

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
JULY 8, 2025**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, July 8, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. in the 5<sup>th</sup> 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 3:00 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: June 26, 2025 Special Meeting:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2025 Special meeting as presented.

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

**Approval of Agenda/Additions:**

Chairman Tikkanen requested adding #11 for the Michigan Judge's Conference for Judge Daavettila.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and 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-Agenda Items only \*(3 minute limit)**

None.

**Approval of Bills-\$983,953.16**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve paying the bills submitted of \$983,953.16 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

**Correspondence:**

None.

**Reports:**

## **Standing Committee:**

Commissioner Keranen reported to the Board on the following:

He commented on an email from the County Clerk regarding Attorney General Nessel's announcement that Copper Shores Community Health Foundation should receive a large amount of money.

Commissioner Janssen had nothing to report to the Board.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

He discussed the DNR Waterways grant at the Marina that fixed the bathrooms to make them ADA compliant. The grant was for \$176,000.

He congratulated Derek Bradway for the opening of the Keweenaw Waters Resort and thanked EGLE for their support.

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following:

He stated the Keweenaw Waters Resort looks very nice.

Chairman Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

He would comment during the Agenda.

## **County Officers:**

Dennis Hext, Airport Manager, stated the numbers for people booking flights are up 8-9%. The 3<sup>rd</sup> flight has started. KRC has done an expansion. There is a meeting with the FAA next week.

Sheriff Saaranen stated the new free Sheriff app has launched for anyone to download.

Clerk Kelly expressed concern about IT for the upcoming August 5<sup>th</sup> election.

## **Old Business:**

### **1. Wage Study**

Commissioner Keranen discussed the three (3) companies, but feels Gallagher is a good option. Theresa Hill stated she has called the other company. Commissioner Keranen stated Gallagher can start soon and it would take about 6-8 weeks to complete the process.

Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to sign the contract with Gallagher for \$38,000 for the wage study as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

## **New Business:**

### **1. FY 24 Audit, Ken Talsma, Anderson, Tackman & Company PLC**

Ken Talsma handed out Basic Financial Statement to the Board, Administrator, and County Clerk. He stated the County had a clean opinion and clean Federal grants. The property taxes had a 7% increase in 2023-2024. The General Fund balance is healthier and had an increase. The pension is now 59% funded, so the 60% state threshold is very close. For expenditures, he said the budget should be changed before any money is spent. He discussed accounting changes that will be coming that are more user friendly. He felt the County looks healthy and will look even better in the next year.

Commissioner Anderson asked how long the County's contract is with the company. Mr. Talsma stated 3 years.

Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to accept the FY24 audit report as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

## **2. Mike Bach, Executive Director, Copper Country Mental Health Services**

Mike Bach discussed the proposed Resolution he would like the Board to consider at their next monthly meeting. Mike will send the Resolution to Administrator Rheault. He expressed concerns regarding administrative costs. He also discussed the impacts of less county contact. He will keep the Board updated.

## **3. Becki Clouthier, Shelter Manager, Copper Country Humane Society**

Keri Sleeman addressed the Board. She discussed the Agreement for Animal Control Services Contract. She discussed the increase in #2a from \$22 to \$30, and #2c from \$22 to \$30.

Commissioner Keranen asked if the owners pay anything if they claim their animal. Keri stated yes the owners pay, not the County.

Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve an increase in the fee schedule by the Humane Society and not exceed \$20,000.00 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

## **4. Airport Water Ordinance**

Dennis stated the Ordinance has been approved by the Airport Committee.

Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the Water System Ordinance as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

## **5. WUPHD County Appropriation Review**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to accept the FY26 Appropriation from WUPHD as presented.

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

## **6. TCPD May 2025 Monthly Payment-\$67,934.65**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve paying \$67,934.65 to the Tri-County Public Defenders as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

## **7. Michigan Townships Association Associate County Membership-\$505.00**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to continue the membership with MTA and pay the \$505.00 as presented.

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

## **8. Houghton County 911 Advisory Board Purchases totaling \$63,730.55**

Sheriff Saaranen explained the 911 Advisory Board's recommendation.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the purchase requested by the 911 Advisory Board for \$63,730.55 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

## **9. Sheriff's Office Dive Team Grant Reimbursement Purchase-\$20,425.00**

Sheriff Saaranen stated there are currently 5 trained divers. The Sheriff Department is required to dive for bodies. The grant will receive full reimbursement.

Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the \$20,425.00 with the County being fully reimbursed.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

## **10. Jail Millage Funding**

### **a. Motion to direct \$1,000 donation to radio ads**

Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to use the \$1,000.00 donation money towards radio ads.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None. 0

### **b. Motion to support funding up to \$6,000 for information distribution**

Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to spend up to \$6,549.62 for jail information that will be distributed.

Commissioner Keranen stated he did not feel the taxpayers should pay for information when they are voting on paying the millage.

Commissioner Britz asked if it was ok to do. Administrator Rheault said it was.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Britz 4.

NO: Keranen 1.

## **11. Travel-Judge Daavettila-Judge's Conference**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to reimburse Judge Nicholas Daavettila \$1,668.48 as presented.

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

**Appropriations:**

- 1. Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Region-\$7,435.50 3<sup>rd</sup> & Qtr.**
- 2. Western Upper Peninsula Health Department-July-September-\$68,960.00**

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

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

**Public Comments:**

Sarah Green addressed the Board regarding Federal concerns.

Lynn Artman addressed the Board regarding issues with culverts on Lakeshore Drive in Chassell that the Road Commission maintains.

Mary Jean Daavettila addressed the Board regarding the culvert in Chassell. She stated that 1 was replaced in 1982.

Robert Daavettila addressed the Board regarding the culverts in Chassell. He stated that there has been flooding 6 times. He suggested the Drain Commission, DNR and MDOT be contacted.

Chairman Tikkanen stated Chris VanArsdale will follow up with Chassell residents.

Charlotte Fields addressed the Board and stated there is garbage in the water.

Roy Manninen, by Microsoft Teams, addressed the Board regarding his opposition to the Elderly Nutrition millage.

Ben Larson addressed the Board and asked Clerk Kelly what millages were on the August ballot. Clerk Kelly stated that there would be millages for Canal View, CCISD, Elderly Nutrition, the Jail/Sheriff Department, and some voters in Portage Township-Precinct 4, would be voting on Baraga Schools millage.

**Announcements:**

None.

**Adjournment:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adjourn at 4:37 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