or Sponsored, and told all about the recent \$8 Million gift that gave the naming rights to Kent County's Ford Airport from Amway. We could possibly do the same at the Marina, and as we look at a remodel or new Airport Terminal. We can also have full fund raising activities here, and interested donors and philanthropists can make outright gifts, deferred gifts, and gifts in their estate plans to support our County and the work that we do. I will be restarting that effort.

Talked about the CDBG program, and how we work with WUPPDR and citizens through this program.

Recent visit with 56 Administrators from Downstate at the MACAO event, and shared that we are now full members of this. The MACAO is the Michigan Association of Counties Administrative Officers group. I was able to learn a lot about the ways that others are considering their healthcare, retirement, State and Federal funding sources and opportunities, and to discuss negotiations and a variety of other subjects at this conference.

He will be seeking his old seat on the State Pool Board for our insurer, MMRMA. He had this seat back in 2020-21, and it was held by Eric Forsberg. He has been asked to consider applying for one of the two open seats so he has. The State Pool represents the smaller counties like Houghton, and any trips or work that is done is paid for by the MMRMA. They will have the Annual Conference in Traverse City in August that he would hope to attend.

Congratulated Brett Beauchamp from our Sheriff's Department. He is in corrections now, but with some possible retirements, he is now MCOLES certified after completing the training down near Pontiac and he is ready to take on a Deputy role when a spot becomes open.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

1. Resolution 23-11 Authorize Collection of County Taxes

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve Resolution #23-11 as presented.

Administrator Larson requested an "I" be added to the word certification as it was misspelled.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Britz 4.

NO: None. 0

ABSENT: Keranen 1.

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RESOLUTION #2023-11**

**RESOLUTION IMPOSING 2022 SUMMER PROPERTY TAX LEVY PURSUANT TO
PUBLIC ACT 357 OF 2004, AND NOTICE OF CERTIFICATION OF COUNTY
ALLOCATED TAX LEVY.**

WHEREAS, Houghton County is authorized under the General Property Tax Act, Public Act 206 of 1893, as amended to levy and collect County allocated property taxes; and

WHEREAS, the General Property Tax Act has been amended by Public Act 357 of 2004, being MCL 211.44a, to require all Michigan Counties to impose a summer tax levy of the total County allocated tax;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to Public Act 357 of 2004, the Houghton County allocated tax shall be levied and collected on July 1, 2023 at the rate of 100% of the amount allocated after application of the "Headlee" millage reduction fraction; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Treasurer of each city and township in Houghton County is directed to account for and deliver all the County allocated tax collections for 2023 in accordance with the provisions of Public Act 357 of 2004; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Clerk shall deliver a copy of the Resolution to the Treasurer of each city and township in Houghton County.

Moved: Commissioner
Supported: Commissioner
Carried: YES Commissioners:
 NO None (0).
 ABSENT None (0).

Motion Carried.

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman
Houghton County Board of Commissioners

Date

STATE OF MICHIGAN)
COUNTY OF HOUGHTON)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and a complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners for the County of Houghton, Michigan, at a regular meeting held on the 13th day of June, 2023, the original of which resolution is on file in my office. I further certify that the meeting was held and the minutes therefore were filed in compliance with Act 267 of the Public Acts of 1976.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto affixed my official signature this 13th day of June, 2023.

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk
County of Houghton

2. Resolution 23-12 Authorize 2023 County Millage Rate

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve Resolution #23-12 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Britz, Tikkanen, Janssen 4.

NO: None. 0

ABSENT: Keranen 1.

HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

401 EAST HOUGHTON AVENUE

HOUGHTON, MI 49931

RESOLUTION #23-12

WHEREAS, the Houghton County Board of Commissioners has the authority to establish the number of operating mills to be levied from within its authorized millage rate,

AND:

WHEREAS, the additional millage rate will increase revenue from Ad Valorem Property Taxes by \$ 375,228 over such revenues generated by levies permitted without holding a public hearing,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the operating rate for the County of Houghton will increase by 0.3268 mill, yielding a total operating millage rate of 6.2220 mills in 2023 in accordance with Act 5, P.A., 1982, Act 2, P.A., 1986 and Act 264, P.A., 1987.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the Resolution.

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Anderson, Britz, Tikkanen, Janssen (4)
 No: None (0)
 Absent: Keranen (1)

HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

TOM TIKKINEN, CHAIRMAN

JENNIFER KELLY, COUNTY CLERK

DATED: June 13th, 2023

3. HCRLF Committee Recommendation

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the HCRLF Committee Recommendation to Quincy MFG, LLC for a 5 year loan of \$70,000 with a 81.4% interest rate as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Britz 4.

NO: None 0.

ABSENT: Keranen 1.

4. Resolution 23-13 Authorize CDBG Application to MEDC

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve Resolution #23-13 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Britz 4.

NO: None 0.

ABSENT: Keranen 1.

HOUGHTON COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT LOAN PROGRAM (CLP) AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION #23-13

The following is a copy of a Resolution adopted by the Houghton County Board of Trustees during the regular County Board Meeting held at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday June 13, 2023, on the 5th floor of the Houghton County Courthouse, 401 East Houghton Avenue, Houghton, MI 49931.

WHEREAS, assisting the location or expansion of companies that create new jobs is a priority for Houghton County; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed Quincy MFG, LLC will assist the creation of new manufacturing jobs in the County; and,

WHEREAS, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) offers loans for assisting companies with purchasing of inventory; and

WHEREAS, the County has requested Community Development Block Grant Loan Program (CLP) funding in the amount of \$70,000 from the MEDC; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed project is consistent with the local community development plan as described in the application and that at least 51% of the beneficiaries of the proposed project would be low and moderate income persons; and,

a., Jennifer Kelly County Clerk Summer Conference \$900.00

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the travel request as presented.

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

8. Appropriations

- a. Upper Peninsula Resource Conservation and Development Council \$350.00**
- b. MSU Extension 2nd Quarter \$10,625.00**
- c. Karhu Cyber \$15,926.02**
- d. Copper Country Community Mental Health \$41,123.73**

a, b & d. Upper Peninsula Resource Conservation and Development Council \$350.00 & MSU Extension 2nd Quarter \$10,625.00 & Copper Country Community Mental Health \$41,123.73

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve letters a, b. and d in the above-mentioned Appropriations as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Janssen, Britz, Tikkanen, Anderson 4.

NO: None 0.

ABSENT: Keranen 1.

c. Karhu Cyber \$15,926.02

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the Karhu Cyber payment with ARPA money as presented.

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

July Board Meeting:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to move the Regular Board meeting scheduled for July 11, 2023 to July 18, 2023 at 4:00 pm. Clerk Kelly will type up a meeting notice.

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

Public Comments:

Faith Morrison asked the Board for transparency in the Board packets.

Ben Larson and Becky Ylitalo will make sure a complete packet is on the table for every Board meeting.

Announcements:

Commissioner Janssen discussed the removal of the parking deck in the City of Houghton. The ramp is still open at this time for people to use.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to adjourn at 5:22 p.m.

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

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk