

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 11, 2024**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, April 11, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. in the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room 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 Vice-Chairman Britz 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 County Clerk, Jennifer Kelly:

Joel Keranen, District 2; Gretchen Janssen, District 4; Roy Britz, District 5.

Absent: Tom Tikkanen, District 1 and Glenn Anderson, District 3

**Approval of Minutes March 12, 2024 Public & Regular Meeting:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2024 meeting as presented.

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

**Approval of Agenda:**

Commissioner Britz requested adding #7 for the Equalization Department Evaluation.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to accept the Agenda as presented with the one (1) addition.

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

**Public Comments:**

None.

**Approval of Bills - \$1,633,297.30:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve paying the bills submitted of \$1,633,297.30.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Keranen, Janssen, Britz, 3.

NO: None 0.

**Correspondence:**

Administrator Larson stated Houghton County was the 43<sup>rd</sup> County listed as recipient for the drought monies from the State.

Reports:

**Standing Committee:**

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following:

BHK received a community school service award. BHK will be celebrating a 50-year anniversary on June 7<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm at the Chassell pavilion.

Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District a tree sale catalog available on their website. The website is hkconserve.com.

Commissioner Keranen reported to the Board on the following:

He toured the seaplane area in Torch Lake.

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following:

He would report later in the Agenda.

**County Officers:**

Sheriff, Josh Saaranen, reported there have been 900 complaints this year, and the number of inmates has been over the maximum capacity of 28 in the past month. There were currently 30 inmates.

County Clerk/Register of Deeds, Jennifer Kelly reported the Clerk’s Office has been busy sending out 2,100 juror letters and qualification questionnaires.

**Old Business:**

None.

**New Business:**

**1. MPSC Co-Location License Agreement**

Under Sheriff, Jon Giachino, discussed the Agreement for the Tower Site 9006 Centennial Heights property.

**2. Resolution 24-08 Co-Location Resolution**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to approve Resolution 24-08 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Janssen, Keranen, Britz 3.

NO: None. 0

**Houghton County Board of Commissioners**

Houghton County Courthouse  
401 East Houghton Avenue  
Houghton, MI 49931  
(906) 482-8307



Tom Tikkanen *Chairman*  
*District 1*  
Roy Britz *Vice Chairman*  
*District 5*  
Joel Keranen *Commissioner*  
*District 2*  
Glenn Anderson *Commissioner*  
*District 3*  
Gretchen Janssen *Commissioner*  
*District 4*

**RESOLUTION 24-08  
CO-LOCATION RESOLUTION HOUGHTON COUNTY AND MICHIGAN PUBLIC  
SAFETY COMMUNICATION SYSTEM FOR SITE 9006 CENTENNIAL HEIGHTS**

WHEREAS, the State is the owner of the MPSCS, a public safety communications network, comprised of real and personal property, including communications towers, buildings,

equipment and other related facilities and fixtures necessary for the operation and safety of the MPSCS;

WHEREAS, DTMB-MPSCS licenses State property in accordance with 1984 PA 431 and manages and operates the MPSCS, including providing communications co location support to MPSCS members;

WHEREAS, the Parties have contemporaneously entered into a MPSCS Integration Agreement to provide public safety interoperability between the MPSCS and the Member's proprietary communications system;

WHEREAS, Member-owned Communications Equipment must be co-located at MPSCS Tower Site 9006-Centennial Heights, located at 58615 Bumbletown Road, Calumet, MI 49913 (Premises) to meet the technical requirements for the systems to communicate on an integrated basis;

THEREFORE, the Parties desire to enter into an Agreement, in which the State grants Member a license to install, operate, and maintain the Member's Communications Equipment at the Premises, in support of the two systems' integration. Member's Equipment is identified in the Integration Agreement and collectively referred to as "Electronics Equipment"; and

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, the Houghton County Board of Commissioners approve the Michigan Public Safety Communications Co-Location License Agreement with Houghton County and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, either Tom Tikkanen, Chairman, of the Houghton County Board of Commissioners or Roy Britz, Vice-Chairman, of the Houghton County Board of Commissioners are hereby authorized to sign this Resolution.

**Absent: Tikkanen, Anderson**

**Moved by Commissioner: Janssen**

**Supported by Commissioner: Keranen**

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Yes: Janssen, Keranen, Britz**

**No: None**

**Motion Carried.**

**RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Houghton County Board of Commissioners**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I, Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk of Houghton County, do hereby certify and set my seal to the above Resolution as adopted April 11, 2024, at the Houghton County Courthouse, 401 East Houghton Avenue, Houghton, MI 49931.

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

### **3. 911 Advisory Board Purchase Recommendations**

Under Sheriff Giacchino discussed the following:

1. 1 portable 800 Mhz radio for Jeffers School Resource Officer-part time position \$7,500.
2. Dual band pagers-70 requested. Tamarack and Hubell have current issues with their pagers. \$49,983.65

3. Fire Department-need 80 APX 4000 batteries \$9,658.40.
4. Agreement with REMC1 quote for onboarding Premier 1 for all Houghton County police and sheriff cars-one time fee is \$12,188. \$8007.24 annual cost for maintenance of Premier 1 and support for data connections issues.

Under Sheriff Giachino stated the 911 Board approved the purchases and will be covered by 911 funds.

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

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Keranen, Janssen, Britz 3.  
NO: None. 0

#### **4. UP Association of County Commissioners Spring Conference May 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>**

It was discussed that any of the Commissioners, Administrator, and Clerk Kelly can attend if they wish.

#### **5. Houghton County Board of Veteran Affairs Reappointments**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to reappoint Eugene La Rochelle and Glenn Ekdahl for terms expiring 12/31/2025.

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

#### **6. Resolution 24-09 Support of the Kingsford Post Office**

Administrator Larson discussed the closing of the Kingsford Post Office.

Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to support Resolution 24-09 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Keranen, Janssen, Britz 3.  
NO: None. 0

#### **Houghton County Board of Commissioners**

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Glenn Anderson *Commissioner*  
*District 3*  
Gretchen Janssen *Commissioner*  
*District 4*

**RESOLUTION 24-09**

**SUPPORT TO MAINTAIN CURRENT SERVICES AT THE KINGSFORD MICHIGAN POST OFFICE**

**Whereas**, the Kingsford Post Office is the only processing facility in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and is crucial in the prompt delivery and collection of mail in the Upper Peninsula; and

**Whereas**, the U.S. Postal Service is planning to discontinue the processing of outgoing mail services at the Kingsford Post Office; and

**Whereas**, discontinuing the processing of outgoing mail at the Kingsford Post Office would reduce mail services for the citizens and businesses of the Upper Peninsula; and

**Whereas**, the Upper Peninsula businesses and citizens depend on reliable mail services to maintain our strong workforce; and

**Whereas**, citizens depend on mail services to receive medications and essentials; and

**Whereas**, mail processing modifications at the Kingsford Post Office will jeopardize reliable mail services needed to connect businesses and citizens nationally and internationally, as cyber communication is not realized nor reliable in rural portions of the Upper Peninsula; and

**Whereas**, mail processing modifications at the Kingsford Post Office will result in a loss of jobs resulting in a negative economic impact.

**Therefore Be It Resolved**, the Houghton County Board of Commissioners supports maintaining current services at the Kingsford Michigan Post Office and Processing Center.

**Moved by Commissioner:**

**Supported by Commissioner:**

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Yes:**

**No:**

**Motion Carried.**

**RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

**Houghton County Board of Commissioners**

I, Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk of Houghton County, do hereby certify and set my seal to the above Resolution as adopted April 11, 2024, at the Houghton County Courthouse, 401 East Houghton Avenue, Houghton, MI 49931.

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

**7. Equalization Evaluation**

Jaikob Djerf, Equalization Director introduced Elizabeth Anderson as a new employee.

He gave the following report to the Board:

For 2023, the County Equalized Value is 1,823,610,232

Overall, between 2023 and 2024, there was an increase in the total assessed & equalized values of 247,694,200 or approximately a 15.72% increase / Personal Property in the County increased by 6,563,339 or approximately an 8.69% increase.

The top five units for Assessed & Equalized value are:

1. Houghton City – 245,341,842
2. Portage Twp – 216,017,893
3. Hancock City – 206,990,159
4. Calumet Twp – 201,914,604
5. Torch Lake Twp – 194,722,768

For 2023, the Taxable Value of the county is 1,251,088,366

Overall, between 2023 and 2024, there was an increase in the total taxable values of 102,448,035 or approximately a 8.92% increase.

The top five units for Taxable value are:

1. Houghton City – 184,361,757
2. Hancock City – 149,158,942
3. Portage Twp – 144,202,777
4. Calumet Twp – 129,820,220
5. Torch Lake Twp – 129,068,270

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to adopt the Equalization report as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Janssen, Keranen, Britz 3.

NO: None. 0

## **8. Travel**

- a. MACAO Conference-Administration-\$500.00**
- b. COCM Conference-Building Department-\$600.00**
- c. PIAM Conference-Building Department-\$500.00**
- d. Election Table Top-Clerk's Office-\$134.00**

Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to approve the four (4) above-mentioned travel requests as presented.

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

## **9. Appropriations:**

- a. Western UP Health Department 3<sup>rd</sup> Q-\$68,081.00**
- b. Houghton County Fair Association-\$10,000.00**
- c. Copper Country Community Mental Health-\$41,123.72**

Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to approve the above-mentioned appropriations as presented.

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

## **Public Comments:**

Faith Morrison addressed the Board regarding errors for the public trying to log into Microsoft Teams. She also commented on changes to the Agenda not matching what is online.

Commissioner Britz discussed having a meeting with the Jail Committee, Sheriff Department and staff to discuss the jail.

**Announcements:**

None.

**Adjournment:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to adjourn at 4:33p.m.

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

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Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

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Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk