

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
JUNE 1, 2026**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session on Monday, June 1, 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 10:00 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 County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly:

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

Agenda/Additions:

Commissioner Anderson asked for #7 be added for an update on the FY 25 audit and RFP; #8 for an update on the Transfer Station Manager position; and #8 for discussion on the changing of the monthly meeting time.

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

None.

Houghton County Board of Commissioners Work Session:

1. Easton Laitila's Contract

Administrator Rheault discussed Easton Laitila's December 2025 contract. She requested the contract be continued until the end of June 2026 and then terminate the contract. She stated Easton will give the Board an opioid update at the July Board meeting. He is being paid \$1,000 per week for 15 hours of work with a maximum of \$4,000 per month.

The Board agreed to put this on the June agenda.

2. Gail Ploe, Creating an Opioid Taskforce, Discussion

Gail Ploe discussed the process for spending the opioid settlement. There is 15 years remaining. She discussed creating a Opioid Taskforce. There are 9 people on Delta Counties Opioid Taskforce. The Taskforce would develop a grant process, mission statement and bylaws. She stated the Michigan Association of Counties has a tool kit that Houghton County could use and then issue an RFP for Houghton County. The Taskforce would then make a recommendation to the Board. Gail will make a recommendation to the Board for who she feels should be on the Taskforce in Houghton County.

The Board agreed to put this on the June agenda to establish a Opioid Taskforce.

3. Resolution Supporting Michigan House Bill 5249 (2025-2026), Discussion

Commissioner Janssen explained the UPCAP Board had approved this Resolution for expanding the service that an EMS person could provide.

The Board agreed to put this on the June agenda.

4. NorthCare Network Communication

Commissioner Anderson explained what Senator McBroom has been trying to do for years and to let the process go through and for the Board to not take any action.

Commissioner Britz stated this was discussed at the CCMH Board meeting.

5. Karen Karinen, Retirement Buyout

Administrator Rheault stated Karen Karinen was looking to buy 3 years of additional time which would be paid by Karen so she can retire at the end of this year. She stated MERS informed her that the Board would need to do a Resolution.

Commissioner Anderson asked if an actuarial would need to be done and questioned if the cost is \$300.00 and needed to be done 6 months before retiring and how many buyouts have been done in the County for the last 20 years. Paige stated she was waiting for a call from MERS.

The Board agreed to put this on the June agenda.

6. Lisa Mattila, ACH/EFT Reporting and BS&A Training

Lisa Mattila stated the payments for ACH/EFTs have money coming out, but there have been no GL entries done and things have been a mess since October. They are 8 months behind reconciling. She contacted BS&A and BS&A are willing to come to Houghton County for 3 days to do in person training for \$4,275 which she would pay that amount from the DTR Funds. Training could be for entering GL entries, Accounts Payable and Payroll if needed.

Alex Radke, IT, stated he has questions for BS&A. Lisa stated the May and June upgrades for BS&A didn't happen. The upgrades happen around the 1st and 15th of each month.

7. FY25 Audit Update and RFP

Administrator Rheault stated she has sent requests to Ken Talsma but has received no response. Ken is working with Joe Madigan. She discussed the RFP and stated there is no FY audit contract, but she will do an RFP for the upcoming year. She discussed the single audit F65 for the Health Department, Road Commission and part of Canal View.

8. Transfer Station Manager position update

Chairman Tikkanen stated they had 3 interviews. The position was reposted for 2 additional weeks. Tom Bingham is the interim manager. Administrator Rheault will ask Tom Bingham to give an update on the Transfer Station. She stated an older truck is not fixable as the motor is bad.

Commissioner Janssen discussed the EGLE money for MMP which 80% goes to WUPPDR and 20% goes to Houghton County which can be used for a feasibility study.

She requested Brendon Pressnel be added to the next agenda.

9. Discussion on monthly meeting time

The Board discussed past years for meeting times.

The Board agreed to put this on the next agenda.

Public Comment-*(3-minute limit):

Faith Morrison stated there are 10 weeks until the deadline to get ballot language ready for the November ballot. She discussed having a campaign and materials ready for Bridge Fest, Strawberry Fest and others. She requested the Board get a process in place.

Announcements:

None.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adjourn at 12:29 p.m.

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk

APPROVED _____

JK