

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
APRIL 6, 2026**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session on Monday, April 6, 2026 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 10:03 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 County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly:

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

Agenda/Additions:

Commissioner Anderson requested adding #10 for discussing the May UPCAP meeting, and #11 for a letter of appreciation to Congressman Jack Bergman for the two (2) grants.

Chairman Tikkanen requested #12 be added for County United PAC.

Commissioner Janssen requested #13 be added for the Website Ad Hoc Committee and for it to be put on the next Agenda.

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

None.

Houghton County Board of Commissioners Work Session:

1. Jail Committee Update

Chairman Tikkanen stated reports will be due next week at the board meeting.

Commissioner Britz stated the Sharon Avenue Properties will provide a report. They will be meeting with OHM and some department heads. He said Todd LaRoux has given blueprints of the courthouse to OHM. The sanctuary has to be beefed up. A firewall will have to be built. They are looking at square footage to see what departments can go up to the Sharon Avenue property. Commissioner Anderson stated the Board will have to find space for the MSU Extension Office. Commissioner Keranen stated he is waiting for the numbers on Canal View. Chairman Tikkanen said the numbers have not arrived. The Jail Committee was meeting on April 2nd.

Faith Morrison discussed the spaces, and suggested focusing on the spaces the Sheriff and staff need and to look at shared spaces to see what savings can happen.

Commissioner Anderson stated we need the number of cells that is recommended. Sheriff Saaranen stated he hopes to have the recommended number of cells and their other needs with a comparison on what they have now.

2. Connections not Cuffs grant update

Gail Ploe discussed the grant to expand the Treatment Court services and continuing the budget. They have a rent agreement with the Salvation Army. They do have liability insurance. There is an agreement coming to the County for the next meeting. Chairman Tikkanen suggested adding this to the Counties liability policy.

Jason Rota discussed purchasing a vehicle for the Treatment Court workers. The bid notice deadline is next week. He suggested it being posted on the Counties website. The Board would look at approving cards for the Treatment Court workers at the next meeting.

Commissioner Anderson asked if the County would own the vehicle. Gail said yes, the County would own it. Chairman Tikkanen stated Gail or Jason would need to work with Administrator Rheault to add the vehicle to the County policy. This would be a leased vehicle.

3. Review of a resolution affirming cooperation with federal immigration authorities, supporting the rule of law, enhancing public safety, and opposing restrictions on the use of County resources for civil immigration enforcement

Sheriff Saaranen stated two (2) groups had concerns regarding ICE. The groups are the Republican Party and Keweenaw Invisible. He had a meeting with the groups. He will have a statement prepared for the next Board meeting. The groups will also be writing to the Board. He would like to focus on education and eliminate worries. Commissioner Britz stated each party will be given the opportunity to speak. Commissioner Anderson stated there are 31 inmates currently in jail. Sheriff stated some may be leaving after they have sentencing today. They are over 28 inmates. Commissioner Britz stated Dan Holcomb was going to withdraw his Resolution. Sheriff to let Administrator Rheault know before Friday.

4. Review Draft of RFP for Cyber Security Services

Chairman Tikkanen discussed finding more cost-effective services for cyber security. He discussed if the County should send out RFP's. Commissioner Keranen stated he reached out to Up and Running. Chairman Tikkanen stated the County needed to put in effort for research. Commissioner Britz suggested putting this on the next agenda. Alex Radke, IT, stated Superior Wizards are currently handling the cyber security for the county.

5. Review Draft of Network Outage and Operations Disruption Policy

Administrator Rheault stated the County does not have a current Network Outage and Operations Disruption policy. She discussed creating protocol for employees. Chris VanArsdale has some edits. She suggested this go on the next agenda.

6. Review Draft of Inclement Weather and Emergency Closures Policy

Administrator Rheault stated there is no Closures Policy. Chris VanArsdale is reviewing it and other counties policies. Commissioner Anderson questioned the Courts and if they had court hearings or a jury trial. Faith Morrison stated a meeting was held before without a policy. Administrator Rheault will ask the court for their feedback before the next meeting and put it on the agenda.

7. Wage Study

Administrator Rheault stated they are close to presenting to the Board. She stated they can give a presentation to her or to the Board. Administrator Rheault is to schedule a one (1) hour meeting.

Sheriff Saaranen asked if a copy would be given to department heads prior to the meeting. Administrator Rheault stated nothing would be available.

8. Building Department Truck

Todd LaRoux stated he had received 1 bid from Keweenaw-Chevrolet. Commissioner Britz commented that no other bids were requested. Other bids are due before the next board meeting.

Todd introduced Joe Wattson. Faith Morrison requested the RFP be put on the County website. Chairman Tikkanen said he would get the RFP on the website.

9. Review of a resolution to declare May 3-98, 2026, International Compost Awareness Week to raise awareness of composting and recognize all who compost in Houghton County

Krissy Sundstrom discussed the low cost for composting. She said the Resolution is a small step. They are trying to educate and do outreach. Commissioner Anderson stated there is no composting facility in Houghton County. This was requested to go on the next agenda.

10. May UPCAP Meeting

Commissioner Anderson requested the May Commissioners Conference for UPCAP be added to the next agenda.

11. Letter of appreciation to Congressman Jack Bergman for the 2 grants.

Commissioner Anderson discussed the letter of appreciation to Congressman Jack Bergman for the 2 grants for the funding grants. Administrator Rheault is to do the letter and have it on the next agenda. Chairman Tikkanen stated Congressman Bergman lobbied for cleanup for the Calumet fire. There was \$0 cost to the Village of Calumet or Houghton County.

12. County United PAC

The Board had discussion. No action taken.

13. Website Ad Hoc Committee

Commissioner Janssen stated Clerk Kelly, Alex Radke and herself will submit a proposal for a proper procedure for department heads to submit things to Opus Web and to the County IT Department. She requested this be on the next agenda.

Commissioner Anderson stated RFP's are due by April 10, 2026 for the CPA's. He requested this to be on the next agenda. Administrator Rheault stated she received no RFP's.

Public Comment-*(3-minute limit):

Faith Morrison discussed another request that Valorie Troesch has sent to Slotkin's Office for \$1 million for funding for a grant. The request went along with five (5) letters of support. She stated they need the funding deficit to overcome the \$1-2 million for a plan.

Valorie Troesch stated there were 2 letters sent to Congressman Bergman and 1 to Slotkin's office along with the 5 letters of support. No money is approved. This would be for FY27.

Todd LaRoux thanked Tom Bingham for completing three (3) big projects at the courthouse.

Davey Sprague encouraged the Board to work with Amtrak. Chairman Tikkanen said to add this to the next agenda.

Announcements:

- 1. There is a new email address for submitting agenda items for consideration by the Houghton County Board of Commissioners: agenda.houghtoncounty.gov. Agenda item requests will only be considered officially received if they are submitted to this email address or delivered in paper form to the Houghton County Administrator's Office. Submissions sent to any other email address may not be considered received. More information about submitting agenda item requests can be found under the Board of Commissioners page on the County website: <https://houghtoncounty.gov/commissions-board.php>**

Chairman Tikkanen discussed the process to submit anything to go on the Agenda. The process is on the county website.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adjourn at 11:20 a.m.

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk

APPROVED _____

JK