

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 11, 2020**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular meeting on Tuesday, February 11, 2020, 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 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Koskela.

Roll call:

The following commissioners responded to roll call:

Tom Tikkanen, District 1; Albert Koskela, District 2; Glenn Anderson, District 3; Gretchen Janssen-By telephone, District 4; Roy Britz, District 5.

Approval of Agenda/Additions:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the Agenda as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote: Ayes 4, Nays 0.

Public Comments:

The following people addressed the Board:

Justin Kasieta
Janine Stevenson
Alan Baker
William Keith
Terry Kinzel
Barry Fink
Hayden Augustiniak

Chairman Koskela did a show of hands for the people for and against the Resolution several times and several different ways.

The following people addressed the Board:

Rachel McDonald
Lance Elliot
Sharon Kupp
Matthew Wright

County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly, requested the Minutes be approved as they were skipped on the Agenda.

Approval of Minutes:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2020 meeting as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

Approval of Bills:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve paying the bills submitted of \$ 2,294,708.90 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Britz, Anderson, Tikkanen, Koskela 4.

NO: None 0.

Correspondence:

Chairman Koskela stated the union correspondence will go to the Personnel Committee and will be put on the March Agenda. No Union correspondence was in the Clerk's packet.

Reports:

Standing Committee:

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following: Stated he will report on the Houghton County Jail later on in the Agenda.

Commissioner Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following: Trails Committee and Solid Waste Committee.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following: The 2020 Census, and the Health Department.

County Officers:

Dennis Hext, Airport Manager, updated the Board on the Airport. He stated he applied for \$20,000.00 in state grants.

Commissioner Anderson asked if United's pricing is competitive to other airports. Dennis Hext stated it is very competitive with the UP airports.

Commissioner Janssen requested to give her report by telephone to the Board. She reported on Eagle Webinar on behalf of the Solid Waste Committee, Houghton County Planning Commission, Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District and their tree sale is on May 9th, and thanked Darcy from UP RC&D for her years of service.

Old Business:

1. Houghton County Jail

Commissioner Britz stated that he and Commissioner Janssen, and Eric Forsberg visited the property on Evergreen road and met with the owner. There is 5-7 acres for sale, and the Board could work on an option to purchase with the owner. Stated he has gotten strong feedback regarding getting out of the City of Houghton. He suggested waiting until spring to do the soil testing, and suggested waiting to decide until spring to decide on anything regarding the jail and putting it on the ballot.

Karin Cooper agreed to put this matter on hold, and stated they would look at aerial views in the meantime.

Commissioner Britz requesting waiting on the state study on the jail task force and pre-trial incarceration. He discussed the study as it may determine the size of the jail that Houghton County may need to consider regarding size. He again recommended this matter be put on the ballot in 2021 and get input from the public.

Commissioner Tikkanen stated his disappointment in this not going on the ballot during the 2020 year. He requested the matter go on the March Agenda.

New Business:

1. Second Amendment Sanctuary County Resolution

Commissioner Tikkanen discussed the proposed Resolution Second Amendment and why so many counties in Michigan have become sanctuaries.

Commissioner Britz stated the Resolution presented is not appropriate for law enforcement. He discussed the other Resolution from Marquette. He stated he cannot decide on a Resolution at this time as there is no telling an elected official how to do their job.

Commissioner Anderson commented on the wonderful turnout at the meeting. He provided information on various gun statistics in Houghton County. He agreed with Commissioner Britz on not telling elected officials how to do their jobs.

Chairman Koskela discussed the Marquette Resolution.

Commissioner Tikkanen discussed consulting with the Commissioners on what items should come out of the proposed Resolution. He read part of the County proposed Resolution.

Chairman Koskela stated the Board can change what they can, and the Board cannot disobey the laws. He suggested the Board study this matter and add to the March Agenda.

Commissioner Britz requested a legal opinion from council on what the Board can and cannot do.

Commissioner Janssen stated she received telephone calls and emails against the proposed Resolution. She stated she does not support the proposed Resolution, and agreed with Commissioners Anderson and Britz regarding not telling an elected official what their job is.

The Board agreed to table this matter and put it on the March Agenda.

2. Great Lakes Recovery Centers

Sylvia Wentala from Great Lakes Recovery Centers gave a short presentation to the Board. They do on the job training and work with landlords and MSHDA for housing. They also provide transportation options.

3. Western U.P. Manpower Consortium Resolution

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to approve the Western U.P, Manpower Consortium Resolution as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Tikkanen, Koskela, Anderson 4.

NO: None 0.

**Joint Resolution of the Counties of Gogebic, Houghton, Iron,
Baraga, Ontonagon, and Keweenaw
RESOLUTION #2020-01**

Whereas, since 1974, and up until October 1, 2015, the above-named Western Upper Peninsula Counties provided job training services to their residents through several agencies which were almost exclusively funded by the State of Michigan, and

Whereas, the Western Upper Peninsula Manpower Consortium was disbanded in 2015, along with two other Upper Peninsula Employment and Training providers, all of which were consolidated into the UPWARD Talent Council, pursuant to the Governor's directive, and,

Whereas, the State of Michigan and the affected Western Upper Peninsula Counties were all aware of the shortfall in the pension fund created for the employees of the Manpower Consortium, and the State of Michigan paid for an audit to determine the extent of the potential shortfall, and,

Whereas, the initial Manpower Consortium pension shortfall was \$300,924.00, which the State of Michigan promised to address after the actuarial report, and,

Whereas, the unfunded liability has grown to \$970,165.00, and will continue to grow until funded, as the State of Michigan has yet to fund this known liability, and,

Whereas, there was a shortfall as it concerned the pension benefits owed the former employees of the Eastern Upper Peninsula Employment and Training Consortium and that shortfall was corrected by subsequent legislative action, and,

Whereas, the failure of the State to fund the Manpower Consortium pension shortfall, as it did for the similarly situated Eastern Upper Peninsula Employment and Training Consortium, creates an unfunded pension liability that adversely affects some of the most vulnerable counties in Michigan.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the six Counties of the Western Upper Peninsula urge and demand that the Legislature correct the shortfall that exists in the pension fund for the seven employees who have retired from the Western Upper Peninsula Alliance Board, all of whom fulfilled their obligation to the State of Michigan by devoting years of hard work to the economic well-being of the State of Michigan.

Date: _____

By: _____
Its: Chairperson, Houghton County Board

Date: _____

By: _____
Its: Houghton County Clerk

4. Attorney's Opinion – Planning Commission Membership

The Board discussed the letter that was received from the Attorney regarding Eugene Londo.

The Board stated they would re-advertise for the replacement of Eugene Londo.

5. Appropriations

- a. Northwoods Rail Transit Commission - \$200.00

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the above-mentioned appropriation as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Britz, Tikkanen, Koskela 4.

NO: None 0.

6. Travel Requests

- a. Mac Conference
- b. Jennifer Kelly – Houghton County Clerk

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to approve the Travel Requests as requested.

The Motion carried by a voice vote: Ayes 4, Nays 0.

Public Comments:

The following people addressed the Board:

Horst Schmidt
Anne Newcombe
Justin Kasieta
Anne Newcombe
Bill Manderfield
Paula DeCare
Phyllis Green
Keith Meyers
Richard Koski
Alan Baker
Horst Schmidt
Todd VanDyke
Mirium Pickens
Daniel Niemela
Levi Niemela
Sarah Green
Keith Saber
Peter Eckstrom
Evan McDonald
Maddy Manderfield

Announcements:

None.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adjourn at 6:54 pm.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 4, Nays 0.

Albert Koskela, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk