

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 17, 2024**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. in the 5th 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 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 Clerk Kelly:

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

Election:

1. Vice Chairperson-1 Year Term

Chairman Tikkanen asked for nominations for Vice Chair. A nomination was made by Commissioner Keranen, and seconded by Commissioner Anderson for Roy Britz. Chairman Tikkanen asked for any other nominations. No other nominations were made.

The nomination carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.
Roy Britz abstained from voting.

Approval of Minutes:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2023 meeting as presented.

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

Approval of Agenda:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to accept the Agenda 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 Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve paying the bills submitted of \$1,109,778.80. Commissioner Anderson asked for a clarification and review of the Excise Taxes presented on the check register. Administrator Larson and CFO Ylitalo said that they will give an update for the February meeting.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

Correspondence:

None.

Reports:

Standing Committee:

Commissioner Keranen reported to the Board on the following:

Reminded all of the recent Lisa McKenzie Part 115 Materials Management presentation and how this will affect the County. He requested Administrator Larson to find out what the Transfer Station is worth. Green For Life is possibly interested in purchasing the Transfer Station. Commissioner Anderson stated that he is in agreement with an appraisal being done. Administrator Larson stated the Transfer Station is back in the black now.

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following:

She agreed to seek an appraisal be done for the Transfer Station. Recycling: There was 502.37 more tons in 2023 compared to 2022. The next Materials Management Committee meeting will be next Thursday at 2 pm on the 5th floor of the courthouse.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

He discussed a DNR Grant of \$7 million for the County Recreation Authority and local trail development and repairs. The Freda grade trail remains closed, but is being looked at. The Bill Nichols Trail is open..

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following:

Houghton County Road Commission: The total snowfall is 35.4” through December compared to 108.3” last year. A \$6.1 million grant was received for roadwork/local roads.

Chairman Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

He discussed the flood damage in Schoolcraft Township and the annual maintenance that should be done on the culverts.

County Officers:

Todd LaRoux, Building Inspector, advised the Board on the Building Department’s numbers for 2023.

Chris VanArsdale, Emergency Director, advised the Board on the lift bridge and some maintenance projects they hope to complete.

Jon Giachino, Undersheriff, advised the Board on the Sheriff Department.

Administrator Larson stated Dr. Kotov is looking for two (2) people to join the Medical Examiners team.

Old Business:

1. Allocation Board Vacancy

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to appoint Jay Ruohonen to the 2024 Allocation Board.

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

2. Treatment Court Opioid Funding Request

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to allocate \$42,000 from the opioid funds for Treatment Court.

The Personnel Committee will meet with Judge Daavettila regarding possibly creating a new position.

Commissioner Anderson discussed what will happen when the opioid money runs out for the new position.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

New Business:

1. Rules of Order

A Motion to adopt the Rules of Order as presented was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson.

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

2. Citizens for Local Choice Initiative

Chairman Tikkanen discussed the ballot initiative that should be on the November 2024 ballot.

Commissioner Anderson stated the Townships are supporting this, and the citizens doing this initiative will need 550,000 signatures.

3. Planning Commission Vacancies

Administrator Larson stated Horst Schmidt resigned and Ron Kilpela took a new job.

Commissioner Keranen stated there were 6 applicants for the 2 vacancies. For the Recreation/Culture position, the applicants were Mark Larson, Mark Rhodes, and Mehmet Inal.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to appoint Mark Larson.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

For the Local Planning & Zoning position, the applicants were Don McLean, Erik Kiilunen, and Mehmet Inal.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to appoint Erik Kiilunen.

YES: Keranen, Britz, Tikkanen 3.

NO: Anderson, Janssen 2.

4. County Canvassers Seat-Democrat

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to appoint Valorie Troesch to the Houghton County Canvassing Board.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

5. 2024 MAC Legislative Conference April 29-May 1, 2024-Lansing

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the Commissioners, Administrator Larson, and Clerk Kelly to attend the MAC Legislative Conference if they wish to attend.

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

6. OHM Contract Amendment

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve \$5,000 for a OHM Contract Amendment from the ARPA money.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

7. Resolution 24-01 Sale of 400 Hecla St

Chairman Tikkanen stated the Torch Lake Federal Credit Union purchased the 911 Building in Laurium for \$300,000. The Purchase Agreement has been signed, and the closing would be in a week from Friday. The money will go in the 911 Fund. The property will go back on the tax rolls.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve Resolution 24-01 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Britz, Janssen, Tikkanen, Anderson 4.

NO: None. 0

ABSTAIN: Keranen 1.

8. Travel

a. Building Department-Continued Education for Election Inspectors

Todd LaRoux asked that travel be added to the Agenda.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve \$1,200 for the electrical inspectors to attend continued education training.

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

9. Appropriations

a. Copper Country Mental Health- \$54,831.64

b. Western UP Health Department-\$68,081.00

c. UPEDA-\$500.00

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

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

Public Comments:

None.

Announcements:

Clerk Kelly announced she has hired Ann Anderton, and has budget concerns over the changes happening in the Clerk's Office. Administrator Larson said it would be taken care of. Chairman Tikkanen announced that Hillary Baker will be the new Assistant Prosecutor effective 2/5/24.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Chairman Tikkanen to adjourn at 5:08 p.m.

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

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk