

Regular Meeting / Public Hearing
March 9, 2004

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting / Public Hearing, on Tuesday March 9, 2004, in the 5th Floor Conference Room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Mike Lahti, at 5 P.M.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, the following commissioners responded to roll call: Edward Jenich, District 1; Dennis Barrette, District 2; Michael Lahti, District 3; Scott Ala, District 4; and Paul Luoma, District 5.

Commissioner Lahti announced the Public Hearing for the Keweenaw Coop Planning Grant was open. Phil Musser was present to speak on behalf of the grant and answer any questions. He stated the \$7,500 grant is part of the \$19,000 cost of a planning grant for the relocation of the Keweenaw Coop to the Scott Hotel Building. The grant would come from the Revolving Loan fund. Phil explained the importance of relocation and the redevelopment of the building as an anchor building for downtown Hancock. With all questions answered, Commissioner Lahti announced the Public Hearing was closed.

A motion by Commissioner Ala, seconded by Commissioner Luoma to accept the minutes as presented of the February 17, 2004 Regular Board Meeting. Carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

A motion by Commissioner Barrette, seconded by Commissioner Jenich to approve the agenda as presented. Carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, nays 0.

Public Comment None

A motion by Commissioner Jenich, seconded by Commissioner Luoma to approve paying the bills as submitted being vouchers # 88664 through #88739 along with the late bills submitted for a total of \$238,058.05.

Carried by the following vote.

YES: Jenich, Luoma, Barrette, Ala, Lahti 5.

NO: None 0.

Correspondence

Commissioner Lahti stated he received an unsigned letter regarding concerns of 911.

Commissioner Lahti said the recent legislative update from MAC regarding the removal of personal property taxes could effect the Counties in Michigan by \$20,000,000 statewide.

Commissioner Lahti addressed an article regarding the DNR PILT. It has been proposed that the PILT money come out of the revenue sharing money. MAC encourages the Counties to do a resolution informing the legislatures and Governor how important the PILT is to the County services. A motion by Commissioner Luoma, seconded by Commissioner Jenich to approve a resolution be sent to our legislators and the governor that we would not be happy with PILT money taken out of the revenue sharing, there by cutting the County monies. Carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

Reports

County Officers: Jack Dueweke, OEM Director stated there was a bill he submitted for Traverse Engineering Services for engineering services. Through Senator Levins efforts they received \$1.3 Million dollars worth of work last year. He learned that money will be available again and he expects Houghton County will benefit again. The bill submitted is for the engineering services that helped organize the information needed by the Corp of Engineers who were administering the grant. A motion by Commissioner Ala, seconded by Commissioner Luoma to pay the submitted bill of \$3,000 to

Traverse Engineering. Carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0

Dennis Hext, Houghton County Airport Manager, was present and stated that North Star Flight Service will begin service on March 11, 2004.

Tom Novascone, Houghton County Equalization Director, was present and informed the Board assessments have gone out to the Townships and they are now waiting for the Townships to hold their Board of Reviews.

Carol Kreher, acting Director of the MSU Extension, was present and announced they have a 4H Challenge & Leadership Training. It is for adult certification as a challenged leader. She mentioned it will help the 4H program if they can get some new volunteers.

Standing Committees

Commissioner Luoma reported on the following: Road Commission will advertise excess property they have for sale on the Green Acres Road and the Toivola Garage property. They also would like to know if the County would be interested in purchasing property when it is delisted on the Super Fund Site in Point Mills for a park or boat launch. They are working with the State Highway Department on some pay backs on equipment advances they had on their contract.

Transfer Station met with the employees discussed improvement in operations. Also the possibility of moving the office which would allow having 2 locations to serve for unloading.

Houghton - Keweenaw Soil Conservation announced there will be 2 new super fund sites for next year. The North Entry and Scales Creek.

Planning Committee after their public hearing worked on redoing the maps of Duncan and Laird Townships.

Attended a U.P. Jail Conference and learned the Houghton County has their reimbursement money under control.

Law Enforcement Committee met and he learned that one the patrol cars has a burned transmission and will cost \$2,000 to fix it. The cost of reconditioning the car would be \$11,900. A discussion followed. A motion by Commissioner Jenich, seconded by Commissioner Luoma to go ahead with the low bid for reconditioning the car. Carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

Tri County Corrections: Got their draft of their mid year plan. Western U. P. Substance Abuse will have to pay an operating advance back to the State that they received several years ago in the amount of \$170,000.

The airport board raised the parking fees from \$3 to \$4 dollars a day. Gave tentative approval of the ALLTEL tower if it meets specifications. Tentative plans to sell Lot 10 to the Michigan Department of Transportation for \$55,000. Approved to go out on bids repairs to the sewer system. Approved contracts for the air service to Pontiac.

Commissioner Barrette reported on the following: The Local Emergency Planning Committee held a tabletop Bio Terrorism Exercise which Jack Dueweke was involved in the planning. Commissioner Barrette stated he was impressed with the Emergency Measures that are already in place in the U.P., Congratulated Jack on the excellent exercise.

Torch Lake PAC regarding the Torch Lake Super Fund Project. The remaining project schedule is the Isle Royal Sands site will be done by July of this year. Design and bid packages for Scales Creek and the North Entry site will be out between July and September of this year. Will advertise for those bids in October. Construction will be between May and October of 2005. The Boston Pond and the Calumet Dam are now done.

Torch Lake Sewage Authority published an ad in the Gazette for engineering proposals for the improvement in the Torch Lake sewage authority system. Also planning for future sewage expanding in the area. A billing adjustment for the sewage was approved by the Department of Public Works as requested.

Commissioner Lahti reported on the following: Western U.P. Health Department, learned that Gogebic County approved the Boards request for 2004. This brought all 5 counties to the same level of funding. Their home health care is stable and their accident rate is low.

Commissioner Ala reported on the following: Michigan WORKS : Elected new officers, drafted the 2004 Summer Youth Program. Received their audit results which was very good. They will be laying off 3 people from their region.

BHK established policies for out of town phone reimbursements, internet usage, and conference and seminar attendance. Update of the salary schedule.

Portage Lake Multi Rec received bills and reviewed expenses, rentals are down. Finlandia has offered \$230,000 toward a new addition on the arena.

Airport meeting reports overtime is down from last year. Last year to date was 140 hours, this year is 69.5. Dennis Hext said it is due to the employees pitching in and doing a good job. A motion by Commissioner Ala, seconded by Commissioner Luoma to send a letter to the airport employees thanking them for their hard work and keeping down the overtime. Carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

Commissioner Jenich reported on the following: Tomorrow is the Keweenaw Industrial Council meeting. The presenter is the Dean of the International School of Art and Design at Finlandia University.

Commissioner Jenich introduced 2 government students, Megan Kiviniemi and Brianne Gruber in the audience that are present to observe how government operates.

Met with the Controller and stated the departments are on target with their expenses.

Commissioner Jenich asked Ann Gasperich, the 911 Director, to give the 911 report. Ann announced the budget at the 911 center is doing well. Ann stated the 911 Committee put together a five member ad hoc group that is looking into every option out there. They are not ready to commit to anything, there are options that have to be reviewed and when they put something together they will bring it to the Commission. Fifteen people tested for the 2 part time positions.

Tom Rosemurgy was present regarding his leave of absence request. He stated he received a leave of absence agreement from his union. He said it addressed all the concerns that were mentioned when he met with the Law Enforcement Committee and asked the Board to sign the agreement. A motion by Commissioner Luoma, seconded by Commissioner Jenich to grant the leave of absence for Tom Rosemurgy. Carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

New Business

Houghton County Medical Care millage. Jim Nutini, Director of the Medical Care, was present and stated the millage is up for renewal. He stated he met with the committee that was appointed by the Chairman, Mike Lahti. The Medical Care has been supported by the county for operational millage since 1985. They operate on a \$13,000,000 budget per year. They have 270 employees. They are presently requesting a renewal of 2.644 mills for 5 years. A motion by Commissioner Jenich, seconded by Commissioner Luoma to support a 5 year 2.644 millage renewal on the 2004 ballot for the Medical Care Facility. Carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

Family Independence Agency. John Nelson, Zone Manager, for the Family Independence Agency was present to update the Board regarding the combining of Houghton FIA, Keweenaw FIA and the Baraga FIA into a 3-county FIA district. He explained it would be both a financial saving for the State and improved service to FIA customers. The 7 member Board would consist of 2 representatives from each county and 1 gubernatorial appointment. Questions were asked regarding the proposed FIA Board made up of 3 counties, having any vote regarding the Houghton County Medical Care Facility operations. A motion by Commissioner Jenich, seconded by Commissioner Luoma to support formulating a three county FIA district consisting of Houghton, Keweenaw and Baraga counties. A statement or policy would be in effect stating Houghton County would have sole voting power regarding the Medical Care Facility. Carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

Sheriff's Office air handling system. John Kirk, from U.P. Engineering, was present and stated the design has been completed for the air handling system for the sheriff's building. The project is estimated at \$60,000. The advertisement for bids is scheduled for March 12 with a bid deadline of March 29. Commissioner Lahti asked for an alternate project to include the cost of air-conditioning the entire building. A motion by Commissioner Luoma, seconded by Commissioner Jenich to advertise for bids

with the understanding that there would be Davis Bacon prevailing wages incorporated into the bids and have an alternate bid of air-conditioning for the building. Carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

Commissioner Luoma questioned John Kirk regarding the proposed indoor exercise area. John had a sketch and quick cost opinion. The estimate is \$60,000 to \$65,000 for a 24x20 room. Commissioner Lahti stated the exercise area is in the possible future planning stage.

Keweenaw Food Coop Grant. A motion by Commissioner Barrette, seconded by Commissioner Ala to approve a \$7,500 Revolving Loan Fund Grant to Keweenaw Food Coop to go toward their market study for relocation to the Hancock Hardware/Scott Hotel Building. Carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

Sale of Lot 3, Block 2, City of Houghton. A motion by Commissioner Ala, seconded by Commissioner Luoma to list for sale Lot 3, Block 2, in the City of Houghton for the appraised value stated by the Equalization Director, Tom Novascone. Carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

Appropriations. A motion by Commissioner Luoma, seconded by Commissioner Barrette to approve the appropriation of the designated portion of the Liquor Tax revenue for 2003 to the Western Upper Peninsula Substance Abuse Service Coordinating Agency, the amount of their portion is \$64,998.50 Carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

Union Personnel issue. A motion by Commissioner Barrette, seconded by Commissioner Luoma to go into closed session. 6:25 P.M.

Carried by the following vote.

YES: Barrette, Luoma, Jenich, Ala, Lahti 5.

NO: None 0.

A motion by Commissioner Barrette, seconded by Commissioner Jenich to come out of closed session. 6:30.

Carried by the following vote.

YES: Barrette, Jenich, Ala Luoma Lahti 5.

NO: None 0.

A motion by Commissioner Jenich, seconded by Commissioner Luoma to go according to the decision of paying her for the 5 days back pay, with a letter of reprimand. Commissioner Lahti asked if there was any further discussion or clarification.

Carried by the following vote.

YES: Jenich, Luoma, Barrette, Ala, Lahti 5.

NO: None 0.

Public comments None

Announcements None

Commissioner Luoma made a motion to adjourn. There being no objection, the meeting was adjourned.

Michael Lahti, Chairman

Mary Schoos, Clerk