

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING/PUBLIC HEARING  
APRIL 13, 2021**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular meeting/Public hearing on Tuesday, April 13, 2021, in the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton. The public was attending by Zoom.

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 done by Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk:

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

Approval of Minutes:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen, seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to approve the March 9, 2021 and the March 18, 2021 minutes as presented.

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

Approval of Agenda/Additions:

Commissioner Britz requested one (1) addition. #13-Discussion on a Resolution for a four-year term for the Commissioners.

Commissioner Anderson agreed to add it to the Agenda.

**\*\*No Motion or voting was done to approve the Agenda with the Addition.**

Public Comments:

Horst Schmitt addressed the board.

Approval of Bills:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve paying the bills submitted of \$1,459,808.46 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Britz, Tikkanen, Koskela, Janssen 5.

NO: None 0.

Correspondence:

None.

## Reports:

### 1. Standing committee

Commissioner Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

Recreation Authority: There were not enough Board members for a quorum. They will be drafting a letter to the DNR and copying legislatures within one (1) week asking for an action plan for the construction plans for the trails.

Solid Waste Committee: There will be a single-stream recycling drop-off point will be available to County residents starting April 29 on Earth Day at the Transfer Station. There will be a contract with Waste Management. The cost will be \$5.00 per vehicle. They will be working with the Copper Country Recycling Initiative. This is the first step for recycling at the Transfer Station.

Old Transfer Station Building: Great American Disposal is close to closing the transaction for the purchase of the building.

Commissioner Tikkanen encouraged the other Commissioners to read the email from March 31<sup>st</sup> from Homeland Security about safeguarding the systems as much as possible. Discussed Senator McBroom being on the Fraud Investigation Committee in Lansing, and maybe he could update the County.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

Michigan Redistricting/Appportionment Commission: A public hearing will be held in Marquette. This is the only meeting in the Upper Peninsula. He asked the County Clerk who is on the local Apportionment Commission. Jennifer Kelly stated the members are herself, Lisa Mattila, Brittany Bulleit, and the Republican and Democrat Chairs.

Western UP Health Department: As of March 22<sup>nd</sup>, approximately 70% of elderly have been vaccinated. Approximately 36% of ages 16 and up have had their first dose, and about 61% of ages 49 and up and have their first dose.

Commissioner Janssen had nothing to report to the Board.

Commissioner Britz had nothing to report to the Board.

Chairman Koskela had nothing to report to the Board.

Commissioner Tikkanen stated according to Realator.com, Houghton is ranked #3 on the top 10 affordable small towns that someone would want to live.

### 2. Special Committee

None.

### 3. County Officers

Dennis Hext, Airport Manager, addressed the Board regarding the Airport.

Lisa Mattila, Treasurer, addressed the Board regarding the Land Bank.

New Business:

1 & 3. County Audit-Debbie Bradford from Rukkila, Negro, and Associates & Adoption of County Audit for Fiscal Year 2019-20

Debbie Bradford stated the audit went well. She informed the Board that pages 6-12 are full of information that the public may request. This information is available on the county and state websites. The County overspent. She discussed the over 8 million in

federal awards that were spent (page 89) due to the flood. She explained the government funds on pages 15-17.

Commissioner Anderson asked about the change in the deficit on page 9. Debbie explained it was due to the assets and liabilities being increased.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to adopt the County Audit for the Fiscal Year 2019-20 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Koskela, Britz 5.

NO: None 0.

## 2. Deficit Elimination Plan-PFC Fund Resolution

Ben Larson, Administrator, explained the Deficit Elimination Plan to the Board and the continuing yearly Resolution that needs the Boards approval.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to adopt the Deficit Elimination Plan as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Tikkanen, Anderson, Koskela, Janssen, Britz 5.

NO: None 0.

# HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

401 E. Houghton Avenue, Houghton, Michigan 49931

Telephone: (906) 482-8307 Fax: (906) 482-7238

**Chairperson**

Albert Koskela

**Vice Chairperson**

Tom Tikkanen

**Commissioners**

Glenn Anderson

Gretchen Janssen

Roy Britz

## RESOLUTION #21-04

### HOUGHTON COUNTY PASSENGER FACILITY CHARGE FUND RESOLUTION TO REDUCE UNRESTRICTED NET ASSET BALANCE

WHEREAS, the Houghton County Passenger Facility Charge Fund has a deficit balance of unrestricted net assets as of September 30, 2020; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to MCL 141.921, any local unit of government ending its fiscal year with a deficit net asset balance must file a deficit elimination plan with the Michigan Department of Treasury; and

WHEREAS, failure to submit a deficit elimination plan and receive Department of Treasury approval for such plan could result in a reduction of State revenue Sharing; and

WHEREAS, the timing of PFC monies are collected and expensed, as directed by the Federal Aviation Administration, dictate that the Fund will always have a deficit balance of unrestricted net assets; and

WHEREAS, the activity currently being posted to the PFC Fund was previously reported in the Airport Fund but was split out for internal accounting purposes only; and

WHEREAS, the resulting deficit balance in unrestricted net assets is an internal accounting number only.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Houghton County Board of Commissioners recognize that the PFC Fund will be in a perpetual state of deficit balance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Houghton County Board of Commissioners approve the projected budget for the years ending September 30, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 for the Houghton County Passenger Facility Charge Fund.

AYES: TIKKANEN, ANDERSON, KOSKELA, JANSSEN, BRITZ (5).

NAYS: NONE (0).

ABSTENTIONS: NONE (0).

ABSENT: NONE (0).

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

STATE OF MICHIGAN        )  
  )ss.  
COUNTY OF HOUGHTON    )

I, the undersigned, the duly qualified and acting Deputy Clerk of the county of Houghton, State of Michigan do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the County Board of the County of Houghton at its regular meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of April 2021, the original of which resolution is on file in my office.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my official signature, this 13<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2021.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Kelly, Clerk  
County of Houghton

4. Mid-Year Budget Amendments

Ben Larson, Administrator, discussed the movement of monies for the Veteran’s Office for flags and the County Clerk’s Office for Concealed Pistol Licenses, and the moving of budgeted monies from the Clerk’s budget to the Controller’s budget for Beverly Smith. He explained the budget amendment for Airport.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to accept the Mid-Year Budget Amendment as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Tikkanen, Britz, Koskela, Anderson, Janssen 5.  
NO: None 0.

5. Copper Country Mental Health Board Appointments

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to reappoint the four (4) existing Board members as presented.

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

6. Airport Road Resolution and Reciprocal Easement Agreement

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to approve the Airport Road Resolution as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Tikkanen, Koskela, Janssen, Britz 5.

NO: None 0.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to accept the Easement agreement with Copper Island Academy as presented.

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

**RESOLUTION #21-06**

**Sale of Lots 19 and 20 in the Houghton County Industrial Airpark, Revision of Resolution #21-02**

**WHEREAS**, The Houghton County Board of Commissioners, as successor in interest to the dissolved Houghton County Airport Authority on July 24, 1989 is authorized to all rights of interest and statutory authority granted to the dissolved Houghton County Airport Authority.

**WHEREAS**, the Houghton County Memorial Airport Committee, created on July 26, 1989, under the Authority of the Houghton County Board of Commissioners, pursuant to Act 73 of the Public Acts of 1970 and Act 327 of the Public Acts of 1945, and pursuant to the authority vested in the County of Houghton by the Aeronautics Code of the State of Michigan has the authority to adopt rules and regulations for the management, government and the use of said airport property.

**WHEREAS**, on February 9, 2021, at a Regular Houghton County Board of Commissioners Meeting, Resolution #21-02 was adopted to approve the conditions set forth in the Purchase Agreement presented on January 11, 2021 with final acceptance on February 9, 2021 by Copper Island Academy for Lots 19 and 20 of Houghton County Airpark Plat, for the purchase price of \$50,000 pursuant to the Airport Industrial Park Covenants, Section 5, Resale Rights, recorded September 12, 1973, in Liber 23 of Misc. Records, Page 157, Houghton County Register of Deeds Records.

**WHEREAS**, Resolution #21-02 should also have authorized the sale of the northerly portion of a private road designated as Industrial Drive North located directly between Lots 19 and 20 of Houghton County Airpark Plat, along with Lots 19 and 20, all for the agreed purchase price of \$50,000.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, Albert Koskela, Houghton County Board Chairman, is authorized to sign the closing documents for the sale of Lots 19, 20, and the northerly portion of a private road designated as Industrial Drive North, located directly between Lots 19 and 20 of Houghton County Airpark Plat, to Copper Island Academy Real Estate, LLC, a Michigan limited liability company.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, at a Regular Houghton County Board of Commissioners Meeting held on April 13, 2021, a resolution was adopted to

approve the conditions set forth in purchase agreement amendments, reconfirming the agreement to sell Lots 19 and 20 of the Houghton County Airpark Plat, and also specifically including the northerly portion of Industrial Drive North located directly between Lots 19 and 20, all for the original purchase price of \$50,000.00. This Resolution expressly acknowledges that all parties have waived any contingency regarding abandonment or vacation of any dedicated rights affecting the northerly portion of Industrial Drive North, and that the conveyance shall be subject to any and all restrictions, reservations, easements, rights-of-way, and covenants, including Section 5, Resale Rights, contained within the Houghton County Airpark Plat, September 12, 1973, in Liber 23 of Miscellaneous Records, Page 157, Houghton County Register of Deeds Records.

Motion Moved By: ANDERSON

Motion Supported By: TIKKANEN

Roll Call Vote:

Yes: ANDERSON, TIKKANEN, KOSKELA, JANSSEN, BRITZ (5).

No: NONE (0).

Motion Carried: YES.

**RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Albert Koskela, Chairman  
Houghton County Board of Commissioners

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

STATE OF MICHIGAN     )  
  ) ss.  
COUNTY OF HOUGHTON)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the County of Houghton, Michigan at a regular meeting of its Board of Commissioners on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2021, the original of which Resolution is on file in my office. I further certify that the meeting was held and the minutes therefore were filed in compliance with Act No. 267 of the Public Acts of 1976.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto affixed my official signature this 13<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2021.

\_\_\_\_\_  
JENNIFER KELLY, COUNTY CLERK  
County of Houghton

Houghton County is an Equal Opportunity Employer

7. Capital Assets Capitalization Policy

Ben Larson, Administrator, explained this policy gives the County the ability to depreciate items.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, seconded by Commissioner Janssen to adopt the Capital Assets Capitalization policy as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Tikkanen, Janssen, Koskela, Anderson, Britz 5.

NO: None 0.

#### 8. County Equalization Report

Cheryl Patrick, Equalization Director, explained the Equalization report to the board. The Total real & personal property tax value total is 1,350,061,734. This is an increase of 2.99% from 2020. Personal property tax value is 72,170,992-an increase of 13.2%. The total real tax value is 1,277.890,742. The top 3 units are the City of Houghton, Portage Township, and the City of Hancock-an increase of 3.64%. The top 3 taxable value units are the City of Houghton, Portage Township and the City of Hancock.

Cheryl thanked her staff for their hard work on this report.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen, seconded by Commission Britz to accept the Equalization Report as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Janssen, Britz, Tikkanen, Koskela, Anderson 5.

NO: None 0.

#### 9. Public Hearing Quincy Woodrights RLF Closeout Payment and Agreement

Commissioner Anderson discussed the loan of \$108,000 with 6% interest that was previously given. The #2 loan is a close out of the grant with \$44,263 still owing, and four (4) jobs were given.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Janssen to close the hearing.

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

#### 10. Remonumentation Program and Agreements

Chairman Koskela discussed the yearly process.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to approve the 2021 program and agreements as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Tikkanen, Koskela, Janssen, Britz 5.

NO: None 0.

#### 11. MTU Rural Communities Flooding NSF Grant Opportunity Support

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the MTU Rural Communities Flooding NSF Grant, and authorize Chairman Koskela to sign the Grant as presented.

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

#### 12. Closed Session to Consider Purchase of Property, Pursuant to MCL 15.268 (d)

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to go into closed session at 5:55 pm.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Tikkanen, Janssen, Koskela, Anderson Britz 5.  
NO: None 0.

Back to open session

A Motion was made by Commissioner Tikkanen, seconded by Commissioner Janssen to purchase the 1<sup>st</sup> Apostolic Church property for \$1.1 million with determination on the occupancy in the Purchase Agreement.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Tikkanen, Janssen, Anderson, Britz 4.  
NO: None 0.  
ABSTAIN: Koskela 1.

13. Resolution for 4 year terms for Commissioners

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the Resolution for 4 year terms for Commissioners as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Britz, Anderson, Tikkanen, Koskela, Janssen 5.  
NO: None 0.

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
RESOLUTION #21-05**

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION TO ADOPT 4-  
YEAR TERMS FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**WHEREAS**, THE 1963 Michigan Constitution stipulation four-year terms for the county Board of Supervisors, the preceding body to today's Board of Commissioners; and

**WHEREAS**, the Legislature voted in 1966 to abolish Boards of Supervisors and formally replace them with Boards of Commissioners after the 1968 elections; and

**WHEREAS**, Public Act 261 of 1966 promulgated that the length of terms for the new County Commissioners shall be concurrent with that of state representatives, as specified in Article IV, Section 3 of the Michigan Constitution; and

**WHEREAS**, the scope of duties of a County Commissioner has greatly increased in the last century—road patrols, indigent defense, mental health treatment and substance abuse prevention programming, solid waste pick-up and disposal, food and water supply safety, park operations, economic development efforts, emergency management and response; and

**WHEREAS**, Michigan is one of only five states in the United States that provides for exclusively two-year terms for County Commissioners; and

**WHEREAS**, all other County and Township elected officials in Michigan are elected to terms of at least four years; and

**WHEREAS**, legislation to amend state law to enact four-year terms has been filed in the form of Senate Bills 242 and 245; and

**WHEREAS**, the Michigan Association of Counties supports the legislation as introduced;



**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Houghton County Board of Commissioners support Senate Bills 242 and 245 to enact four-year terms for County Commissioners.

Adopted this 13<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2021.

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ALBERT KOSKELA  
Chairman, Houghton County Board of Commissioners

STATE OF MICHIGAN     )  
  )ss.  
COUNTY OF HOUGHTON )

I, JENNIFER KELLY, Clerk of the Houghton County Board of Commissioners and Clerk of the County of Houghton, do hereby certify that the above Resolution was duly adopted by the said Board on April 13, 2021.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the County of Houghton, Houghton, Michigan, on this 13<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2021.

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JENNIFER KELLY  
Houghton County Clerk

14. Appropriations:

1. Western U.P. Health Department - \$66,680.75
2. Copper Country Community Mental Health - \$13,707.91
3. MIDC 2<sup>nd</sup> Half Appropriation \$60,119.54

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

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Koskela, Britz 5.  
NO: None 0.

Public Comments:

None.

Announcements:

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk, advised the Board that due to the denial of filling a vacancy in the Clerk's Office, she gave notice to the Board and the public that the Clerk's Office will be closing at times due to lack of staff and requested the public to call the Clerk's Office to make sure the office is open.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to adjourn.

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

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Albert Koskela, Chairman

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Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk