

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
OCTOBER 19, 2022**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Special Meeting on Wednesday, October 19, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. in the 5th Floor Conference Room of the Courthouse, City of Houghton and public viewing by Zoom and in person.

A. Call to Order:

Chairman, Tom Tikkanen at 10:05 a.m., called the meeting to order.

B. Pledge of Allegiance:

Chairman Tikkanen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. 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.

D. Approval of Agenda/Additions:

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

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

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

None.

F. Correspondence:

Administrator, Elizabeth Bjorn, discussed a ARPA Round Up handout, and stated Kevin Harju, Road Commission Manager, is at a crossroads for road projects.

G. Old Business:

1. American Rescue Plan (CSLFRF) \$6.8

Administrator Bjorn stated the Board has obligated \$5,174,635.22 and has \$1,756,563.78 remaining in ARP Funds.

Chairman Tikkanen stated there was a tire collection happening at the Transfer Station on October 19th. He discussed an option of doing tire shredding at the Transfer Station. An approximate cost would be \$350,000, and would require additional staffing. He asked for the Boards serious consideration.

Commissioner Anderson asked if there is a market for shredding tires. Chairman Tikkanen said yes.

Commissioner Codere recommended Curt Judson do a profit/loss statement and an employment cost.

Chairman Tikkanen discussed two (2) proposals from two (2) contracts for the County Clerk's Office.

Todd LaRoux, Building Inspector, explained that a group met with 2 cabinet companies. There would be an additional \$2,300-\$2,500 needed for IT. The low bid was \$12,690 from World of Wood. The other bid was \$18,000-\$22,000.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Codere and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve \$20,000 for improvements to the County Clerk's Office, and request electrical and internet connections

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the \$12,690 bid from World of Wood.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

Commissioner Anderson discussed District Court security, the Airport fuel farm, childcare expansion, Houghton County Arena debt of \$390,000, a payment in lieu of tax that is expected to be received in the future. He discussed using the additional payment of \$400,000 instead of ARP funds.

Chairman Tikkanen stated he supports childcare in Houghton County.

Commissioner Anderson stated he attended a summer presentation at MTU, and the Board could invite them to come and make a presentation to the Board. Chairman Tikkanen stated he felt we need childcare for working families. The Board discussed matching what Marquette County did by approving \$200,000, and the need for qualified workers in Houghton County due to its growth.

Commissioner Anderson stated there might be some limited grant opportunities to look into and felt the Portage Health Foundation would help with capital, and to do an expansion for childcare.

Commissioner Codere stated he would like to see a plan in place for childcare due to not enough workers to care for the children.

Chairman Tikkanen stated this was the beginning stage of discussion and recommended the Board earmark \$200,000.

Commissioner Britz recommended getting input from the schools.

Chairman Tikkanen recommended getting a network for childcare throughout Houghton County. He felt it would be a key to be in support of working families and this may help others.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to earmark \$200,000 for expansion of childcare in Houghton County.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

Chairman Tikkanen discussed the Sharon Avenue property. The congregation will need the building until August 2026 and stated the Board needs a plan to move District Court, Family/Probate Court, and the Sheriff. He discussed a future Justice Center. A plan will require money due to architect costs, and designating planning funds.

Commissioner Codere is in favor of architect and engineering studies. He has concerns on the money that has been spent by the Board. He discussed the \$500,000 spent on the air conditioning unit, as no air quality was addressed, and felt that it is needed to be looked into. He visited the courtrooms yesterday. He discussed providing a barrier, and a service window and a door in the Magistrate's office. He discussed a drawing of District Court by UP Engineering, and the need for a service window. He discussed getting bids for two (2) projects. He discussed shutting down the 4th & 5th floors and the need for functional office space and an air study.

Administrator Bjorn stated according to a MCL the Board shall fix existing systems.

Commissioner Codere stated that is exactly why a study needs to be done and questioned if the Board is concerned about air quality in the courthouse.

Administrator Bjorn stated air quality was addressed in some offices and by the courts.

Commissioner Britz asked if the air quality was addressed in the new system that would be installed.

Commissioner Anderson asked that Karin Cooper come to the next meeting.

Chairman Tikkanen discussed the security of District Court, and if one (1) officer would be hired, and to set planning for funds for the jail.

Commissioner Codere asked if \$50,000 was enough and Chairman Tikkanen said no.

Chairman Tikkanen asked what architect upgrades are required at the Sharon Avenue Property. He recommended earmarking \$500,000 for the Sharon Avenue property, and to possibly pay off the bond for the Houghton County Area at next month's meeting.

The Board discussed if Hancock ever sold the Houghton County Arena, it would come back to the County for \$1.00. The Board agreed to add this matter to the November Agenda.

Chairman Tikkanen stated the Airport does not need ARPA money. He feels the airport needs to be self sufficient. SkyWest is bidding on a renewal contract with 100 seats per day. The Board discussed the need for a new terminal, and Chairman Tikkanen felt the future is bright at the Airport.

Commissioner Anderson agrees to the need of a new terminal and holding area. There is no bathroom or water. The Airport is 75% funded. He discussed relocating the fuel farm. There is an application pending for a new terminal, but the County would need to do a bond millage.

Commissioner Britz has concerns on the fuel farm at the Airport.

Chairman Tikkanen recommended trying to find grand funding and to push the matter to development.

Judge, Nicholas Daavettila, discussed his concerns for the safety of his staff, the need for a bailiff on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:00 am-12:00 pm. He discussed UP Engineering's design and the no face to face contact with the staff and public. He can currently request a bailiff to be present, and inherited past practice.

Nikki Jollimore, Magistrate, stated there is no physical barrier for the clerk in District Court, or the Magistrate with the public.

Judge Daavettila discussed a possibility could be developed that could be used for all 3 courts.

Commissioner Britz discussed the single point entry.

Judge Daavettila is in support of the SCAO recommendation, and stated SCAO is in favor of the UP Engineering study.

Commissioner Britz asked about the appraisal for the Sharon Avenue property. Administrator Bjorn stated Tim Seaton should have it done by November 30, 2022.

Chairman Tikkanen commented that anyone could tell when court is in session at the courthouse.

Commissioner Britz discussed how all 3 courts could need a deputy at the same time.

A Motion was made by Chairman Tikkanen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to earmark \$400,000 for security upgrades for the District Court and Magistrate Office.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

A Motion was made by Chairman Codere and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to earmark \$500,000 for engineering design and implementation of necessary improvements for the Sharon Avenue property to make it a usable facility.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

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

NO: None 0.

H. New Business:

None.

I. Public Comments: (5-minute limit)

Nikki Jollimore thanked the Board

Judge Daavettila thanked the Board.

Doug Hebner, Captain, stated the new door has been installed at the Sheriff Department.

J. Announcements:

None.

K. Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to adjourn at 11:47 pm.

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

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk