

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

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session on Monday, July 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 10:00 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; Gretchen Janssen District 4; Roy Britz, District 5.

Absent: Glenn Anderson, District 3.

Agenda/Additions:

No additions, continue as presented.

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

None.

Houghton County Board of Commissioners Work Session:

1. Easton Laitila, Opioid Update

Easton Laitila handed out an opioid payment schedule. He stated \$1,533,062.94 would be coming.

He provided an Opioid Relief Fund handout. He discussed the opioid relief fund where the Board would delegate monies to Treatment Court. This will be done on an annual basis. The report for the year-to-date expenses still needs to be done for this year. This report will be sent to the Attorney General. He discussed the opioid and marijuana funds.

The December 2026 report for ARPA Funds shows no remaining money. All money has been obligated. He shows \$320,000 has been over obligated.

The general ledger has been updated for the opioid funds, and the report has been sent to the Attorney General. He discussed ARPA account expenditures, and the justification for the Sharon Avenue Property. He stated District Court will be the only one (1) using the opioid money.

Chairman Tikkanen asked about Easton's contract. Administrator Rheault recommended one (1) additional month. Chairman Tikkanen asked that it go on the next agenda.

2. Jail Committee Update/Discussion

Faith Morrison provided handouts to the Board. She discussed the handout "Industry Day Draft Details and Logistics". The deadline for ROM's will be on July 29, 2026. She stated a special Board meeting should be scheduled around August 6th or 7th. She commented that the Board had

agreed at a previous meeting to add July 15th as Industry Day and a Gazette ad will be done for advertising. The Jail Committee will be doing everything for Industry Day.

Sheriff Saaranen stated he is looking forward to a productive meeting. Todd LaRoux stated the Jail Committee is on track. Andrea Johnson stated the Community Corrections Fund was included in the State funding. Programs will be able to start the next fiscal year with Marquette.

Faith Morrison discussed the ROM's.

Public Comment-*(3-minute limit):

Andrea Johnson suggested calling the “Jail” the “Justice Center” as it will provide functions for all the community.

Commissioner Britz explained the years trying to get a new jail facility.

Alex Radke, IT, suggested doing a survey asking the voters if they support a “Jail” or “Justice Center”.

Sheriff Saaranen stated he wants the taxpayers to know what they are getting for their money.

Chairman Tikkanen stated it would be a better facility for the Sheriff Department and the public's safety.

Announcements:

Administrator Rheault stated an IRS Auction would be held on July 22, 2026 at 10:00 am with registration at 9:30 am at the Houghton County Courthouse. There are 2 vacant lots off North Entry Road in Houghton.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to adjourn at 10:52 a.m.

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk

APPROVED_____

JK