

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 11, 2022**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in the 5th Floor Conference Room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton. The public was able to attend by Zoom.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly at 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly.

Roll call:

The following commissioners responded to roll call:

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

Absent: Albert Koskela, District 2.

Election:

County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly, asked for nominations for Vice-Chairman. A nomination was made by Commissioner Britz, and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to have Tom Tikkanen stay on as Vice-Chairman. County Clerk, Kelly, asked for any other nominations. No other nominations were made.

The nomination carried by a voice vote. Ayes 3, Nays 0.

County Clerk, Kelly, turned the meeting over to Vice-Chairman Tikkanen.

Approval of Minutes:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2021 meeting as presented.

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

Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Anderson asked to add the FOIA appeal to New Business #3.

Commissioner Janssen asked to add the correspondence from Faith Morrison regarding her request for zoom to Old Business #4.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to accept the Agenda with the two (2) additions as presented.

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

Public Comments:

Josh Vissers addressed the Board regarding his FOIA appeal.

Approval of Bills:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve paying the bills submitted of \$1,094,926.50.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Janssen, Britz, Tikkanen, Anderson 4.

NO: None 0.

Correspondence:

The Board discussed the correspondence from Anderson & Tackman. Anderson & Tackman are currently conducting the audit. Elizabeth Bjorn, Administrator, informed the Board that there are questionnaires in the packets for Commissioner Britz and Chairman Koskela to review.

Reports:

Standing Committee:

Commissioner Britz had nothing to report to the Board.

Commissioner Janssen had nothing to report to the Board.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

4-year Commissioner terms beginning in 2024. He thanked Senator McBroom for helping to pass the bills.

He discussed the City of Houghton and Portage Township revenue sharing that increased from \$28,000 to \$45,000.

Recreation Authority-well attended meeting. Updates from the DNR were given on the Dollar Bay-Lake Linden grade. Bids will begin in March or April 2022. There will be six (6) different contracts to bid on. Construction should begin in 2022 depending on the bids and the contractors. 90% of the engineering is done. There will be a ribbon cutting in May or June 2022. There has been a grant of \$500,000 for the work to be done in Chassell to the Pilgrim River Bridge, and two (2) culverts. The Freda trail is still washed out. The DNR engineers will be inspecting it. The Baraga-Arnhem trail is still under construction for the Carp River. There is a contract for the Sturgeon River Sloughs. The Baraga trail is hoped to open next winter.

There will be a public meeting on January 26, 2022 at 6:30 pm at the Franklin Township Office to discuss a non-motorized trail from Hancock to Lake Linden.

Commissioner Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

Transfer Station: There has been over 20 tons of recycling done in 2021.

Village of Calumet: He thanked Senator McBroom and Representative Markkanen for the help getting a \$250,000 grant to help getting the area ready for development where the fire occurred.

2nd Bridge: He met with Representative Markkanen and stated efforts are needed from all of Houghton County.

County Officers:

Todd LaRoux, Building Inspector, gave an update to the building departments totals for 2021.

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk gave an update on the 2021 totals for Concealed pistol licenses, and the number of performed weddings.

Old Business:

1. Resolution #22-01 Opioid Settlement Participation Janssen & Distributor

Elizabeth Bjorn, Administrator, stated the County had registered and the County had approved the Counties participation as the second step, and now the third step is the Resolution.

Commissioner Anderson asked how much money would come to the County. Elizabeth Bjorn stated it would possibly be a substantial amount.

Commissioner Anderson asked if there would be conditions for the spending of the money. Elizabeth Bjorn stated it would be required to be used for rehabilitation or treatments for the betterment of individuals. A good portion of other counties are participating.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve Resolution #22-01 for the Opioid Settlement as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

2. Local #226 AFSCME Union Contract

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the Local #226 AFSCME Union Contract as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

3. Airport Union Contract

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the Airport Union Contract as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

4. Zoom meetings

The Board discussed correspondence from Faith Morrison. Commissioner Janssen stated she felt zoom should be used due to the size of Houghton County. County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly, reminded the Board of Dick Storms request for the sick and elderly who wished to participate. Commissioner Anderson said he supports having zoom for one (1) year. Commissioner Tikkanen stated we have the technology to do zoom. Commissioner Britz asked if there were any issues for the County to do zoom. Elizabeth Bjorn, Administrator, said she is in favor of it for transparency. Commissioner Anderson asked about the cost. Administrator Bjorn said it would be the time spent by the Counties IT, Tom Ressler. At this time the County does not subscribe, but has a 100-person capacity. Two (2) meetings had exceeded that capacity in 2021.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to resume having zoom meetings for the public beginning February 15, 2022.

Commissioner Britz stated if the costs are high that the County look to purchase Zoom.

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

1. New Business:

1. Rules of Order.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to adopt the odd version of the Rules of Order.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Britz 4.

NO: None. 0.

2. Commissioner Committee Appointments.

- a. Mental Health: A nomination/Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to reappoint Chairman Koskela to the Mental Health Board.

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

- b. District Health: A nomination/Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to reappoint Commissioners Britz, Anderson, and Janssen to the District Health Board.

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

3. FOIA Appeal

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to deny the FOIA Appeal request.

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

4. Appropriations

- a. Northcare Network - \$6,848.10
- b. Western Upper Peninsula Health Department Quarterly Appropriation- \$66,584.50
- b. WUPPDR-\$2,866.50

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve paying the above-mentioned appropriations.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Britz, Janssen, Tikkanen, Anderson 4.

NO: None. 0.

Public Comments:

Donna Moilanen, District Court-Criminal Clerk, addressed the Board regarding the relief funds. Administrator Bjorn stated they would be used with caution.

Craig Wadell from the City of Houghton addressed the Board regarding looking into a second bridge.

Commissioner Tikkanen talked about Stillwater, MN.

Craig Wadell stated the people in Stillwater, MN have a thriving community and the people are happy with their additional bridge.

Announcements:

None

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to adjourn at 5:55 p.m.

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

Albert Koskela, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk