

Houghton County Board of Commissioners

Commissioners' Hall
(906) 482-8307
Houghton County Courthouse
401 East Houghton Avenue
Houghton, MI 49931



Tom Tikkanen *Chairman*

District 1

Roy Britz *Vice Chairman*

District 5

Joel Keranen *Commissioner*

District 2

Glenn Anderson *Commissioner*

District 3

Gretchen Janssen *Commissioner*

District 4

MEMO

To: Houghton County Board of Commissioners

From: Chelsea Rheault, County Administrator

Date: October 30, 2025

Subject: Review of Board Rules of Order

Dear Commissioners,

As we prepare for the upcoming year, I would like to respectfully request that the Board review its current Rules of Order to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the County and support efficient, transparent governance.

It may be beneficial for the Board to examine whether any updates, clarifications, or amendments are needed based on current practices, recent procedural questions, or desired improvements.

Please let me know how you would like to proceed or if any additional information would be helpful.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Chelsea Rheault

County Administrator



Outlook

Re: Update Rules of Order

From Jennifer Kelly <countyclerk@houghtoncounty.gov>

Date Mon 11/3/2025 9:00 AM

To Chelsea Rheault <chelsea@houghtoncounty.gov>; Board of Commissioners <boc@houghtoncounty.net>

Cc Paige Setter-Hallwachs <Paige.setter@houghtoncounty.gov>

The public comments of 5 minutes needs to be changed to 3 if the BOC is sticking with that for 2026, the Rules of Order was never updated in 2025.

The Committee Appointments don't equal the list done by the Chair. Chairman Tikkanen and I still have to meet about the Committee Appointments and the website at some time down the road.

If you have any questions, or need further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Kelly
Houghton County Clerk/Register of Deeds
401 E. Houghton Avenue
Houghton, MI 49931
(906)482-1150

From: Chelsea Rheault <chelsea@houghtoncounty.gov>

Sent: Thursday, October 30, 2025 11:51 AM

To: Board of Commissioners <boc@houghtoncounty.net>; Jennifer Kelly <countyclerk@houghtoncounty.gov>

Cc: Paige Setter-Hallwachs <Paige.setter@houghtoncounty.gov>

Subject: Update Rules of Order

Hello Board of Commissioners,

As we prepare for the upcoming 2026 year, I wanted to share the current *Rules of Order* for your review. Please take a moment to determine if there are any amendments or updates you would like to propose prior to the January Board of Commissioners meeting, when the *Rules of Order* will be formally adopted.

Paige is available to assist with any suggested edits or questions you may have.

RULES OF ORDER

Adopted April 26, 1988

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HOUGHTON COUNTY, MICHIGAN

The great purpose of all rules and forms is to subserve the will of the assembly, rather than to restrain it; to facilitate, and not to obstruct, the expression of their deliberate sense.

RULE 1

At the first meeting of the Board of Commissioners held in January of each odd numbered year, the County Clerk shall open the meeting, call the roll, and if a quorum is found to be present, the Board shall proceed to nominate and elect one of their number as chairperson. The commissioner receiving the majority of all votes cast shall be Chairperson of said Board, and immediately assume the duties thereof. At the January meeting of each year, the Chairperson shall first proceed to the election of a Vice-Chairperson by a roll call vote.

RULE 2

During the January organizational meeting, the Commission shall review and revise, if deemed necessary, the Rules of Order.

RULE 3

The committees of the Board of Commissioners shall be as follows:

Standing Committees of the County:		Other Committees (Cont.):	
1. Finance	2	16. Revolving Loan Fund Board	2
2. Building & Grounds	1	17. U.P.C.A.P.	1
3. Bargaining	5	18. RC & D Council	2
4. Equalization	1	19. Ho. / Kew. Conservation Dist.	1
5. Law Enforcement	2	20. Main Street Calumet	1
6. Marina	1	21. Keweenaw Natl. Hist. Park	1
Other Committees:		22. Trails	1
1. CC Mental Health	1	23. Bridge Outage	1
2. W.U.P.D.H.D.	3	24. Personnel Committee	2
3. Dept. of Human Services	1	25. 911 Committee	1
4. Michigan Works	2	26. Portage Lake Multi-Education	1
5. Airport Zoning Bd. Appeals	5	27. BHK Headstart	1
6. Parks and Recreation	1	28. MSU Cooperative Extension	1
7. Fair Board	1	29. U.P. Econ. Devel. Alliance	1
8. Planning Comm. (2 yr term)	1	30. Brownfield Authority	1
9. W.U.P.P.D.R.	3	31. Dam Committee	3
10. Road Commission	1	33. Northwood Rail	2
11. Airport Committee	3	34. U.P. Energy Workgroup	2

12. Solid Waste Planning	2	35. Jail
13. Kew. Economic Del. Alliance	1	
14. Substance Abuse	1	
15. Local Emergency Planning	1	

RULE 4

The Chairperson shall appoint all committees except W.U.P.D.H. and Mental Health, unless otherwise ordered by the Board. The Chairperson's appointments shall be made no later than the Monday following the January organizational meeting in each odd number year.

The W.U.P.D.H.D. and Mental Health appointments shall be made by majority vote of the Board at its January organizational meeting in each odd numbered year.

RULE 5

The first named member of a Standing Committee shall be the Chairperson thereof, and the second named member shall be the Vice-Chairman.

RULE 6

Rights and Duties of Committees:

Any matter referred to committee remains the property of that committee until reported to the full board, or another committee, either by a date specified in the motion or at the earliest convenience of said committee. Any matter not reported to the Board within a reasonable length of time may be brought upon the floor for consideration by a majority vote of those present.

RULE 7

Reports and recommendations of all Standing and Special Committees of the Board may be in writing and signed by at least a majority of such Committee.

RULE 8

It shall be the duty of the Finance Committee to meet at least one day prior to the regular monthly meeting of the Board to carefully examine and consider all claims against the County. All bills must be filed with the Controller's Office on or before the fourth day of each month in order to be acted upon at the meeting following the above mentioned date.

RULE 9

This rule applies to Committee of the Whole meetings and no other Regular Committee of the Whole Meetings.

(a) Members of the Board of Commissioners shall meet as a Committee of the Whole on the dates as established at the Board's organizational meeting. Committee of the Whole meetings may be cancelled by the Chairperson.

(b) This meeting shall be noticed and posted as a regular monthly meeting.

(c) The purpose of this meeting of the Committee of the Whole shall be for the informal discussion of matters then before the Board of Commissioners, any Committee of the Board, or of matters then put to the Committee of the Whole by any member.

(d) When meeting as a Committee of the Whole, the Board is strictly prohibited from taking any formal or final action on any business then before the Board or any Committee of the Board; unless the entire Board (5 members) is present and agree by unanimous vote to take formal and final action.

(e) The Committee of the Whole may vote to refer any matter to any other Committee of the Board, or to the Board of Commissioners for formal, or final action. Such reference to a committee of the Board may be accompanied by a recommendation as to policy or disposition.

(f) The Chairperson shall call the Committee of the Whole to order at the time, place and date set for its meeting.

(g) A tentative agenda for this meeting shall be drawn up by the County Clerk, County Controller and Chairperson. Prior to the meeting, any item for discussion shall be placed on the agenda at the request of any Commissioner of the Board.

(h) Matters not placed on the tentative agenda may be raised under new business at this meeting after completion of discussion of items on the agenda.

(i) The Chairperson shall conduct order of the committee in a reasonable manner so as to permit free and informal discussions of all matters by all members of the committee. On motions to refer matters to the Board or other committee, the Chair shall state the motion and call for a vote.

RULE 10

When the Board shall decide to go into Committee of the Whole, the Chairperson may preside or, if he/she chooses, name another member of the Board to preside.

RULE 11

Dates for committee meetings shall not be changed from the adopted schedule unless all members of the committee are polled and a majority agree to the change.

RULE 12

Powers and Duties of the Chairperson:

The Chairperson shall take the Chair precisely on the day and at the hour to which the Board adjourned at the preceding session. He/She shall immediately call the members to order, and on the appearance of a quorum from a call of the roll, he/she shall cause the minutes of the preceding session to be approved unless otherwise ordered by the Board.

RULE 13

It shall be the duty of the Chair to preserve order, and to call to his/her aid for that purpose the Sheriff of the County or his Deputy. The Chair shall suppress any disorderly conduct and shall strictly enforce the rules and regulations of the Board.

RULE 14

The Chairperson of the Board is authorized to send to any meeting, convention or function deemed important to the conduct of county business, those persons he/she deems necessary, in numbers appropriate to the occasion; said members shall travel by the mode of transportation most suited to the situation. Action taken by the Chairperson shall be subject to later review by the County Board of Commissioners, and when the occasion warrants, it is expected that a written or oral report concerning participation in such activities will be submitted to the full board by a designated participating delegate.

RULE 15

Power and Duties of the Vice-Chairperson:

When the Chairperson is absent from Board meetings or otherwise incapacitated, during interim the Vice-Chairperson shall assume all the duties and obligations of the Chairperson.

RULE 16

Both the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, when presiding, shall have the right to name any member of the Board to perform the duties and obligations of the Chair temporarily.

RULE 17

Rights and Duties of Members:

Quorum: Three members of all commissioners duly elected and/or qualified shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

RULE 18

The order of business of the Board of Commissioners shall be as follows:

1. Calling to order.
2. Salute to the Flag and Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Roll Call
4. Approval of the minutes of preceding regular and special meetings.
5. Approval of the Agenda.
6. Public Comment (Time limit of 5 minutes per person).
7. Public Hearings.
8. Approval of Bills
9. Presentation of Claims, Petitions and Communications.
10. Reports of the Standing Committees.
11. Reports of Special Committees.
12. Reports of County Officers.
13. Late additions to the agenda.
14. Unfinished Business.

15. New Business.
16. Public Comment.
17. Announcements.
18. Adjournment.

RULE 19

The County Clerk or his/her Deputy shall attend all full board meetings of the County Board and shall keep a correct journal of the Board's proceedings. Minutes of each meeting shall be provided according to the Open Meeting Act of the State of Michigan. The meetings shall be tape recorded and retained by the Clerk's or Controller's office.

RULE 20

At a meeting called for any special business, such business shall be given first consideration by the Board, and shall have the right of way over all other matters taken up by the Board at such special session.

RULE 21

No member shall speak a second time on a question until all others who wish to have had an opportunity to speak once.

RULE 22

When two or more members address the Chair at the same time, the Chairperson shall designate the member who is first to speak; but in all other cases the member who shall first address the Chair shall speak first.

RULE 23

Only members of the Board of Commissioners shall be given the right to speak during any Board meeting except:

1. Any person with the consent of the majority of the Board members present.
2. Any member of the public speaking under the privilege of Public Comment.
3. Any staff person, when requested by any member of the Board.
4. Any member of the public, speaking during a Public Hearing.
5. The Chairperson may limit each speaker to 5 minutes, if in his judgment, the discussion will be lengthy.

RULE 24

A member called to order shall immediately relinquish the floor, unless permitted to explain, and the Board, if appealed to, shall decide the case. If an appeal is not made, the decision of the Chair shall stand. On an appeal, no member shall speak more than once without the consent of the Board.

RULE 25

If a question in debate contains several points, any member may ask for and have the same divided.

RULE 26

No rule of the Board shall be suspended, altered or amended without the concurrence of four-fifths of the members present at a meeting.

RULE 27

The rules of parliamentary practice comprised in "Robert's Rules of Order Revised" shall govern the Board in all cases to which they are applicable, providing they are not in conflict with the Board's rules or the laws of the State of Michigan.

RULE 28

When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received or entertained but the following:

- To adjourn.
- To close debate on the pending question.
- To lay on the table.
- To postpone to a certain day.
- To commit, amend or substitute.
- To refer back to committee.

Several motions shall have precedence in the order in which they stand arranged.

RULE 29

The motion to adjourn shall always be in order; that and the motion to lay on the table, shall be decided without debate.

RULE 30

A motion for reconsideration of a decision shall be in order when:

1. The motion is made at the same meeting or the following meeting.
2. The motion is made by one who voted with the majority on the original motion.

RULE 31

No motion or resolution shall be debated or put to the Board unless the same has seconded and, before voting, stated by the Chair, and any such motion or resolution shall be reduced to writing if the Chair, Clerk or any member so desires. Any motion or resolution so reduced to writing by a member of the Board of Commissioners shall be spread verbatim on the minutes of the meeting.

RULE 32

After a motion has been stated by the Chair, it shall be deemed to be in the possession of the Board, but may be withdrawn at any time before amended or otherwise acted upon.

RULE 33

A roll call vote shall proceed according to district from the person making the motion. Every member who is present when a question is last stated by the Chair, and no other, shall vote for or against the same, unless the Board shall excuse him/her, or unless he/she be immediately, financially interested in the question.

RULE 34

A roll call vote shall be taken on any question when called for by any member of the Board.

RULE 35

Upon a roll call vote, the names of those who voted for or against the same shall be entered according to district on the journal, and each member called upon, unless for special reasons he/she shall be excused by unanimous consent of the Board, shall declare openly and without debate his/her assent or dissent to the question.

RULE 36

The Chairperson must vote on all roll call questions unless excused by a unanimous vote of the Board. He/she may vote on all questions before the Board, except on appeal from his/her own decisions.

RULE 37

All officers elected by the Board shall receive a vote of the majority of the members elected. All members of the County Commissions elected by the Board shall be nominated and appointed according to the County Board's appointment policy resolutions per Rule 42.

RULE 38

Public Hearings Rules of Procedure:

(a) Whenever a public hearing on any issue is convened by the Houghton County Board of Commissioners or committee thereof, the Chairperson shall commence the public hearing by:

1. Stating the purpose of the hearing.
2. Advising the public in attendance on the rules procedure set forth in

this rule.

