

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 11, 2021**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular meeting on Tuesday, May 11, 2021, in the 5th Floor Conference room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton. The public was attending by Zoom and in person.

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 done by Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk:

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 Janssen, seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to approve the April 13, 2021 minutes as presented.

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

Approval of Agenda/Additions:

Commissioner Anderson requested one (1) addition. #8-Restoring training funds back to the budget effective June 1, 2021.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the Agenda with #8 being added to the Agenda for Restoring training funds back to the budget effective June 1, 2021 as presented.

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

Public Comments:

Jim Wainio addressed the Board.
Teresa Kariniemi addressed the Board.
Erik Kiilunen addressed the Board.
Tim Timmonen addressed the Board.
Phil Storm addressed the Board.
Steve DeLongchamp addressed the Board.
Bill Manderfield addressed the Board.
Mary Sears addressed the Board.
Amy Johnson addressed the Board.
Harold Rudnianin addressed the Board.
Darice Taylor addressed the Board.
Teresa Kariniemi addressed the Board.
Dan Holcomb addressed the Board.
Steve Tarnowski addressed the Board.

Naomi Leukuma addressed the Board.
Daniel Niemala addressed the Board.
Anita Tervo addressed the Board.

Approval of Bills:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve paying the bills submitted of \$828,003.74 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Koskela, Britz 5.
NO: None 0.

Correspondence:

None.

Reports:

1. Standing committee

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following:

Houghton County Road Commission and the Jail. He stated a Purchase Agreement has been written for the property on Sharon Avenue with help from our Attorney, and that the FALC Board has that now and is considering it. He also talked about the property being in Portage Township, and the need for Public Act 425 agreement or annexation so that it can come into the City of Houghton and be in the County Seat.

Commissioner Janssen had nothing to report to the Board.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

Census numbers should be complete and reported in September 2021, Recycling bins at the Transfer Station have been implemented and the program has started. He thanked Senator McBroom and Representative Markkanen for the meeting they attended last week on the recreation trails and Douglass Houghton Falls Park with the other legislators that came to see them.

Commissioner Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

Transfer Station updates were given, and he talked about the meeting with the Senators and State Representative regarding the damaged Recreational Trails he reported on the cost and wear and tear for the Mental Health transports being done by the Sheriff Department, and Senator McBroom possibly making a report in June regarding the November 2020 election. He stated the emergency services are stretched to the limits in assisting people in Houghton County.

Chairman Koskela reported to the Board on the following:

Mental Health transports are putting high miles on the Sheriff Department vehicles, overtime pay is affecting the budget, and there is no reimbursement to the County at the current time.

2. Special Committee

None.

3. County Officers

Dennis Hext, Airport Manager, addressed the Board regarding the Airport. A recent security and safety plan review meeting that happened with our local Emergency Services partners.

Todd LaRoux, addressed the Board regarding the Building Department, and thanked our Prosecutor and Court systems for their assistance in make sure that local contractors do the right thing and are properly serving the clients who hire them.

New Business:

1. Enduring Gifts County Fund Raising Initiative

Ben Larson, Administrator, requested permission to initiate fund raising activities and to establish short term and longer term “endowed” Enduring Gift funds for the County. He discussed fund raising, and stated a citizen recently gave a gift of flashlights to the local Sheriff department. He shared that he has done the preliminary research with the Michigan State Treasury, with our External Auditor, with our Attorney, and with the Michigan Association of Counties leadership. All have said that it is possible, so he asked to now take the time to do the remaining research to set up such a program, and that he would be bringing a formal Resolution and a plan to the June meeting.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve Ben Larson to prepare a Resolution for the June 2021 meeting as presented.

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

2. Clerk Office Requests

a. CPL Fingerprinting

Commissioner Anderson asked the County Clerk which CPL fingerprinting machine would need to be purchased. County Clerk informed the Board that Marquette County purchased the lower cost machine and it was working perfectly. She left the decision to the Board.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the County Clerk’s Office begin fingerprinting and purchase the \$5,590 CPL fingerprinting machine as presented.

The Motion failed by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen 2.

NO: Tikkanen, Koskela, Britz 3.

b. Vital Records Rate Increase

Commissioner Tikkanen discussed the 2021 Vital Records Fees included with the County Clerk’s request to the Board. The County Clerk explained there had been no increase in more than 20 years.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to adopt the new vital records fee in the County Clerk’s Office as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

3. MAC and NACO Conference Zoom Updates

Ben Larson, Administrator, discussed the MAC and NACO Conference Zoom updates.

4. ATC Tower Easement in Calumet Township

Ben Larson, Administrator, explained the picture of the tower in Calumet that was included in the Board's packet. ATC owns the tower, but it is sitting on County land. ATC would like to purchase a permanent easement for the land that the tower sits on. They made an offer to purchase this easement for \$126,500.00 and the County did not accept the offer. The County has made a counter offer of \$132,000.00 and that was agreed upon in principle. Attorney Zappa has also considered the agreement, and if approved he would make sure that our documentation and agreement would be sound on behalf of the County.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to accept the offer for a permanent easement as presented.

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

5. County Property Holdings

Ben Larson, Administrator, gave a computer presentation on all of the land and mineral rights owned by Houghton County using Google Earth. All Board members received a zip drive and were encouraged to download Google Earth and then they would have all of the County holdings at their quick availability.

6. Marina and Transfer Station Updates

Ben Larson, Administrator, announced the Marina opened on May 1st. There were problems that needed repair, and several items have been addressed and are still being addressed. New showerheads were replaced in the bath house, a new roof was replaced on the guard shack, several trip hazards in the forms of broken concrete on pathways were removed and replaced, east end Wi-Fi repeaters and security cameras have been installed, damaged groundwork has been repaired, and the spillway has been cleaned of sand up until the outlet into the canal. At the canal a large plume remains and must be cleaned up at some point, and Administrator Larson is working with the EGLE and Army Corps of Engineers to seek a permit for that work. The computer system is receiving a major upgrade also, and PFN and Up.Net have connected the office to high speed fiber networks. This move will greatly enhance the computer and Wi-Fi capabilities and speeds, and allow for secure credit card transactions and more security for the Marina and IT there. LED lights are also being installed on the light poles, and the old incandescent bulbs are being retired.

Transfer Station: He stated there is now hot water at the transfer station, and he discussed the tonnage and recycling reports as well as some maintenance and repair needs that have recently been addressed.

7. Appropriations:

1. WUPPDR Quarterly - \$2,866.50
2. UPEDA Annual Dues- \$500.00
3. NorthCare Network - \$28,860.50

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

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Britz, Janssen, Tikkanen, Koskela, Anderson 5.
NO: None 0.

8. Restore training funds back to the budget effective June 1, 2021.

Commissioner Anderson stated the training budgets were stopped last fall and discussed the importance of people attending trainings and meetings.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to restore four (4) months of training/travel budgets effective June 1, 2021.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

Public Comments:

Naomi Leukuma addressed the Board.

Mary Sears addressed the Board.

Jim Yates addressed the Board.

Commissioner Anderson discussed asking Senator McBroom to come to Houghton County to update the Board on the Oversight Committee since he is the Chairman of that Committee.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to invite Senator McBroom to come to Houghton County to update the Board on the Oversight Committee.

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

Announcements:

None.

Adjournment:

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

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

Albert Koskela, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk