

**Regular Meeting  
December 14, 2010**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, December 14, 2010, at 5:00 p.m. in the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Paul Luoma. After the Pledge of Allegiance, the following commissioners responded to roll call: Edward Jenich, District 1; Dennis Barrette, District 2; Anton Pintar, District 3; and Paul Luoma, District 5. Absent was Scott Ala, District 4.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jenich and seconded by Commissioner Pintar to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on November 9, and the Special Meeting on November 30, 2010. The motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Barrette and seconded by Commissioner Pintar to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

Public Comment   None

A motion was made by Commissioner Jenich and seconded by Commissioner Barrette to approve paying the bills of vouchers #12456 thru #124651 for a total of \$103,102.53, along with the late bills submitted of \$7,423.29 for a grand total of \$110,525.82. The motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Jenich, Barrette, Pintar, Luoma 4.

NO: None 0.

Absent: Ala 1.

Correspondence   Nothing brought for discussion.

Reports   Standing Committee

Commissioner Barrette reported to the Board on the following: Portage Lake Lift Bridge Planning Group, Copper Country Mental Health, and the Houghton County Memorial Airport. Commissioner Barrette ended his report thanking Chairman Luoma for being an important part of the Commission.

Commissioner Pintar reported to the Board on the following: Houghton – Keweenaw Conservation District, Houghton County Planning Commission, Western U.P. Health Board and the Copper Country Trail National Byway Committee.

Commissioner Jenich reported to the Board on the following: Department of Human Services / Houghton County Medical Care, Commission on Aging, Houghton County Finance Committee Meeting, and Keweenaw National Park.

Commissioner Luoma reported to the Board on the following: The new Transfer Station land purchase. Commissioner Luoma thanked the Board, the county officers, and employees for 10 years of helping to steer him in the right direction keeping Houghton County in good financial shape for the benefit of all people in Houghton County.

County Officers

Eric Forsberg, Houghton County Controller, said he received a notice from WUPDR that they applied for and received a grant on behalf of Houghton County of \$150,000.00 for Single Family Housing. Eric stated he will be meeting with the insurance representative and the union heads tomorrow to try and come up with an alternative group plan due to the 27% increase in the health insurance rate.

Sheriff McLean thanked Commissioner Luoma for his years of service to the County.

John Pekkala, Houghton County Drain Commissioner, informed the Board that starting last March the Department of Natural Resources and Environment began conducting an audit of the Houghton County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Program. It started with a review of projects filed in his office and continued with inspections at various job sites. He received a letter from the DNRE formally approving Houghton County's Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Program.

#### New Business

1. Appointment to the Houghton County Road Commission. Commissioner Luoma stated there are 3 qualified candidates. He stated that it has been the policy of the Road Commission to have members from different districts be appointed to represent the County. Two of the current applicants live in a district that is already represented on the Board. It is his recommendation that James Markham be appointed to represent that district. A motion was made by Commissioner Pintar to reappoint James Markham to the Houghton County Road Commission Board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barrette. The motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

2. Appointment to the Houghton County Department of Veteran's Affairs – 2 positions. A motion was made by Commissioner Barrette and seconded by Commissioner Pintar to appoint Robert Jeannotte to fill the unexpired term and to appoint Carl Hayrynen to a three year term. The motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

3. Proposal for MERS Health Care Savings Program. A representative from MERS was present and explained how the Health Care Savings Program works. He stated that it offers employees the opportunity to set money aside tax free. The funds accumulate tax free and there is no fee for withdrawals. The funds must be used for medical purposes after retirement for the employee or their dependents. An employee can deposit available vacation, sick and longevity pay. The fee to the employee is \$25.00 per year and ½% of the balance. A motion was made by Commissioner Jenich and seconded by Commissioner Pintar to adopt a resolution to allow employees to use the MERS Health Care Savings Program. The motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Jenich, Pintar, Barrette, Luoma 4.

NO: None 0

ABSENT: Ala 1.

4. Request for approval to purchase one year of service from MERS. Raphael Soumis requested to be able to purchase 1 year of service from the MERS Retiree Service. A motion was made by Commissioner Jenich and seconded by Commissioner Barrette to approve a resolution allowing Raphael Soumis to purchase 1 year of additional credited service with MERS at his expense. The motion carried with the following vote.

YES: Jenich, Barrette, Pintar, Luoma 4.

NO: None 0.

ABSENT: Ala 1.

5. Request for approval to purchase agreements for new Transfer Station property. A motion was made by Commissioner Pintar and seconded by Commissioner Barrette to approve the purchase agreements as written to purchase two parcels of property at the cost of \$130,940.00. The land is needed to build the new Transfer Station. The motion carried with the following vote.

YES: Pintar, Barrette, Jenich, Luoma 4.

NO: None 0.

ABSENT: Ala 1.

6. Realtor's listing for old high school site. Eric explained the listing for the high school property was expiring. A motion was made by Commissioner Barrette and seconded by Commissioner Jenich to renew the realtor listing to sell the old high school property. The motion carried by the following vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

#### 7. Appropriations

a. UP Economic Development Alliance - \$500.00

b. Copper Country Mental Health - \$43,120.25

A motion was made by Commissioner Jenich and second by Commissioner Pintar to approve the budgeted appropriations as listed. The motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

#### Public Comments

Phil Musser was present and stated they have extended the loan to Keweenaw Scrap Metal at the same rate of interest for 3 years rather than the normal balloon. They hope this will allow them to get stable and be able to continue their payments. The rest of the loans are doing well. They have approximately \$65,000.00 to loan out and they are able to be flexible and do working capital loans, forgiveness of interest for the first few months, and or forgiveness of payment for the first few months.

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

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Paul Luoma, Chairman

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Mary Schoos, Clerk