

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 15, 2014**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular meeting on Tuesday, April 15, 2014, in the 5th Floor Conference Room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Scott Ala at 5:00 p.m. After the Pledge of Allegiance the following commissioners responded to roll call: Tom Tikkanen, District 1; Al Koskela, District 2; Anton Pintar, District 3; Scott Ala, District 4 and Timothy Palosaari, District 5.

A motion was made by Commissioner Palosaari, seconded by Commissioner Pintar, to approve the March 11, 2014 minutes as presented. The motion carried by a voice vote: Ayes 5, Nays 0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, seconded by Commissioner Koskela, to approve the agenda with one addition, Item #13 MERS. The motion carried by a voice vote: Ayes 5, Nays 0.

Public Comments

Louis Sullivan discussed the condition of Pike Lake Road.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ala, seconded by Commissioner Pintar, to approve paying of voucher # 139618 through #139709 for a total of \$148,378.06 along with late bills of \$16,261.22 for a total of \$164,639.28. The motion carried by the following vote:
YES: Ala, Pintar, Tikkanen, Koskela, Palosaari 5.
NO: None 0.

Correspondence

Commissioner Pintar mentioned the Houghton-Keweenaw Conservation District is holding their tree sale Saturday, May 3rd by 9:00 am till Noon at their office location on Lakeshore Drive, near Kestner Park.

Commissioner Pintar asked about the UPCAP state of emergency resolution which prompted a discussion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, seconded by Commissioner Pintar, to approve the UPACC Resolution Requesting the Governor Issue a State of Emergency in Counties in the Northern Lower Peninsula and in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

The motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Tikkanen, Pintar, Koskela, Palosaari, Ala 5.

NO: None 0.

Commissioner Pintar mentioned the MAC Regional Summit in Houghton on June 23rd at the Franklin Square Inn.

Commissioner Pintar mentioned the Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance meeting on Friday, May 23rd at Michigan Tech.

Commissioner Tikkanen mentioned the report by U.P. Engineering concerning the water flowing under the courthouse parking deck. A discussion took place.

Reports Standing Committee

Commissioner Palosaari reported to the Board on the following: Houghton County Fair Board.

Commissioner Pintar reported to the Board on the following: Copper Country Trail National Byway Committee, Houghton County Planning Commission, Western U. P. Health Board, Michigan Works.

Commissioner Ala reported to the Board on the following: Georgetown University Energy Prize Competition, Revolving Loan Fund.

Commissioner Tikkanen asked Dennis Hext, Airport Manager, to report to the Board regarding the Airport and Kevin Harju, County Road Commission Engineer, to report to the Board regarding the Houghton County Road Commission. Commissioner Tikkanen continued his report to the Board on the following: WUPPDR.

Commissioner Koskela reported to the Board on the following: Railroads, Emergency Response, Torch Lake Water & Sewage.

County Officers

John Pekkala, Drain Commissioner, reported to the Board on the Dam Committee activities.

A motion was made by Commissioner Koskela, seconded by Commissioner Palosaari, to grant John Pekkala authority to prepare documentation to petition the circuit court and to pay the attorney for their time to prepare this documentation for the Rice Lake Dam. The motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Koskela, Palosaari, Tikkanen, Pintar, Ala 5.

NO: None 0.

Eric Forsberg, Controller, reported to the Board that the Sheriff Deputy Union requested to begin negotiations. Commissioner Ala said to wait to start negotiations at this time.

New Business

1. Houghton County Audit Report. Debbie Bradford of Rukkila, Negro & Assoc. reviewed the audit and discussed the audit with the Board.

2. Duane Fedie, Laird Township Supervisor, and Frank Pentti, Duncan Township Supervisor, discussed with the Board the situation with PILT monies.
3. Houghton County Equalization. John Partanen, Equalization Director, reviewed the State equalized and taxable property values for Houghton County.

A motion was made by Commissioner Koskela, seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen, to accept equalized and taxable property values as presented. The motion carried by the following voice vote: Ayes 5, Nays 0.

4. Transfer Station Rates. Eric Forsberg, Controller, explained the situation with the Houghton County Transfer Station rates and asked the Board to increase the rates by \$5.00/ton to \$75.00/ton for household waste and \$85.00/ton for construction debris effective June 1, 2014. The per bag rate would remain the same.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, seconded by Commissioner Koskela, to adopt the Transfer Station rates as presented by Eric Forsberg, Controller. The motion carried by voice vote: Ayes 5, Nays 0.

5. Deficit Elimination Plans. The deficit elimination plans were presented for the following funds: Airport, Twin Lakes Special Assessment District, Rice Lake Special Assessment District, Otter Lake Special Assessment District, Brownfield Fund and the Airport Passenger Facility Charge.

A motion was made by Commissioner Palosaari, seconded by Commissioner Pintar, to accept the deficit elimination plans for the Airport Fund, Twin Lakes Special Assessment District Fund, Rice Lake Special Assessment District Fund, Otter Lake Special Assessment District Fund, Brownfield Fund and Airport Passenger Facility Charge Fund. The motion carried by voice vote: Ayes 5, Nays 0.

6. Deficit Elimination Resolutions.

A motion was made by Commissioner Pintar, seconded by Commissioner Palosaari, to adopt the deficit elimination resolutions for the Airport Fund, Twin Lakes Special Assessment District Fund, Rice Lake Special Assessment District Fund, Otter Lake Special Assessment District Fund, Brownfield Fund and Airport Passenger Facility Charge Fund deficits. The motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Pintar, Palosaari, Tikkanen, Koskela, Ala 5.

NO: None 0.

7. Blight Elimination Grant. Kathleen Beattie, Houghton County Treasurer, asked the Board to adopt a resolution to apply for a Blight Elimination Grant on behalf of Houghton County.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, seconded by Commissioner Koskela, to adopt the resolution as presented to apply for a Blight Elimination Grant on behalf of Houghton County. The motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Tikkanen, Koskela, Pintar, Palosaari, Ala 5.

NO: None 0.

8. Request for assistance with Vietnam Memorial Moving Wall. Paul Lehto discussed the possibility of assistance by the County with the installation of the electrical power required to exhibit the wall.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen to have the County assist with the installation of electrical power required to exhibit the Vietnam Memorial Moving Wall. The motion died for lack of a second.

9. Houghton/Keweenaw Trail Authority. Paul Lehto discussed membership dues with the Board.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, seconded by Commissioner Pintar, to pay membership dues in the amount of \$100 to the Houghton/Keweenaw Trail Authority. The motion carried by voice vote: Ayes 5, Nays 0.

10. Houghton County Road Millage. Kevin Harju, Engineer, of the Houghton County Road Commission discussed the need for a resolution to allow a millage proposal to be placed on the August 5, 2014 Primary ballot.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, seconded by Commissioner Pintar, to adopt the resolution as presented for the Houghton County Road Commission millage for the August 5, 2014 Primary. The motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Tikkanen, Pintar, Palosaari, Koskela, Ala 5.

NO: None 0.

11. Appropriations. A motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, supported by Commissioner Palosaari, to approve the listed appropriation.

- a. Western U.P. Planning and Development Region \$2,866.50.

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

12. Travel Requests. A motion was made by Commissioner Palosaari, seconded by Commissioner Koskela, to approve the listed travel requests.

- a. U.P. Association of County Commissioners
- b. Brenda Cadwell – Houghton County Friend of Court
- c. Kevin Coppo – Houghton County Sheriff's Office
- d. John Pekkala – Houghton County Drain Commissioner

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

13. MERS. Commissioner Ala discussed MERS with the Board. Eric Forsberg, Controller, will contact a representative of MERS to schedule a Special Meeting.

Public Comments. Barbara LaFex Lewis commented on the Laird Township and Duncan Township situations with PILT funds and National Forest Lands. Paul Lehto also commented.

Todd LaRoux and Paul Lehto commented on the Vietnam Memorial Moving Wall.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, seconded by Commissioner Koskela, to adjourn. The motion carried by voice vote: Ayes 5, Nays 0.

Scott Ala, Chairman

Patricia A. Janke, County Clerk