(b) The Chairperson shall be responsible for order and procedure at all public hearings, and enforce this rule, as well as the general rules of order of the County Board of Commissioners to the extent applicable.

(c) All persons, organizations, firms, partnerships, corporations, or other such entities shall have the right to address the Board either individually or by agent or representative. Each person addressing the Board must give his name and the name of any organization if he is speaking on behalf of that organization.

(d) All presentations to the Board during a public hearing shall be limited to a reasonable time length by the Board, if necessary.

(e) Those parties addressing the Board may also submit such written materials, documents, petitions, and exhibits to support their presentation. They shall be in quantities sufficient so that each Board member shall have a copy.

(f) Following each presentation, each board member may question the individual making the presentation.

(g) The Board shall receive any additional written comments from interested persons or parties on the subject matter of the hearing for up to thirty days following the date of the hearing.

RULE 39

Should meetings continue until a very late hour, the Clerk may be instructed to stop the clock at one minute to midnight to make it unnecessary to pay per diem to members for two days.

RULE 40

For items to appear on the agenda of the regular monthly meeting, finance, or special meeting, they must be presented to the Clerk or the Controller by noon on the Tuesday preceding the meeting. A copy of the proposed agenda and supporting documents for the regular monthly and finance meetings shall be e-mailed to each commissioner five days prior to said meeting. The agenda of the meeting shall be posted in the same manner as prescribed for meeting notices not later than the start of business on the day preceding the meeting. Copies of the agenda shall be made available to the press as soon as they are available for posting. The Clerk shall cause to be printed notices of meetings as provided for in the Open Meetings Act of Michigan. The entire board packet shall be posted on the County website by 12:00 p.m. on the Friday immediately preceding the meeting.

RULE 41

The Board may occasionally be faced with problems, on which it needs additional input from individuals with expertise concerning ways to solve the problem. When these situations arise, the Board may create an Ad Hoc Committee to study the problem and made recommendations on the resolution of the problem.

The Ad Hoc Committee shall cease to exist once it has given its report unless the County Board wishes to charge the Committee with new direction.

Appendix A attached shall prescribe the Ad Hoc Rules of Order.

RULE 42

Board Appointments:

Appointments to the various boards, committees and commissions appointed by the County Board shall be announced at a regular meeting prior to making such appointments.

An application must be filed prior to an individual's consideration for appointment by the County Board. Applications shall be in writing, dated, signed, and are to be submitted to the County Controller's Office by 4:00 P.M. of the Wednesday preceding the Finance Committee meeting of the County Board.

Each member of the Board of Commissioners shall be mailed copies of all applications, complete with any and all supporting documents, by Friday preceding the Finance meeting.

If more applications are received for a particular position than positions are available, all applicants may be interviewed by the County Board if the Board deems it necessary by majority vote. This rule will not apply to appointments made under Rule 41.

Applications will be retained by the Controller's Office for one year.

RULE 43

Board members shall perform their duties free from conflicts of interest.

No Board member shall use his/her position as a Board member to benefit either himself/herself or any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of the County.

When a Board member determines that the possibility of a personal interest conflict exists, he/she should, prior to the matter being considered, disclose his/her interest (such disclosure shall become a matter of record in the minutes of the Board), and thereafter shall abstain from participation in both the discussion of the matter and the vote thereon.

A member of the Board is presumed to have a conflict of interest if the member or his/her family member has a financial interest, or a competing financial interest, in the contrast or other financial transaction or is an employee of the County.

"Family member" means a person's spouse or spouse's sibling or child; a person's sibling of sibling's spouse or child; a person's child or child's spouse; or a person's parent or parent's spouse, and includes these relationships as created by adoption or marriage.

Any contract in which there is a conflict of interest as defined by this rule must be approved by a majority vote of the full Board without the vote of any Board member with a financial interest.

APPENDIX A
RULES OF ORDER
AD HOC COMMITTEES

RULE 1

The County Board of Commissioner's Rules of Order listed below shall apply equally to the Ad Hoc Committees.

RULE NO.'S: 11, 12, 15, 16, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36.

RULE 2

The panel's final report shall be submitted to the County Board of Commissioners not latter than 90 days after the panel is appointed.

RULE 3

If the panel needs secretarial help to complete its reports, the chairperson shall contact the County Controller for this help.

RULE 4

If the panel can not reach a consensus on its final report, the panel may submit both a majority and minority report.

RULE 5

The public shall have every right to provide the panel with written and/or oral input into questions under consideration. All meetings shall be public with the proper meeting notice requirements being met.