

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING AND BUDGET HEARING
SEPTEMBER 29, 2021**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Special meeting on Wednesday, September 29, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. in the 5th Floor Conference Room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Albert Koskela at 12:00 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 the County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly:

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

Approval of Minutes:

Ben Larson, Administrator, informed the Board that Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk, noticed the Board voted in August and September to pay Copper Country Mental Health a duplicate Appropriation.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the September 14, 2021 minutes, and delete the Copper Country Mental Health Appropriation under #10 as presented.

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

Agenda:

Ben Larson, Administrator, requested adding #4 for Budget Amendments.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the Agenda with the one (1) addition as presented.

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

Public Comments on Agenda Items Only (5 minutes per commenter):

None.

Public Hearing on the County Fiscal 2021-22 Budget:

a. Open Hearing

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to open the hearing.

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

b. Discussion

Commissioner Anderson recommended an increase in the budget for KEDA from \$10,000 to \$20,000. He also requested the \$1.1 million for the acquisition of the jail property on Sharon Avenue be finalized by the end of October 2021.

Ben Larson, Administrator stated the Purchase Agreement has not been signed.

Commissioner Anderson stated his concerns are that the \$1.1 million is in the budget, and that the Purchase Agreement is executed.

Commissioner Tikkanen said he supported the increase for KEDA. He stated KEDA has hired additional staff. He is not opposed to the fund being approved for expenditure for the jail property on Sharon Avenue.

Chairman Koskela stated the money could be reimbursed to the General Fund.

Commissioner Janssen stated the Purchase Agreement stipulates that a 425 Agreement or Annex has to be done.

Commissioner Britz said he spoke with Eric Waara at the City of Houghton. He is concerned on the language as Portage Township wants a jail built before the property is annexed. He discussed the moving of the Courts to the Sharon Avenue property, and stated the Courts must be in the City limit.

Commissioner Anderson again recommended getting the Purchase Agreement signed before the end of October 2021.

c. Close Hearing

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to close the hearing.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

Public Hearing on Cross Country Sports Loan Closeout

a. Open Hearing

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

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

b. Discussion

Commissioner Anderson read a memo from KEDA regarding the MEDC closeout. The loan has been met, but the debt is still there.

Chairman Koskela asked why the loan was in June of 2020, but the balance is not lower. The Board had discussion on the loan amount paying on the interest.

Commissioner Tikkanen stated the loan saved six (6) jobs.

a. Close Hearing

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to close the hearing.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

New Business:

1. 2021-22 Fiscal Year Budget Adoption

Ben Larson, Administrator, stated the Marina and Transfer were not budgeted in the past.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen approve the 2021-22 Fiscal Year Budget and increase KEDA's budget to \$20,0000, and budget \$1.1 million for the property acquisition for the property on Sharon Avenue.

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

2. Cross Country Sports Revolving Loan Fund Closeout

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen approve the Loan Fund Closeout for Cross Country Sports.

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

3. County Administrator Candidate Review

Commissioner Britz opened the envelopes, and Chairman Koskela read the names of the candidates: Christina Holcomb, David Juntunen, Jeremy Marshall, William Lytle, Elizabeth Bjorn, Adam Gill, Mary Sears, Dale Shalifoe, Kerry Pontis, Keith Anderson, and Kassy Heikkinen.

The Board agreed to have a special meeting on October 5, 2021 at 1:00 pm to select the candidates to interview.

4. Budget Amendments

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Britz approve the quarterly budget amendments as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

Public Comments (5 minutes per commenter)

None.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to adjourn.

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

Albert Koskela, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk