

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
AUGUST 3, 2026**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session on Monday, August 3, 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; Gretchen Janssen District 4; Roy Britz, District 5.

By Microsoft Teams: Glenn Anderson, District 3.

Absent: Joel Keranen, District 2.

Agenda/Additions:

No additions, continue as presented.

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

None.

Houghton County Board of Commissioners Work Session:

1. Request from the Community Garden to acquire the 2 most western lots of the empty block west of the Courthouse

Elena Busova stated the Community Garden was first built in 2007 with community money. There is a waiting list from people in the community to use the community garden.

Commissioner Janssen stated she reviewed the plat that is hard to understand. The request is for 50 feet on the west side. Some City Council members approved this. She will check with the City of Houghton to get a more readable plat. She discussed 200 feet North to South.

Todd LaRoux, Building Department Manager, discussed the Sheriff Department vehicles and snow removal that are on that land. He stated feels the Board should use caution.

Chairman Tikkanen suggested Tom Bingham take the Commissioners over to look at the lot.

Commissioner Britz stated the land was supposed to be used for an expansion and questioned doing anything at this time since the Jail has not passed yet.

Elena Busova stated the Community Garden has been used for educating children and has been used by the entire County. She is willing to show the garden to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Janssen to follow up with Tom Bingham and the City of Houghton to find out where the property lines are. The Commissioners are to take a tour of the Garden and lots.

2. Data Center Temporary Moratorium Resolution

Commissioner Janssen stated Delta County had passed an Ordinance and Houghton County does not do zoning.

Chairman Tikkanen felt the Houghton County Planning Commission should review this matter closer.

Commissioner Janssen questioned if the Houghton County Planning Commission would do an Ordinance. She discussed cases where last minute zoning happened and big tech companies sued that township.

Chairman Tikkanen stated the community should be aware of vulnerabilities.

Alex Radke, IT, stated Big Tec pray on weak zoning.

Lexi Tater, suggested the next work session have for moratorium language. She suggested updating the Master Plan after the moratorium is passed. She stated the need to mention Data Centers.

Chairman Tikkanen recommended moving this to the Chairman of the Houghton County Planning Commission.

3. George Gipp Recreation Arena Annexation Request

Chairman Tikkanen stated Attorney Zappa has given an opinion, and tabled this request.

4. Resolution Opposing Legislation to Dissolve the Upper Peninsula Community Mental Health System into a Single Specialized Regional Mental Health

Commissioner Britz stated he felt this Resolution would take away things locally and North Care objected to the Resolution as it will hurt the county and the residents.

Chairman Tikkanen stated there is no psych ward in the UP.

Fraser Strome, Probate/Family Court Judge, stated he has met with several people. Beginning the day after Labor Day, there would be availability in Marquette, Rhinelander and Green Bay for Houghton Count patients. Judge Strome stated he and the group of people will meet every 3 months, and he will be encouraging Judge Brennan and Judge DeForge to do the same.

Chairman Tikkanen recommended this go on next month's agenda and Commissioner Britz will reach out to Mike Bach.

5. Single Point of Entry Project

Todd LaRoux, Building Department Manager, stated he and Sheriff Saaranen will be having a video conference this week and should have some numbers for the next agenda.

Fraser Strome, Probate/Family Court Judge, stated Jason Williams has not provided a final report. He hopes to have the report by late September, early October. This will be discussed at the next security meeting.

Todd LaRoux stated doors will have alarms.

6. Remote Attendance for BOC Meetings

Chairman Tikkanen discussed possibly looking at restrictions on comments. He referred to Attorney Zappa's opinion.

7. Public Comment Time Limit

Chairman Tikkanen referred to Attorney Zappa's opinion.

Lexi Tater stated according to OMA, the Board cannot limit public comment time limits.

8. Houghton County Marina Survey

Chairman Tikkanen stated the survey was done for clarification of the property lines. This was driven by to retain ownership of the marina.

Todd LaRoux asked if Tom Bingham can get a copy of the survey. Chairman Tikkanen said yes he will receive one.

Faith Morrison suggested putting the survey in a Marina folder for future reference.

Public Comment-*(3-minute limit):

Todd LaRoux discussed snow removal. He stated there is a huge volume of snow put in the field across the street.

Commission Anderson, By Microsoft Teams, asked if the \$28-30 million bond language was given to the Attorney. He suggested a Resolution be prepared by Miller-Canfield showing the interest rates and proposed language.

Faith Morrison discussed Derek Bradway’s wording on a millage on the back of his ROM.

Chairman Tikkanen discussed the option of the Board putting money on their budget to make the amount of the mills be at 1. He stated the Resolution needs to be set and to look to see if money can be used from the General Fund to lower the cost. He discussed if there was a way to get it to 1 mill.

Commissioner Anderson discussed the 1 mill bond. He questioned when the audit will be done and to look into finding out if \$1-2 million can be taken out of the General Fund. The Resolution should say to not exceed \$28 million.

Announcements:

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk, announced that 298 voters voted at the Early Voting Center for the 9 days it was open. She requested to speak with the Chair or the Board privately regarding Early Voting.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk

APPROVED_____

JK