

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JAIL TASK FORCE
MAY 28, 2019**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Jail Task Force meeting on Tuesday, May 28, 2019, in the 3rd Floor Circuit Courtroom of the Courthouse, City of Houghton.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Albert Koskela at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Koskela.

Chairman Koskela turned the meeting over to Commissioner Tikkanen to act as the Chairman.

Approval of Agenda/Additions:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the Agenda as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote: Ayes 5, Nays 0.

New Business:

1. Introductions

Commissioner Tikkanen introduced all of the Commissioners, the Administrator, and the County Clerk. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves and stated where they were representing.

2. Sheriff Brian McLean – Why is a new jail needed

Sheriff McLean stated the jail has been studied 4-5 times. The current jail has 28 beds and has the least amount of beds per capita in Michigan. Dickinson County has about 500 less people than Houghton County and had their new jail funded by the voters.

3. History of prior jail proposals

Commissioner Tikkanen thanked the Jail Task Force members.

Eric Forsberg, Administrator explained the 1989 site plan for 34 beds, and the 21 work camp beds. This was the first study that went on the ballot in 1990 for 3.3 million. This did not pass, and there are no records with exact numbers in the Clerk's Office.

In 2010, the Houghton County Justice Center was put on the ballot for 110 beds and the 21 work camp beds, and District Court to be at the new facility. This was a 30 year bond for .99 mills. This did not pass with 74% of no votes.

In 2018, the jail addition to the courthouse was on the ballot for 55 beds and the work camp being put where the current jail is located. This was a 20 year bond for \$11 million at a levied rate of .7439 and an average annual millage rate required to retire the bonds is .751 mills. This did not pass. The results were 6941 No, and 6779 Yes. This was a difference of 162 votes.

4. Karin Cooper, UPEA - Cost Estimates

Commissioner Tikkanen stated Karin Cooper will discuss the 4 alternatives for the Jail Task Force to discuss.

Karin Cooper, UPEA Architect, explained the following:

- a. Recalculating the 2018 proposal for a jail addition.
- b. Recalculating the 2010 proposal for a new jail.
- c. Estimating the cost to build a new jail and courthouse within the City of Houghton. The Houghton County Sheriff Department must be within the County seat.
- d. Calculating a cost estimate for Camp Kitwen.

All cost estimates should be done by UPEA and given to the County by the end of June 2019.

Judge Mark Wisti questioned why Camp Kitwen was even being considered since the jail/courthouse must be in the county seat according to the Constitution.

5. Goals and objectives of the Task Force

Barbara Battersby questioned if the Board wants information on what each department needs for a new facility. Karin Cooper stated the estimates will give an idea on the four (4) alternatives.

Valorie Troesch stated the Task Force should look to the public for input and what the public wants for a 5 year plan, a 50 year plan?

Susan Boxer stated the Task Force should look at the future, not a Band-Aid for fixing the courthouse/jail, and for a new facility to not be located in people's backyards like it is now.

Virginia Dwyer recommended everyone make a list of needs per regulations and let the public know. She stated Camp Kitwen should not be an option, and that the inmates and staff need to be safe.

Mr. Taddeuci stated that people have told him they would vote for a long term solution for a new jail/courthouse facility.

Mr. Hyrkas asked how long the Task Force has to get a proposal on the ballot, and recommended using technology to reach the voters.

Paul Lehto stated the Board of Commissioners should make a decision regarding the jail and put it on the ballot and to let the Township Supervisors assist in educating the voters.

Jim Tervo felt the public was left out of the process in the past with prior elections for the jail/courthouse.

Julianne Haischer asked why there are only 4 alternatives, and asked if Shopko in Houghton was an option.

Commissioner Tikkanen stated Camp Kitwen was built like a dormitory with no cells.

Judge Wisti asked if UPEA could do a cost estimate on the Shopko property. Karin Cooper responded that it would cost approximately \$12,000.00.

Eric Waara from the City of Houghton stated a new retailer is possibly considering the Shopko property.

Evan McDonald asked that the end goal is for the Task Force.

Judge Wisti recommended the Board of Commissioners give a list of what is needed by each department to the Task Force.

Steve Carlson brought up using the poly-cam for more court hearings.

Bruce Peterson discussed Camp Kitwen. Judge Wisti explained it is not an option due to the County Seat.

6. Task force structure

A future Task Force meeting will be held in approximately 1 month after the cost estimates are received.

Eric Forsberg will email everyone information on the previous ballot proposals.

Norm Shimp discussed the possibility of a regional jail. Judge Wisti explained that no other County wants a regional jail as it is not cost effective.

Commissioner Janssen discussed why people voted no in the past, what will they vote yes for.

Task Force Comments:

Virginia Dwyer discussed looking into grant money, and looking into federal funding for federal prisoners.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Koskela and seconded by Commissioner Britz to adjourn.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk