

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
JULY 1, 2025**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session on Tuesday, July 1, 2025 at 10:00 a.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 10:00 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Tikkanen.

Roll call:

The following commissioners responded to roll call done by Chief Deputy County Clerk, Renee Cunningham:

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

Agenda Additions:

None.

Public Comments-Agenda Items only *(3 minute limit):

Faith Morrison stated she is assisting in educating the public on the new jail. The League of Women Voters has a power point almost complete that describe the jail, and that the Courts and County Clerk will remain at the courthouse. She stated the language in the millage is vague and can change. They received a \$1,000 donation.

Houghton County Board of Commissioners Work Session:

1. Wage Study

The Commissioners received a packet that was not on the website. Commissioner Keranen talked to the other two (2) companies. Job descriptions are up to date. He spoke with Heather from Gallagher. The cost would be \$38,500.00. MGT would reduce their fees from \$14,000 to \$12,000. Mark Knottley, the third company is about the same price as the other two (2) companies. Gallagher is willing to give a deal as they handle the county's insurance. Chairman Tikkanen asked if Commissioner Keranen has any preliminary costs. Commissioner Keranen asked Administrator Rheault and Teresa Hill if anything is missing in the MGT projections since the company did not respond by the meeting. Teresa Hill stated she would get a proposal from Knotley by the end of the week.

2. Jail Millage

Chairman Tikkanen thanked Faith Morrison for her comments, and the proposal for keeping the County Clerk and the court offices in the courthouse.

Commissioner Anderson discussed winning the votes then get the bills for the project and get the bonds.

Faith Morrison has started the political organization for following the Michigan Campaign Act. She received one (1) donation for the County to move forward on the jail. League of Women Voters has taken a stand on the project. Struggling to raise money to mail the mailer to County residents that is similar to what the CCISD and Meals on Wheels did. There will be radio ads.

She feels the Board of Commissioners could add an ad in the Gazette and have public sessions to show the power point. There are three (3) public educating meetings scheduled for two (2) Commissioners to be present at these meetings. The radio station will do ads for 50% off for three (3) times per day. She feels it is a cost-effective way to get the word out.

Commissioner Anderson stated the Meals on Wheels ads are hitting the radio hard.

Faith Morrison wants the County to mail the flyer and pay for the mailings.

Commissioner Anderson stated the CCISD is using their money to pay for a mailer. In 2020, they got a census grant of \$10,000.00. Commissioner Anderson did the ad. Census has room for up to six (6) children, had to get another form to add additional children. Received \$1,000 from Craig Waddell. Discussed adding more money to the fund.

Chairman Tikkanen stated if the County uses this as an educational form of communication to educate the public, the Board needs to take action at the next Board meeting for radio ads and a flyer.

Faith Morrison stated it would cost \$2,000 to print, and about \$5,000 to mail to every citizen of Houghton County. The Leage of Women Voters will not raise enough funds to mail the flyer.

Commissioner Anderson discussed authorizing \$6,000 for the flyer and radio ads.

Faith Morrison stated a full page mailer is cheaper than a half page, and the postage is cheaper. It would cost \$6548.00 for a full page print and to mail, and then \$6,966 for a half page that is two (2) sided to print and mail.

Commissioner Anderson suggested adding \$6,000 for radio ads and the flyer to the next Agenda.

Chairman Tikkanen feels radio ads are effective.

Commissioner Janssen suggested Faith Morrison write a script and to have a couple Commissioners do the recording.

Commissioner Anderson stated there will be \$3,500 for rendering that needs to go to the public.

Chairman Tikkanen stated the Democrat and Republican parties are endorsing the new jail.

3. Tri-County Public Defenders

Chairman Tikkanen discussed regrouping and a recap. He stated everything is funded through the fiscal year. Administrator Rheault received feed back from MIDC and it was denied. The first FSR was denied. Both need supporting documentation. The FSR is from October to December 2023. The compliance plan is from Dave Gemignani. Administrator Rheault read a letter for fiscal year 2026.

Commissioners Anderson and Keranen will meet with Attorney Zappa regarding the MDIC fund and a proposed five (5) year contract.

Attorney Gemignani stated he talked to the State and indicated he did not know why one of the FSR's were denied. Imperative to get all information into the State at one (1) time. The cost plan and analysis was also denied.

Commissioner Anderson stated that the FSR's need to be done one (1) at a time and resolved one (1) at a time.

Ann Harris suggested filing all FSR's together and review them all at one time. They will contact Administrator Rheault if they have questions.

Commissioners Anderson and Keranen will meet with legal council for a draft timeline that can be reviewed at the August Work Session on August 4, 2025 at 10:00 am.

Public Comment-*(3 minute limit):

None.

Announcements:

None.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adjourn at 10:57 a.m.

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

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk