

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 14, 2023**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. in the Conference Room on the 5th Floor of the Courthouse, City of Houghton with the public viewing in person and by Microsoft Teams.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tikkanen at 4:00 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; Glenn Anderson, District 3; Gretchen Janssen, District 4; Roy Britz, District 5.

Absent: Joel Keranen, District 2.

Approval of Minutes-October 10th Regular Meeting:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the minutes of the October 10th meeting as presented.

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

Approval of Agenda/Additions:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the Agenda as presented.

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

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

Iola Brubaker addressed the Board regarding the \$200,000 ARPA funds that the Board previously obligated for childcare in Houghton County. She requested to make a presentation to the Board at the December meeting.

Dan Helmer, Houghton County Prosecuting Attorney, introduced himself to the Board.

Approval of Bills -\$4,789,646.50:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve paying the bills submitted of \$4,789,646.50.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Britz, Tikkanen, Janssen 4

NO: None 0.

ABSENT: Keranen 1.

Correspondence:

Commissioner Janssen discussed the Dollar Bay-Lake Linden Trail ceremony and asked if it was open to the public. Tim Gasperich, Calumet Township Supervisor, stated it was not open to the

public. Chairman Tikkanen stated if people showed up at the ceremony, he does not believe that they would be asked to leave.

Reports:

Standing Committee:

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

Dollar Bay-Lake Linden Trail: He discussed it taking 5 years and 5 months to complete the project.

Calumet Electronics: They announced another additional, and that they are eligible for more funds for chip manufacturing.

Sheriff: He congratulated the Sheriff for his appointment to be on the Advisory Commission Board for the Sheriff's organization.

Governor: He discussed the Bill that goes into effect in November 2025 for solar and wind projects. Tax credits to begin in December 2024. He mentioned that the Stanton and Adams Townships Ordinances will be mute. The septic bill was not approved by the Governor.

Commissioners Conference: He attended the Commissioners Conference in Escanaba and discussed the presentation on the money being used for broadband.

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following:

Materials Management: She stated the next meeting is Thursday at 2:00 pm.

Transfer Station: In October there was 1800 tons of garbage, and 3.94 tons in recycling. Copper Country Recycling Initiative (CCRI) is going to monitor the large bin at the transfer station.

Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District: There is a job opening for a District Manager's position that will be paid by monies received from a grant. Anyone with questions can email Commissioner Janssen.

Commissioners Conference: She attend the Commissioners Conference in Escanaba and enjoyed the presentations.

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following:

Sheriff: Ryan Kuntze will be working at the Calumet Schools. There is 1 Deputy retiring at the Sheriff Department and 1 resigning. Sheriff will be advertising to fill the positions.

Mental Health: They will be sending \$82,500 to Houghton County for mental health transports.

Houghton County Road Commission: There has been 10.5" in snow in October. The Road Commission received the "Goose Egg" award for no worker compensation claims.

Chairman Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

Veterans Office: In September and October there were 354 office visits and 190 claims submitted.

County Officers:

Chairman Tikkanen congratulated Todd LaRoux on becoming a Board member for the Code Officials in Michigan.

Old Business:

1. Remaining ARP Obligations

Chairman Tikkanen commented on how the ARP Funds must be obligated by the end of December 2023.

Administrator Larson stated OHM is working on getting an estimate as to the cost for moving people to Sharon Avenue. Childcare will be on the December 2023 Agenda.

New Business:

1. Resolution 23-21 WMHIP Membership

Administrator Larson stated Marquette County, Western UP Health Department and Keweenaw Road Commission are members of WMHIP. There will be a Health Savings Account. This will save the County 19%-about \$300,000.00. There will be a representative, Mike, at the courthouse on November 27th and 28th to sign everyone up. Everyone would be entitled to go to the Mayo Clinic.

Commissioner Anderson asked what the employees would receive from the savings?
Administrator Larson stated it would be discussed later.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve Resolution 23-21 as presented for a 3-year commitment.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Britz, Tikkanen, Janssen 4.

NO: None. 0

ABSENT: Keranen 1



**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PUBLIC ENTITY MEMBERSHIP
IN THE WEST MICHIGAN HEALTH INSURANCE POOL ("WMHIP") FOR A MINIMUM
THREE-YEAR PERIOD
#23-21**

WHEREAS The Western Michigan Health Insurance Pool ("WMHIP") is a Public Employer Pooled Plan ("PEPP") that provides pooled self-funded health insurance coverage, as authorized by the Public Employees Health Benefit Act, Act 106 of 2007.

WHEREAS WMHIP has received from the Michigan Department of Insurance and Financial Services ("DIFS") a certificate of registration authorizing establishment of the PEPP.

WHEREAS The Houghton County Board of Commissioners has had opportunity to consider the obligations of the Public Entity to WMHIP and PEPP plans, and services available to the Public Entity by WMHIP, and has carefully reviewed the WMHIP Amended Trust Agreement and Bylaws.

WHEREAS The Houghton County Board of Commissioners desires to authorize membership of the Public Entity in the WMHIP for a minimum period of three years.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Houghton County Board of Commissioners hereby resolves:

1. The Board approves the WMHIP Amended Trust Agreement and bylaws, and accepts WMHIP provision of Public Entity self-funded, pooled health insurance coverage under the PEPP plan.

2. The Administrator, or CFO of the Public Entity or, with their approval, the person appointed by the Board as WMHIP Trustee or Alternate Trustee, is hereby authorized to execute all documents necessary for the Public Entity to become a Member in the WMHIP PEPP plan.

3. The Board hereby confirms its appointment of the following persons as Trustee and Alternate Trustee to serve as Trustee when the initial Trustee is not available or in attendance to carry out the Trustee's duties:

[Benjamin Larson]

[Rebecca Ylitalo]

As required by law, neither the Trustee nor the Alternate Trustee is an owner, officer, or employee of any third-party administrator or any other third party providing services to WMHIP. The Trustee and Alternate Trustee shall serve until replaced by action of the Board. Once appointments are made known to the WMHIP, the persons appointed shall remain in office until the WMHIP receives evidence of appointment of other persons. Evidence of proper appointment of the Trustee and Alternate Trustee shall be a certified copy of the resolution passed by the Board, indicating the names of the designated Trustee and/or Alternate Trustee. Failure of the Public Entity to designate a Trustee, or the failure of that Trustee/Alternate Trustee to participate on the Board of Trustees, shall not affect the responsibilities or duties of the Public Entity under the Amended Trust Agreement.

4. The Public Entity shall continue participation in the WMHIP for a minimum of three full years under its PEPP plan.

5. All Resolutions and parts of Resolutions insofar as they conflict with the provisions of this Resolution be and the same are hereby rescinded.

Moved by Commissioner:

Supported by Commissioner:

Roll Call Vote:

Yes:

No:

Motion Carried.

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman
Houghton County Board of Commission

Date

I, Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk of Houghton County, do hereby certify and set my seal to the above Resolution as adopted November 14, 2023, at the Houghton County Courthouse, 401 East Houghton Avenue, Houghton, MI 49931.

Jennifer Kelly, Houghton County Clerk

2. Resolution 23-22 Support of Highland Copper Mine

Chairman Tikkanen discussed business and job creation.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve Resolution 23-22 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Janssen, Britz, Tikkanen, Anderson 4

NO: None. 0

ABSENT: Keranen 1



RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE COPPERWOOD MINE PROJECT BY HIGHLAND COPPER COMPANY IN GOGEBIC COUNTY, MICHIGAN

#23-22

WHEREAS the Houghton County Board of Commissioners supports the development of safe, modern and responsible mining as planned for Highland Copper Company's Copperwood Mine Project located in Ironwood and Wakefield Townships of Gogebic County, Michigan, and;

WHEREAS the Houghton County Board of Commissioners acknowledges the commitment of Highland Copper Company to maintain their transparent and regular engagement with local and regional communities and remain a positive partner for the region, and;

WHEREAS the Houghton County Board of Commissioners recognizes the commitment of Highland Copper Company to develop an environmentally sound copper mine that will maximize local employment and will provide expansive economic benefits to the Western Upper Peninsula, contributing to the revitalization of the local and regional economy.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Houghton County Board of Commissioners fully supports the development of Highland Copper Company's Copperwood Mine Project.

Moved by Commissioner:

Supported by Commissioner:

Roll Call Vote:

Yes:

No:

Motion Carried.

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman
Houghton County Board of Commission

Date

I, Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk of Houghton County, do hereby certify and set my seal to the above Resolution as adopted November 14, 2023, at the Houghton County Courthouse, 401 East Houghton Avenue, Houghton, MI 49931.

Jennifer Kelly, Houghton County Clerk

3. Torch Lake Federal Credit Union Purchase Agreement

Chairman Tikkanen discussed the property in Laurium and the Purchase Agreement that was drafted by Attorney Zappa. This property was formerly the 911 Building. He stated the need to get this property back on the tax roll.

Administrator Larson stated the tower has been removed, and advised that the Credit Union Board has agreed to purchase the property, but wanted a few things looked at before signing the Agreement.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the Purchase Agreement as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Britz, Anderson, Tikkanen, Janssen 4

NO: None 0

ABSENT: Keranen 1

4. Houghton County Road Commissioners Annual Compensation and Benefits

Commissioner Britz stated there are no changes from last year.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the Houghton County Road Commissioners Annual Compensation and Benefits as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Britz, Anderson, Tikkanen, Janssen 4

NO: None 0

ABSENT: Keranen 1

5. Emergency Watershed Protection Program Agreement

Chris VanArsdale, Emergency Director, explained various watershed, and discussed the damage service report that the Board had in their packet. He discussed a grant that has a match with a co-sponsor.

Chairman Tikkanen stated he hoped the Board would support Schoolcraft Township and the Village of Lake Linden. Administrator Larson was asked to contact Schoolcraft Township and the Village of Lake Linden.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to table discussing this Agreement until the Administrator speaks with Schoolcraft Township, the Village of Lake Linden and anyone else that could benefit from the Agreement.

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

6. Houghton County Equalization-Amended Apportionment Report and Interlocal Assessor

Jaikob Djerf, Equalization Director, discussed the Amended Apportionment Report.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the 2023 Amended Apportionment Report as presented.

Jaikob stated the taxable value in 2023 is \$1,148,188,883.00.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Britz 4

NO: None. 0

ABSENT: Keranen 1

Jaikob stated he had spoken with Stanton Township and the City of Houghton, and talked with a few others townships also. There is no cost to the townships for the Interlocal Assessor. The deadline for responses is on December 8, 2023.

7. Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule CY2024

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to adopt the 2024 Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule Houghton County Equalization- Apportionment Report as presented.

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

9. Travel

a. Clerk's Office-Train the Trainer Certification (Budgeted Item)

b. District Court-CER Exam (Budgeted Item)

c. Building Dept-IAEA Conference (Budgeted Item)

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve all travel requests as presented.

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

10. Appropriations:

a. NorthCare Liquor Tax Payment-\$18,034,72

b. WUPPDR 1st Q-\$2,974,.25

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve letters a & b as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Britz, Tikkanen, Janssen 4

NO: None. 0

ABSENT: Keranen 1

Public Comments:

Bill Heide, Schoolcraft Township Trustee stated their Board is in agreement to accept the grant money. They do not have a public works department. He will work with Administrator Larson to get a Resolution.

Iola Brubaker discussed the childcare shortage in the community.

Tim Gasperich stated there is a DNR meeting in Lake Linden on December 6, 2023.

Announcements:

Administrator Larson stated that UPPCO recently replaced and recycled 683 bulbs in County buildings. Any business or organization can contact UPPCO to have their bulbs replaced.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to adjourn at 5:13 p.m.

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

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk