

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
AUGUST 15, 2023**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, August 15, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. in the Conference Room on the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Courthouse, City of Houghton with the public viewing in person and by Microsoft Teams.

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tikkanen at 4:00 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Tikkanen.

**Roll Call:**

The following Commissioners responded to roll call done by the County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly:

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

**Approval of Minutes-July 18, 2023 Public Hearings & Regular Meeting:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the minutes of the July 18, 2023 minutes as presented.

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

**Approval of Agenda/Additions:**

Chairman Tikkanen requested #8 be added for the Equalization Director position. Commissioner Anderson requested #9 for the MAC Conference, and #10 for a \$12,188 budget amendment for the Houghton County Fair.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to approve the Agenda as presented with the three (3) additions.

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

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

Debbie Winquist addressed the Board regarding the request for Houghton County to pay the insurance for last year and this year. She stated the County had always paid half of the insurance cost for many years. The Fair Board would like the name continue to be called Houghton County Fair. She suggested the County make a \$10,000 donation in 2024.

Ethan Johnson, Treasurer of the Houghton County Fair Board, addressed the Board requesting Houghton County pay the insurance for last year and this year and to make a \$10,000 donation in 2024.

Carol Saari, former manager of the Houghton County Fair, addressed the Board requesting Houghton County pay the insurance for last year and this year and to make a \$10,000 donation in 2024.

Paul LaBine, Prosecutor, introduced himself to the Board.

**Approval of Bills -\$4,195,190.72:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve paying the bills submitted of \$4,195,190.72.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

**Correspondence:**

None.

**Reports:**

**Standing Committee:**

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following:

Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District: She stated there would be a celebration at Point Isabelle on August 27, 2023 at 5:00 pm. There will be music and everyone is welcome.

Recycling: She stated the monthly recycling increased from 3.94 in 2022 to 4.92 in 2023. Due to Marquette not fully accepting recycling at this time, the Houghton County Transfer Station will only accept recycling on Wednesdays.

Commissioner Keranen reported to the Board on the following:

Torch Lake Board meeting: He attended the meeting, and stated they were collecting soil samples from the flooding, and looking at the damage.

Houghton County Planning Commission: He stated the Planning Commission will be working on updating the members of the Planning Commission at the next meeting pm Tuesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Recycling: He said some work needs to be done regarding the recycling and our partners, but the staff is doing great at the Transfer Station.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

Land Bank: The Land Bank received a \$500,000 Grant for the 2023 Fiscal Year.

Houghton County Fair: The Fair will be from August 24-27, 2023.

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following:

Pilgrim River Development: The owner has had issues with the septic approvals. The soil testing has been good. Out of 47 total lots, 38 have been approved.

911 Building Tower: The tower will come down on August 23, 2023 and will be hauled away.

Portage Township: At Monday's meeting, they discussed a 425 that their Attorney wrote for Portage Township and the City of Houghton to sign. The Board tabled the 425 agreement until their September meeting. They will have a public meeting at 5:30 before their regular 6:00 pm Board meeting. He asked Administrator Larson to have Attorney Zappa review the 425 Agreement.

Chairman Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

Sharon Avenue property: OHM has been looking to redevelop the property on Sharon Avenue.

**County Officers:**

Dennis Hext, Airport Manager, stated the runway project is almost complete, and \$3 million has been reimbursed so far to the County, and more will come. He stated the Airport Board approved the sale of Lot 21. He discussed a request to build a hanger, and the FAA will process the request.

Chris VanArsdale, Emergency Manager, He discussed the cleanup from the spring flood, state funding and he has not heard from FEMA. He is looking into a grant program through the Army Corp of Engineers that will fund construction projects.

Joshua Saaranen, Sheriff, stated there are currently 14 inmates and they have received 1700 complaints this year. He is looking forward to working with the schools regarding security. He stated the Calumet Schools is looking for a Resource Officer.

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk, advised the Board that the City/Townships need election workers for the 2024-2025 elections. Applications are available at the County Clerk's Office or at the City/Township Offices or online at Michigan.gov. Training will be in September and October 2023. She stated the 9-day early voting will be at the City of Houghton Center-2<sup>nd</sup> floor-ADA compliant. The City and Township Clerks will be signing an agreement for the 9-day early voting with Clerk Kelly soon. The workers will receive \$18 per hour, and the Chair and Supervisor will receive \$20/hour. Clerk Kelly will be the Administrator and the QVF Coordinator.

### **Old Business:**

#### **1. TLFCU building consideration**

Commissioner Janssen stated there is possible a verbal agreement for the Credit Union to purchase the property. The Board discussed getting the agreement in writing.

Administrator Larson stated the Credit Union Board meets on August 29, 2023.

Chairman Tikkanen recommended waiting for the Purchase Agreement before taking any action.

#### **2. Treatment Court Consideration (Opioid Lawsuit Funds)**

Commissioner Keranen discussed an email Keith Anderson sent to the Commissioners. He discussed setting up a Sub-Committee.

Administrator Larson stated more money will be coming from Walgreens and others soon.

Commissioner Anderson stated the lawsuit monies should be used for Houghton County citizens. He suggested a comprehensive strategy be done and to schedule a work session and get requests, and see the need to hire additional staff.

Chairman Tikkanen stated Commissioner Keranen and Anderson, and Administrator Larson will set up a work session with the appropriate people.

### **New Business:**

#### **1. MSP/Negaunee Regional Dispatch Agreement with County**

Sheriff Saaranen discussed the new October agreement for \$175,191. Houghton County averages about 39% of the calls. The 911 Advisory Board recommends signing and approving the new Agreement. The \$175,191 will be split into 2 payments and paid by the 911 Advisory Board Fund.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the MSP/Negaunee Regional Dispatch Agreement with Houghton County as presented. The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

## **2. Airport Land Sale Agreement**

Dennis Hext, Airport Manager, stated the Agreement is needed to correct a technical issue.

## **3. Airport Land Sale Resolution #23-15**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve Resolution #23-15 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

## **REVISED SALE OF PORTION OF AIRPARK PLAT LOT 21** **RESOLUTION #23-15**

**WHEREAS**, the Houghton County Board of Commissioners, as successor in interest to the former Houghton County Airport Authority, which was dissolved on July 24, 1989, is authorized to exercise all rights of interest and statutory authority granted to the dissolved Houghton County Airport Authority.

**WHEREAS**, the Houghton County Memorial Airport Committee, created on July 26, 1989, under the authority of the Houghton County Board of Commissioners, pursuant to Act 73 of the Public Acts of 1970 and Act 327 of the Public Acts of 1945, and pursuant to the authority vested in the County of Houghton by the Aeronautics Code of the State of Michigan, has the authority to adopt rules and regulations for the management, government and the use of said Airport property.

**WHEREAS**, the Houghton County Board of Commissioners previously authorized and approved the sale of two portions of Lot 21 of the Houghton County Airpark Plat to Copper Island Academy Real Estate, LLC, in two separate transactions.

**WHEREAS**, the Franklin Township Assessor refused to recognize the transactions unless combined into a single legal description.

**WHEREAS**, in furtherance of this transaction, Copper Island Academy Real Estate, LLC, has reconveyed the North Forty (40) feet of Lot 21 to the County of Houghton in a Deed dated July 31, 2023, recorded at Houghton County Register of Deeds, Document No. 2023R-03041.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, Thomas P. Tikkanen, Houghton County Board of Commissioners Chairman, is authorized to sign all closing documents for the sale of those portions of Lot 21 of Houghton County Airpark Plat to Copper Island Academy Real Estate, LLC, a Michigan limited liability company, as hereinafter described.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, at its regular meeting held on August 15, 2023, the Houghton County Board of Commissioners hereby approves and reauthorizes the sale of the previously-approved portions of Lot 21 of the Houghton County Airpark Plat to Copper Island Academy Real Estate, LLC, in a single transaction with one combined legal description upon those terms and conditions set forth in the Amended Purchase Agreement presented to this Board, for the additional purchase price of Five Thousand and 00/100 Dollars (\$5,000.00), and pursuant to the Airport Industrial Park Covenants Section 5, Resale Rights, contained within the Houghton County Airpark Plat, September 12, 1973, in Liber 23 of Miscellaneous Records, Page 157, Houghton County Register of Deeds records.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the combined portions of Lot 21 of the Houghton County Airpark Plat being sold to Copper Island Academy Real Estate, LLC, consists of and shall hereafter be described as:

The North 40.00 feet of the East 165.66 feet of Lot 21, and the North 225.00 feet of the West 330.00 feet of Lot 21 of the Houghton County Airpark, Franklin Township, Houghton County, Michigan, according to the recorded Plat thereof, said Plat being recording in Plat Cabinet 1, Folio No. 88-93, Houghton County records, and as depicted as “Parcel A” in Exhibit A attached hereto.

Subject to any and all restrictions, reservations, easements, rights-of-way, and covenants appearing in the record chain of title, including any and all restrictions or covenants adopted August 31, 1973, by the Houghton County Airport Authority, and recorded September 12, 1973, in Liber 23 of Misc. Records, at Page 157, Houghton County Register of Deeds Records, and as subsequently amended.

This parcel shall not be considered a “stand-alone” parcel, and shall not be conveyed separately or apart from Lot 20 of the Houghton County Airpark, which Grantee has previously acquired in a Deed recorded at Houghton County Register of Deeds, Document No. 2021R-\_\_\_\_\_.

**Motion Moved By:**

**Motion Supported By:**

**Roll Call Vote: Yes:** \_\_\_\_\_

**No:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Motion Carried.**

**RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
THOMAS P. TIKKANEN, CHAIRMAN  
Houghton County Board of Commissioners

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

STATE OF MICHIGAN     )  
  ) ss.  
COUNTY OF HOUGHTON )

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the County of Houghton, Michigan, at a regular meeting of its Board of Commissioners on the 15th day of August, 2023, the original of which is on file in my office. I further certify that the meeting was held and the minutes therefor were filed in compliance with Act No. 267 of the Public acts of 1976.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereinto affixed my official signature this \_\_\_\_\_ day of August, 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
JENNIFER KELLY, COUNTY CLERK  
County of Houghton

**4. Airport Committee Recommendation-PFAS Legal Services Agreement**

Administrator Larson discussed the clean-up of the PFAS.

Dennis Hext stated an Attorney recommended approving the Agreement

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to join the lawsuit and approve the PFAS Legal Services Agreement as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

#### **5. MSUE MOA FY 23/24 Request-\$45,500.00**

Administrator Larson stated Paul Putnam has requested the same amount without a raise.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the MSUE MOA FY 23/24 request for \$45,000.00 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

#### **6. WUPPDR 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

Chairman Tikkanen stated the Board has been invited to go to the WUPPDR Annual meeting in White Pine on September 18, 2023 and to bring their spouses.

#### **7. Houghton County Fair Support**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to pay the FY23 amount for the insurance to the Houghton County Fair Board.

Commissioner Britz recommended paying the Houghton County Fair Board for last year's insurance and this year's insurance with a budget amendment of \$12,188.

Commissioner Keranen asked why Houghton County did not receive an insurance bill in 2022. Commissioner Anderson stated the Agent, Mark Hannula was ill and did not send out a bill in 2022. A bill was sent out in 2023. Carol Saari stated the Fair Board had reached out to 6 insurance companies for quotes and Hannula was the only one (1) to respond.

The Motion carried by the following vote:

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

NO: None 0.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve \$10,000 in 2024 for the Houghton County Fair. No insurance payment will be done in 2024, and the Fair will be continued to be called "Houghton County Fair".

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

#### **8. Equalization Director**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to permanently appoint Jaikob Djerf as the Equalization Director.

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

#### **9. MAC Conference**

**A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to authorize Administrator Larson, Clerk Kelly, and the Commissioners to attend the MAC Conference in Kalamazoo on October 1-3, 2023.**

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

#### **10. Travel**

- a. Jennifer Kelly MARD Conference \$1,500**
- b. FOC Fall Conference \$3,000**
- c. LeAnn Pulda MECRA Conference \$1,078.00**

Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to authorize the above-mentioned Travel requests as presented.

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

#### **11. Appropriations:**

- a. MAC 2023-2024 County Dues \$5,343.64**
- b. NorthCare 3<sup>rd</sup> Q Payment \$34,996.50**
- c. Karhu Cyber-\$9,065.24**
- d. TK Elevator 2<sup>nd</sup> Payment ARP Funds \$60,307.17**
- e. WUPPDR 4<sup>th</sup> Q \$2,974.25**

**A, B & E-A** Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve letters A, B & E as presented.

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

**C-A** Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the \$9,065.24 payment to Karhu Cyber as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

**D-A** Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the \$60,307.17 payment to TK Elevator as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

Administrator Larson stated the elevator will be shut down for 7-10 days in September or October.

#### **Public Comments:**

Leah Hauswirth addressed the Board and requested an Animal Control Officer be hired due to animal abuse in Houghton County. She provided a folder to all board members and the County Clerk. The County Clerk was also given a folder with signed Petitions.

Commissioner Anderson asked if the pictures in the folder are from Houghton County. Leah stated yes they are.

Sheriff Saaranen stated the Sheriff Department did have an animal control officer, but the position is not active at this time.

#### **Announcements:**

None.

**Adjournment:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adjourn at 5:20 p.m.

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

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Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

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Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk