

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 14, 2021**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular meeting on Tuesday, December 14, 2021, in the 5th Floor Conference room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton. The public was attending 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; and Roy Britz, District 5.

Approval of Minutes:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the November 9, 2021 minutes as presented.

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

Approval of Agenda/Additions:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz, seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to approve the Agenda as presented.

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

Public Comments-Agenda Items Only (5 minutes per participant):

Horst Schmidt addressed the Board regarding #2 under Old Business and asked how much Houghton County will receive.

Approval of Bills:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve paying the bills submitted of \$ 910,539.94 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

Correspondence:

The Board discussed two (2) letters.

Reports:

1. Standing committee

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following:

Had nothing to report, however, he requested a moment of silence for the passing of the former cook, Sandy Ahola, from the jail.

Commissioner Janssen had nothing to report to the Board.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

Houghton County Fair: Sandy Ahola was a longtime member of the Houghton County Fair Board, and stated she will definitely be missed.

The 2021 Fair had a record year for the youth's livestock. Exhibitors were down over 100 most likely due to COVID. The \$25,000 Agriculture Grant was used to put in a new concrete floor for the Exhibits Building, and a stand for the horse building, and a new parking lot.

The next Houghton County Fair will be held from August 25-28, 2022.

Commissioner Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

Transfer Station: Announced there is a new Manager of the Transfer Station.

The recycling bin is available five (5) days per week.

They are accepting demolished homes five (5) days per week.

DNR meeting: He attended a DNR meeting with Commissioner Anderson and the Recreation Authority. The trail repair will hopefully open about one (1) year from now between Dollar Bay and Lake Linden. It is fully funded. Bids for engineering will soon be accepted.

There is an opportunity for a non-motorized trail from the City of Hancock to Lake Linden.

There is a \$300,000 trust fund grant from the Michigan National Refuge for the Houghton Douglas Falls Park.

Additional Bridge: Tikkanen thanked Jeff Ratcliffe from KEDA for his hard work along with the municipalities and city managers and two (2) employees from MDOT, and two (2) MTU Professors for discussing the additional bridge. It was discussed that a feasibility study needs to be done, and parameters need to be drawn, and then go to the Legislatures for support.

Commissioner Anderson discussed finding a location and determine the cost.

Chairman Koskela reported to the Board on the following:

Mental Health: There is an agreement that Mental Health will pay Houghton County for transports. A check will be coming to the County.

Sheriff Department: The heating unit in the Sheriff Department quit working. A new one is ordered.

2. Special Committee.

None.

3. County Officers

Josh Saaranen, Sheriff, updated the Board on all of the arrests made by Houghton County. There was a total of 309 arrests in 2021 so far.

The two (2) cars purchased with the USDA grant will be made in 2022. The grant was a 50/50 grant with a total of \$11,402 with Houghton County paying \$5,701.

He thanked the Board for the five (5) cars that the Board approved at the November 9, 2021 meeting.

Todd LaRoux, Building Inspector, stated the Calumet Electronics Building is almost complete, and the Hampton Inn is open for business. Somero has built a 400 square foot addition to their building.

The Building Department is still in test mode for the BS&A software.

In 2021 there have been 80 new homes built which is a record of all time. And, there have been 144 new 911 addresses this year.

Jacob Djerf, Assistant Equalization Director, informed the board they have a new employee in Equalization.

Lisa Mattila, Treasurer, stated she had one (1) employee retire, and another employee left. Jason Coffey replaced the retiring employee, and she has one (1) opening.

Old Business:

1. Rebuild America Initiative – New Bridge Correspondence (Draft)

Elizabeth Bjorn, Administrator, stated she prepared a draft letter per the Board's request.

Commissioner Tikkanen stated he and Commissioner Anderson will review the drafted letter and make any necessary changes and give the revised letter to Chairman Koskela for his approval.

2. Opioid Settlement (2) Agreements

Commissioner Anderson stated the Michigan Attorney General has signed off on the Settlement Agreement. Houghton County needs to sign off, but the details are sketchy. He stated the County would receive about a one-quarter percent (1/4%) or .24 of the 15% that is allocated to the local governmental agencies if Houghton County agrees. All of the groups must agree or it will go back to litigation.

3. Cardboard Bailer Bids

One (1) bid was received from REL for \$1,000.00 to purchase the unit.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to sell the cardboard bailer to REL for \$1,000.00.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

New Business:

1. Tentative Union Agreement-Sheriff Union POAM

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to approve the Sheriff Union POAM Union Agreement as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

2. Copper Country Mental Health Appointments

The Board discussed the two (2) names given to the Board by the Copper Country Mental Health Services Board of Directors.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Britz to agree to appoint Julie Farmer and Richard Herrala to the Copper Country Mental Health Services Board of Directors.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

3. CY 2022 Remonumentation Application

Joe Foster addressed the Board. He oversees the Remonumentation Program. It is a state grant program to resurvey the State of Michigan. They have been approved to receive fund of \$74,215 to accomplish more surveys in 2022. There are currently five (5) contracted surveyors. They completed 28 corners in 2021. They hope to complete 36 in 2022.

Commissioner Anderson asked what percentage of corners are completed in Houghton County. Joe Foster stated approximately 30%.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the 2022 Remonumentation Application as presented.

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

4. Houghton County Sheriff's Union – MERS Benefit E

Elizabeth Bjorn, Administrator, informed the Board this is an annual payment that is required to fully fund the adoption of the Benefit E program that must be funded before December 31, 2021. The total cost is \$134,742.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the \$134,742 payment for the Houghton County Sheriff's Union-MERS Benefit E as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Koskela, 4.

NO: None 0.

ABSTAIN: Britz 1.

5. Appointed/Elected raises

Elizabeth Bjorn, Administrator, recommended the Board approve the same wage increase for the Appointed and Elected that the Houghton County Courthouse Union received. The wage increases will be 2022-\$.80, 2023-\$.60, and 2024-\$.50.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz, seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the wage increases for the Appointed and Elected for the years 2022-2024 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

6. December 2021 Quarterly Budget Amendments

Elizabeth Bjorn, Administrator, informed the board about the proposed Budget Amendments in their packets.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to approve the December 2021 Quarterly Budget Amendments as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

7. Open Meeting Act Informational Letter-effective 01 January 2022

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the Open Meeting Act Informational Letter effective January 1, 2022 as presented.

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

8. Appropriations

- a. National Association of Counties (NACo) annual dues - \$733.00
- b. C.C. Mental Health EQQ - \$41,123.73

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

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

Public Comments (5 minutes per participant):

Lisa Mattila, Treasurer, addressed the Board regarding the approved Airport raises.

Lisa, Mattila, Treasurer, informed the Board the Copper Country Mental Health payment has arrived.

Announcements:

None.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to adjourn the meeting at 5:41 pm.

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

Albert Koskela, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk