

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
SPECIAL MEETING/COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
JUNE 28, 2022**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Special Meeting/Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, June 28, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. in the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton and public viewing by Zoom and in person.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tom Tikkanen at 1:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Tikkanen.

Roll call:

The following Commissioners responded to roll call done by the County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly:

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

Approval of Agenda/Additions:

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

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

Public Comments-Agenda Items only (5-minute limit):

Jeff Ratcliffe, KEDA Executive Director, addressed the Board regarding the Land Bank.

Leah Polzien, Calumet Business owner, addressed the Board regarding the Land Bank.

Correspondence:

None.

Old Business:

1. American Rescue Plan (CSLFRF) \$6.8

Administrator Bjorn stated the additional \$3.4 million should arrive in July 2022.

- a. Land Bank

Lisa Mattila, Treasurer, discussed the six (6) properties in the Boards packet. The properties are from unpaid taxes. The properties are as follows:

1. 116 Osceola property has fire damage and the winds are causing board to fall.
2. 426 5<sup>th</sup> Street property (Erkkila Gas Station) has gas fumes.
3. 451 Pine Street property was the Rose and Thorn business.
4. 501 Pine Street property had a wall buckling and a contractor pushed the wall in this past winter.
5. 26364 Atlantic Street property is in Laurium and there is concern about the structure collapsing.
6. 26508 D Street

There are animals in all of the properties. All properties are in Calumet Township. The Land Bank has partnered with Calumet Township in the past to take a building down. Calumet Township may be willing to assist again. Grants have been applied for.

Commissioner Codere asked why the properties were only from Calumet Township. Treasurer Mattila stated they were the top six (6) worst properties in Houghton County. She advised the Board that more properties will be coming to the Land Bank in the future. Commissioner Codere asked what the Land Bank was looking for money wise in their proposal. Treasurer Mattila stated the majority of the money. Commissioner Codere asked for a priority list. Treasurer Mattila stated these properties are the top six (6).

Commissioner Janssen asked for a money amount the Land Bank is requesting. Treasurer Mattila stated \$350,000. She stated that Calumet Township is the highest in delinquent taxes.

Chairman Tikkanen discussed the Board taking into consideration the Land Bank's request.

Commissioner Janssen discussed the liability of the property, and the property looks dangerous.

Commissioner Britz stated he was comfortable with \$350,000. Treasurer Mattila stated \$350,000 would help three (3) major issues.

Chairman Tikkanen stated Marquette County put a percentage of the ARPA funds into a Demolition Fund.

b. Houghton County Arena

Commissioner Anderson discussed the things on the Houghton County Arena's Wish List. He felt the Zamboni was the lowest priority and the City of Hancock should make an offer in August or September.

Commissioner Codere questioned how the Houghton County Arena funds itself. Commissioner Anderson stated it is a break even operation. The County insures the building. There is no revenue to the County.

Chairman Tikkanen stated the County pays 50% of the insurance for the building.

Commissioner Anderson said the County may see the Board for the Arena turn it over to the County due to members aging.

Administrator Bjorn stated event insurance is the responsibility of the Houghton County Fair Board.

New Business:

1. Work Group Session

Commissioner Anderson discussed Stanton Townships request for \$100,000 for structural support columns for the Redridge Dam. Stanton Township spent \$250,000 of the FEMA money on repairs at the Redridge Dam. Commissioner Britz stated Stanton Township is looking for someone to take over the Redridge Dam.

Commissioner Anderson discussed the cost increase for the needed security upgrades.

Administrator Bjorn advised the Board that they cannot obligate money before we receive the money.

Commissioner Codere asked what the Board was trying to accomplish at the meeting. Chairman Tikkanen stated to see what the Board can do by 2:30 pm and schedule an

additional work session to protect the lives of workers and students. He stated there has not been a lot of effort by Department Heads to try and get matching money or grant money.

Administrator Bjorn discussed getting the A/C fixed that supplies central air to the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors. Commissioner Codere discussed the offices on the second floor. Administrator Bjorn discussed the machinery needed to lift the unit onto the building and discussed the estimate and the elevator estimate for upgrades to keep the elevator functioning and to keep it compliant.

Commissioner Anderson discussed using the ARPA funds for a future jail site.

Commissioner Codere asked how the airport functions? FAA supported. Commissioner Anderson stated there is approximately 80% capital. The Board discussed replacing the terminal. Chairman Tikkanen stated the airport is run by the County, and the debt is County debt. The runway and aprons are maintained. There are two (2) lots left to sell at the airport. Commissioner Codere stated Schoolcraft Township needs information from the Torch Lake Authority.

Chairman Tikkanen discussed the lagoon expansion and a one (1) time payment that may need to be done soon.

Commissioner Codere asked about the Counties borrowing capacity and if the County could get a \$10 or \$20 million dollar bond. Administrator Bjorn stated the County does not have much debt. Chairman Tikkanen said the County could get a bond.

The Board discussed the next work group session on July 14, 2022 at 1:00 pm.

The Board discussed obligating \$2.1 million so far out of the received monies from the first payment, and has \$1.5 million left.

Commissioner Codere stated Schoolcraft Township is awaiting information from the Airport Authority Committee. Commissioner Britz stated the next meeting was Thursday for the airport.

The Board discussed the liability of the buildings in the Land Bank for the three (3) structures for a fence to be put up by a contractor, and the projects may possibly be done in phases. Commissioner Anderson said it would be wise to spend the money on demolition instead of a fence. The Board agreed to put this on the July 12<sup>th</sup> Agenda under Old Business-Land Bank.

Commissioner Codere discussed Cyber Security and the feedback between Administrator Bjorn, the IT, and department heads. He suggested it be put as a priority for the next work session.

Commissioner Britz discussed getting bids on all six (6) properties and the three (3) worst properties for the Land Bank.

Commissioner Codere discussed the money needed for a jail and new office space. Commissioner Britz discussed the Mattson property. It was recommended to speak with Erica Waara on the property. Commissioner Britz stated Portage Township agreed to let Houghton County have nine (9) years to move into the Sharon Avenue property before the County gets annexation to the property.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commission Codere for the Land Bank to advertise for bids for full demolition of the six (6) properties.

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

Public Comments: (5-minute limit)

None.

Announcements:

None.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to adjourn at 2:47 pm.

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

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Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

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Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk