

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 18, 2024**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Public Hearing & Regular Meeting on Tuesday, June 18, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. in the 5th Floor Conference Room 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 5:00 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 Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk:

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

Approval of Minutes May 15, 2024 Regular Meeting:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2024 meeting as presented.

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

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Anderson requested adding #8a to discuss a \$250,000 grant for a flight next summer.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to accept the Agenda as presented with the one (1) addition.

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

Public Hearing-Truth in Taxation

a. Open Hearing

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

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

b. Discussion and Public Comment

Elizabeth Anderson, Equalization Specialist, explained the Truth in Taxation hearing in order to collect the maximum millage rate of 6.2070 mills for the 2024 levy.

The Millage Reduction Fraction (MRF) is 0.9976

The Base Tax Rate Fraction (BTRF) is 0.9492

The 2024 taxable value is 1,237,399,250

The Base Tax Rate (after application of the BTRF) is 5.9059

After adjusting the Base Tax Rate by the estimated Convention/Facilities Tax of 188,449

The resulting Base Tax Rate is 5.9057

The difference between the Maximum allowable rate of 6.2070 & the adjusted Base Tax Rate of 5.9057 is 0.3013 mills.

If approved, that difference nets a 5.10% increase in operating revenue from last year or approximately \$372,828 beyond last year's levy.

Host Schmidt asked a question about the 0.3013.

c. Close Hearing

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to close the hearing.

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

Public Comments:

Horst Schmidt addressed the Board regarding M#3 and asked if a new employee was going to be hired. Joe Battisfore stated it is to continue funding a staff member's current position that was created in 2019 through this grant. There are 2 fulltime and 1 part time positions at the Veteran's Office.

Approval of Bills:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve paying the bills submitted of \$1,305,804.44.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

Correspondence:

None.

Reports:

Standing Committee:

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following:

Meals on Wheels: She toured the facility. New kitchen equipment was recently received. There are more than 300 people on a waiting list for services.

BHK: There is a new program called Meet Up & Eat up for anyone under 18 years old at the Barkell and Baraga locations. They were recently ranked 12th in the Nation for a letter writing campaign. They will celebrate a 50th Anniversary this year.

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following:

Houghton County Road Commission: In a 2023 survey for road conditions, Houghton County ranked 28th in the State in terms of durability and access for roads. There were 3 of 10 counties in the State that were from the U.P.

Laird Township: He attended their monthly meeting. He distributed a brochure to the Board for Bay Ambulance. Voters will vote on a millage in August. Bay Ambulance compared current calls at 1040 compared to 195. Bay Ambulance meets Ontonagon folks to make transports to our County Airport and local hospitals when called upon.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

Canal View: He stated the Canal View's Board minutes and Board members are now visible on the Houghton County website with a link and postings each time they meet.

Vet Fest: He attended the Vet Fest and commented on the large amount of Veterans and vendors and thanked and highlighted the work being done by Joe Battisfore and others.

MTU SmartZone: He discussed a \$1.25 million grant for the Houghton and Hancock School Districts and a \$1 million grant for 5 counties in the U.P. They hope to accelerate 5 local companies, and to consider a \$10 million prototyping center for developing businesses, and possibly look to the EDA for another \$25 million in grant funding.

WUPPDR: They received their 3rd Hope Housing grant for low income housing. They previously received \$600,00. On September 16th at 5:00 pm, WUPPDR will have their annual meeting at the Bonfire Restaurant. All Commissioners were invited. The Guest Speaker that evening will be the Calumet Electronics Group.

He attended the Copper Country Trail National Scenic Byway meeting. He reminded the Board that the declaration was given to our area back in 2005, and that we are one of just 3 in the State of Michigan.

Brownfield Authority: They approved a \$41,000 loan for L&Z Rentals to renovate the old Kirkish building across from the Downtowner. This will create some housing and move the Sky Sushi restaurant to more space.

Commissioner Keranen reported to the Board on the following:

He attended a meeting regarding the flood in Lake Linden.

District Court Treatment Court: There will be a graduation on Thursday, June 20th.

County Officers:

Dennis Hext, Airport Manager, stated the airplane load numbers are strong this month. They are out for bid for EAS as the current EAS contract is up on January 31, 2025. Commissioner Anderson asked him about the shortage of pilots, and Dennis said that with the Boeing struggles that there is an ample supply of younger pilots. Dennis talked about the new Airport Terminal project and work that is being done by Mead and Hunt. Our concept is with the FAA now for their consideration.

Josh Saaranen, Sheriff, stated there are currently 26 inmates, 1500 complaints. The Jail Project Committee had their first meeting. The 2nd meeting should be in the next week or so.

Curt Judson, Transfer Station Manager, stated they are up 500 tons from last year. Recycling is only on Wednesdays right now from 8:00 am-4:00 pm. He stated the loader and mini excavator are starting to show their age.

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk, stated she participated in the Vet Fest and she attend the UP Commissioners Conference in Escanaba. She discussed Senator McBroom's comments on following other states and eliminating the City and Township Clerks from running elections and turning everything over to the County Clerk. The November millage deadlines are quickly approaching.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

1. Resolution 24-12 Authorize Collection of County Taxes

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to adopt Resolution #24-12 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

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401 East Houghton Avenue
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(906) 482-8307



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Roy Britz *Vice Chairman*
District 5
Joel Keranen *Commissioner*
District 2
Glenn Anderson *Commissioner*
District 3
Gretchen Janssen *Commissioner*

District

RESOLUTION 24-12

RESOLUTION IMPOSING 2024 SUMMER PROPERTY TAX LEVY PURSUANT TO PUBLIC ACT 357 OF 2004, AND NOTICE OF CERTIFICATION OF COUNTY ALLOCATED TAX LEVY.

WHEREAS, Houghton County is authorized under the General Property Tax Act, Public Act 206 of 1893, as amended to levy and collect County allocated property taxes; and

WHEREAS, the General Property Tax Act has been amended by Public Act 357 of 2004, being MCL 211.44a, to require all Michigan Counties to impose a summer tax levy of the total County allocated tax;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to Public Act 357 of 2004, the Houghton County allocated tax shall be levied and collected on July 1, 2024 at the rate of 100% of the amount allocated after application of the “Headlee” millage reduction fraction; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Treasurer of each city and township in Houghton County is directed to account for and deliver all the County allocated tax collections for 2024 in accordance with the provisions of Public Act 357 of 2004; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Clerk shall deliver a copy of the Resolution to the Treasurer of each city and township in Houghton County.

Moved by Commissioner:

Supported by Commissioner:

Roll Call Vote:

Yes:

No:

Motion Carried.

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman
Houghton County Board of Commissioners

Date

STATE OF MICHIGAN)
COUNTY OF HOUGHTON)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and a complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners for the County of Houghton, Michigan, at a regular meeting held on the 18th day of June, 2024, the original of which resolution is on file in my office. I further certify that the meeting was held and the minutes therefore were filed in compliance with Act 267 of the Public Acts of 1976.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto affixed my official signature this 18th day of June, 2024.

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk
County of Houghton

2. Resolution 24-13 Authorize 2024 County Millage Rate

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to adopt Resolution #24-13 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

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RESOLUTION 24-13 TRUTH IN TAXATION

WHEREAS, The Houghton County Board of Commissioners has the authority to establish the number of operating mills to be levied from within its authorized millage rate;

AND WHEREAS, the additional millage rate will increase revenue from Ad Valorem Property Taxes by \$372,828 over such revenues generated by levies permitted without holding a public hearing;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the operating rate for the County of Houghton will increase by 0.3013 mill, yielding a total operating millage rate of 6.2070 mills in 2024 in accordance with Act 5, P.A., 1982, Act 2, P.A., 1986 and Act 264, P.A., 1987.

Moved by Commissioner:

Supported by Commissioner:

Roll Call Vote:

Yes:

No:

Motion Carried.

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman
Houghton County Board of Commissioners

Date

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IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto affixed my official signature this 18th day of June, 2024.

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk
County of Houghton

3. FY25 County Veteran Service Fund Grant Application

Joe Battsfore, VSO Director, stated the same grant application is submitted every year. For fiscal year 2025 the amount is \$70,239.

He stated there were 817 veterans at Vet Fest, and 70 vendors and service providers. He was able to get a Federal Grant to fund the event. He still has \$20.00 gas cards available for Veterans. They can come to the office on Monday-Thursday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Currently, the Houghton County Veterans Office brings to Houghton County \$42 million in impact.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to approve the service fund grant application as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

4. Creation of Multicounty Materials Management Plan and Interlocal Agreement

Commissioner Janssen stated it was necessary for the Board to approve the Interlocal Agreement for our Part 115 Compliance, and working with the other 5 Counties and WUPPDR. There are 6 counties in agreement, and 2 Counties have passed the Agreement. Once everyone has passed the Agreement, a committee will be created.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to adopt the Interlocal Agreement as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

5. POAM Collective Bargaining Agreement Resolution 24-14

Commissioner Britz stated the Personnel Committee and the POAM Union discussed the contract expiring on 12/3/23. The Union and Sheriff support the new Agreement for 2024 until June 2025.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adopt Resolution 24-14 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

**RESOLUTION 24-14
RESOLUTION ADOPTING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE COUNTY OF HOUGHTON AND THE HOUGHTON COUNTY SHERIFF
AND THE
HOUGHTON COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFF'S ASSOCIATION
AFFILIATED WITH THE
POLICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN**

WHEREAS, the Houghton County Deputy Sheriff’s Association affiliated with the Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM) is recognized by the Michigan Employment Relations Commission and the County of Houghton as the exclusive representative of certain employees of the Houghton County Sheriff’s Office;

AND WHEREAS, the parties have bargained mutually acceptable terms and conditions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, pursuant to the recommendation made to the Board of Commissioners, the County resolves that the Tentative Agreement amending the collective bargaining agreement for the period January 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, is hereby approved. It is further authorized that the Board Chairperson is authorized to take all necessary administrative actions to implement this resolution.

Moved by Commissioner:

Supported by Commissioner:

Roll Call Vote:

Yes:

No:

Motion Carried.

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman
Houghton County Board of Commissioners

Date

STATE OF MICHIGAN)
COUNTY OF HOUGHTON)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and a complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners for the County of Houghton, Michigan, at a regular meeting held on the 18th day of June, 2024, the original of which resolution is on file in my office. I further certify that the meeting was held and the minutes therefore were filed in compliance with Act 267 of the Public Acts of 1976.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto affixed my official signature this 18th day of June, 2024.

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk
County of Houghton

6. Petition for Annexation of Sharon Avenue Property

Commissioner Britz stated Houghton County has ownership of the Sharon Avenue property, but with its physical location across Sharon Avenue that is currently in Portage Township. This Petition would ask for the property to formally be annexed in the City of Houghton, which has been approved by all 3 lawyers who have agreed to the language in the Resolution.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to request Annexation of the Sharon Avenue property and adopt Resolution 24-15 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

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RESOLUTION #24-15

WHEREAS, the County of Houghton is a governmental subdivision of the State of Michigan and a property owner who is authorized to file a Petition for Annexation pursuant to MCL 117.9(8) and MCL 42.34(4);

WHEREAS, the Houghton County Board of Commissioners, as the governing body of the County of Houghton, wishes to request annexation of property owned by Houghton County from the Charter Township of Portage into the City of Houghton, the County Seat of Houghton County, as described in a Petition for Annexation attached to this Resolution;

WHEREAS, annexation of the property commonly known as 19741 West Sharon Avenue, Houghton, Michigan, will allow the County of Houghton to relocate a broader range of County facilities, some of which must statutorily be situated within the County Seat.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Petition for Annexation is approved on behalf of Houghton County and shall be filed with the City of Houghton and the Charter Township of Portage for the purpose of transferring the property into the Houghton County Seat, which is the City of Houghton.

IT IS THEREFORE FURTHER RESOLVED that Tom Tikkanen, Chair of the Houghton County Board of Commissioners, is authorized to sign the Petition for Annexation on behalf of Houghton County and is further authorized to sign all documents on behalf of the County of Houghton that may be necessary for completion of the annexation.

IT IS THEREFORE FURTHER RESOLVED that the Houghton County Administrator shall deliver and file a copy of the Petition for Annexation to the City of Houghton and to the Charter Township of Portage for their consideration.

Motion Moved By Commissioner:

Motion Supported By Commissioner:

Roll Call Vote:

Yes:

No:

Absent:

Motion Carried:

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED

Dated: _____

Tom Tikkanen, Chair
Houghton County Board of Commissioners

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 Board of Commissioners for the County of Houghton, Michigan, at a regular meeting held on the day of June, 2024, the original of which Resolution is on file in my office. I further certify that the meeting was held and the minutes were filed in compliance with Act No. 267 of the Public Acts of 1976.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have affixed my official signature this 18th day of June, 2024.

Jennifer Kelly, Houghton County Clerk

7. Traverse Engineering Recommendation for Property Transfer to Torch Lake Twp.

Administrator Larson stated Traverse Engineering has requested the right of way for sewer in Hubbell for a property that is now sitting in our Houghton County Land Bank. He also spoke with Treasurer Mattila and shared that she advised the County to wait until a future meeting as there is a structure on the property and she said that this will take some thought. She has asked to have this matter not covered now.

Chairman Tikkanen tabled this matter.

8. Federal Broadband Expansion for Houghton County

Koray Inal, VP for Baraga Telephone, addressed the Board. The Government has 2 funds for broadband expansion right now through the RDOF and ACAM programs. The BEAD program will come next, and the goal is to have Fiber at every home by 2028-2030. Over 300 homes have been hooked up so far. There is a 2028 deadline for no unserved premise throughout Houghton County, but Koray reminded the Board that it is likely to take a bit longer.

a. \$250,000 Grant for a Flight for next Summer at the Airport

Dennis Hext, Airport Manager, discussed a Michigan air service contract for a \$250,000 federal funds grant for a 3rd flight during June to August 2025. If the flight is successful and proves strong numbers, this can help our cause and EAS status.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to allow Dennis Hext to electronically sign and send the grant application.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

9. Travel

a. Jennifer Kelly-County Clerk Summer Conference \$564.40

b. Drew Bastman-FOC Summer Conference \$1,000.00

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the above-mentioned Travel Requests as presented.

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

10. Appropriations:

a. Michigan Township Association \$505.00

b. Copper Country Community Mental Health \$13,707.91

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

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

Public Comments:

Faith Morrison addressed the Board regarding the Jail Development workgroup. She is a member of the League of Women Voters and would like to get invited to the workgroup.

Dennis Hext stated he felt the workers at the Veteran's Office are valuable.

Horst Schmidt addressed the Board regarding a group called Keep UP Wild. He asked the Board to send a letter of recommendation to Senators Stabenow and Peters.

John Wallace gave an update on the Ottawa Forest and the 158,2000 acres. The stairs were removed in 2016 at Silver Mountain, and he shared the timber sales plans and gave some other updates as requested last month at the meeting.

Announcements:

None.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adjourn at 6:30 p.m.

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

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk