

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PUBLIC HEARINGS/REGULAR MEETING
MAY 10, 2022**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, May 10, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in the 5th Floor Conference Room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton and public viewing in person and by Zoom.

A. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tikkanen at 5:00 p.m.

A request was made by Commissioner Tikkanen for a moment of silence for Albert Koskela. Commissioner Tikkanen then made another request for a moment of silence for John Kelly former Controller for Houghton County.

B. Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Tikkanen.

C. Roll call:

The following Commissioners responded to roll call done by the Deputy County Clerk, Renee Cunningham:

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

D. Approval of Minutes:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the minutes of the April 12th and April 29th, 2022 meetings as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

E. Approval of Agenda/Additions:

Commissioner Anderson requested an addition to Old Business #3, update on Keweenaw Waters application.

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 4, Nays 0.

F. Public Comments-Agenda Items only *(5 minute limit):

Dan Holcomb, Chairman of the Copper Country Republican party, read a letter to the board to endorse Joel Keranen for the District #2 seat.

Steve Foix also recommended Joel Keranen for Commissioner for the 2nd District seat.

G. Approval of Bills:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve paying the bills submitted of \$2,225,956.34.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Britz, Janssen, Tikkanen, Anderson 4.

NO: None 0.

H. Correspondence:

Elizabeth Bjorn, Administrator, discussed the MACT house bill #4730.

I. Reports:

1. Standing Committee:

Commissioner Britz reported the Road Commission reported the County has received 246 inches of snow through the end of April. Commissioner Britz also reported that the Health Department is having a hard filling their open positions. Staff members are doing double duty.

Commissioner Britz commented on the UP Commissioners meeting and reported on the alcohol money with North Care.

Sheriff Department: Commissioner Britz feels a new door is needed on the Huron street entrance into the Sheriff's department. The cost to replace the door is estimated at \$12,000.00.

Commissioner Britz also reported the Sheriff's department needs to replace one of the deputies and with the medical marijuana fund they are looking to add an additional deputy to the staff.

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following:

Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District has just put out a survey for Houghton & Keweenaw county residents to fill out. The survey is seeking how to best serve the two (2) counties. Surveys were on the desk at the meeting and Gretchen encouraged the audience to take a survey to complete. Deadline to turn in a survey is June 1, 2022.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

Commissioner Anderson talked about Albert Koskela and how this was his tenth year as the Commissioner in District #2. Anderson then talked about how John Kelly served the county very well as a past Controller.

Anderson then reported the Houghton County Recreational Authority. The DNR is working on a permit to repair the Bill Nicholas trail that was washed out during the Father's Day flood. No bidding as occurred yet.

Commissioner Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

Reported how fortunate it was for him to see the presentation given by Ed McBroom at the U.P. Conference.

Repairs will begin shortly on the sidewalk in front of the Courthouse.

Tikkanen then talked about Courthouse Security. Each office will be visited by the Safety Team. Tikkanen asks that all should respond when contacted by the Safety Team.

Commissioner Tikkanen finished his report letting the board know that the Transfer Station has processed 16 tons of trash so far this year.

3. County Officers:

Todd LaRoux, Building Inspector, informed the Board that there have been 17 commercial permits and 37 building permits.

Sheriff Josh Saaranen reported that there are currently 23 inmates housed in the jailed. There have been 1025 criminal complaints thus far this year. There are currently two deputy positions that need to be filled.

Commissioner Anderson did report that the Land Bank has two (2) redevelopment projects in progress. Anderson also requested ARPA funds be allocated for some of the properties that need to be demolished.

J. Old Business:

1. Appoint to fill District #2 Commissioner seat.

After some discussion Commissioner Anderson made a Motion to table the appointment of the District #2 seat and to let the winner of the August Primary fill the term. Support was given by Commissioner Janssen.

Commissioner Britz added that the voters should be able to pick their own candidate for the District 2 seat.

Commissioner Tikkanen let the board know he appreciated their team work in this matter.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Anderson 4.

NO: None 0.

2. America Rescue Plan (CSLFRF)

Chairman Tikkanen added new requests to each Commissioner's packet.

3. Keweenaw Waterway/Waters

Derek Bradway gave the Board an update on the Campground. Derek thanked the Commissioners for their help in moving the project forward.

New Business:

1. George Rajala – Rajala Road

George Rajala, a resident of Chassell addressed the Board. Commissioner Britz asked for Kevin Harju (by zoom) to be unmuted. George Rajala discussed the road flooding (16-18") and not getting help from the Road Commission or Chassell Township to fix the road. Road has been closed due to flooding in the area. No fire trucks, nor buses will travel down the road due to flooding. The DEQ has been to his home to talk to him. George requested the Board approve the money to fix the road. George thanked the Commissioners for their time. Two (2) homes are effected. Chassell Township said to him that it is a County Road.

Kevin Harju stated the Road Commission has not refused to repair the report. They can spend up to 50% to improve the road. First quote of \$53,900 to cover the gravel to the site. He contacted the township to check on cost sharing monies. A new quote of \$65,000 as of today for gravel. HCRC would apply for an EGLE permit.

Kevin Harju explained it could take up to one (1) year for a permit.

Chairman Tikkanen asked if this is a Road Commission matter. Commissioner Britz said it is.

Kevin explained they need an outside source to pay for 50%. He said local citizens have paid 50%. They are looking to Chassell Township to pay the 50%. Commissioner Britz said the project is in the six (6) figures.

George Rajala asked if the County has any money to assist him, and asked for a response within seven (7) days. Commissioner Britz asked if the County can put money into the

County roads. Kevin Harju stated there are 850 miles of County roads in Houghton County. The next Road Commission meeting is May 23rd at 1:30 pm.

2. Budget Amendments – 2nd Quarter

Elizabeth Bjorn, Administrator, reported that the submission of the 2nd Quarter was late.

A Motion to accept the 2nd quarterly budget amendment ending March 31, 2022 was made by Commissioner Anderson and supported by Commissioner Janssen as presented.

The motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Tikkanen, Janssen, Anderson, Britz 4.

NO: None 0.

3. Sale of Airport Outlot A- Resolution #22-7

Changes have been made to Resolution #22-7 for the sale of out lot #8.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to accept the changes to Resolution #22-7 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Britz, Janssen, Tikkanen, Anderson 4.

NO: None 0.

7. Travel

- a. Chad Hammerstrom and Dan Kilpela Building Department-Mechanical Inspectors Assoc Conference \$650.00

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the travel request as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

8. Appropriations

- a. W.U.P.P.D.R. - \$2,866.50
- b. U.P. Association of County Commissioners 2022 Dues - \$174.00

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

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

L. Public Comments: (5 minute limit)

Timothy Sears, Franklin Township -will be on the ballot for the Constitutional Party.

Joel Keranen - commented to the Board about the disservice to District 2 by tabling the vote for an interim District 2 Commissioner. He feels District 2 has zero representation at the County table.

Lou Ambuehl - supports the Board's decision to wait until the August Primary is complete to appoint a Commissioner for District #2.

Glenn Schuldt - supports the Board on their decision.

Timothy Sears - Eric Forsberg would be a good choice for interim District 2 Commissioner.

Faith Morrison – thanked the Board for having zoom and the packets on line, but would have liked to have all the information available for her to see. Applicant information was missing.

Chairman Tikkanen it was due to lack of time due to the deadline to get the applicant's information on the website.

Daniel Niemela – Suggested the Board should have chosen an interim Commissioner at the meeting.

M. Announcements:

Commissioner Janssen reminded everyone that the surveys are on the table.

N. Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to adjourn at 6:10 pm.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk