

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
WORK SESSION  
AUGUST 4, 2025**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session on Monday, August 4, 2025 at 10:00 a.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 Chairman Tikkanen at 10:00 a.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:

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

Absent: Joel Keranen, District 2 and Glenn Anderson, District 3.

**Agenda Additions:**

Chairman Tikkanen requesting adding WUPPDR to the Agenda.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the agenda with the one (1) addition as presented.

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

**Public Comments-Agenda Items only \*(3-minute limit):**

Faith Morrison requested including information on the Commissioners on #1 on the agenda.

**Houghton County Board of Commissioners Work Session:**

**1. Website Update Suggestions**

Clerk Kelly explained what she had found on Marquette County's website regarding information on the Board of Commissioner's Committee assignments.

Chairman Tikkanen and Clerk Kelly will set up a meeting to begin the process for having the Committee assignments for the Commissioners on the website. Clerk Kelly offered to type everything for the website.

**2. FY2025 Auditors**

Chairman Tikkanen stated he received a proposal from Anderson & Tackman and 2 other auditors.

Alex, Finance Manager, stated a decision needs to be made by next week, and Administrator Rheault would like to switch auditors, and Joe does not recommend switching this year.

Chairman Tikkanen suggested Alex and Chelsea meet with Ken Talsma to set up a meeting before the next monthly Board meeting.

Commissioner Britz stated he has concern regarding the late filings.

### **3. BS&A Cloud**

Teresa Hill stated the County is at the maximum version for BS&A and the version we have, will be obsolete soon and will not work. The cost for the update would be \$200,000 annually. Chelsea would like a recommendation by the next monthly Board meeting.

Commissioner Janssen asked if there are any other options.

Chairman Tikkanen requested Teresa send out an email to all Commissioners with bullet points and what the costs would be, and when a decision must be made by.

Commissioner Janssen said that the proposal says it is good until 9/29/25 and this should be discussed at the August 12<sup>th</sup> Board meeting and be on the agenda.

### **4. VC3 Updates**

Teresa Hill discussed the \$200,000 cyber security grant. The agreement should be ready maybe before the next monthly Board meeting. She stated Alex Radke is the new in-house courthouse IT for now. He will work 40 hours per week.

Commissioner Britz discussed the email problem at the Sheriff Department.

Teresa Hill stated UP & Running is doing a great job.

### **5. Wage Study**

Teresa Hill met with Gallagher. The Board will receive their recommendation and will receive a preliminary report possibly in September. They are meeting with her every 2 weeks.

### **6. Portage Canal 2<sup>nd</sup> Crossing**

Commissioner Janssen stated Jay Gage is trying to get a feasibility study done.

Chairman Tikkanen stated MDOT is not opposed but will require the feasibility study and work with local agencies. The State would pay 20%. Michigan Tech is excited. He recommended following up with state legislatures and set up a meeting with them in Houghton.

Commissioner Janssen suggested Keweenaw County be included in a meeting with the legislatures and discuss this at the next Board meeting and have it on the agenda.

### **7. District Court Security Upgrades**

Commissioner Britz said he met with Judge Daavettila. Judge Daavettila did not approve of the previous Administrator's decisions. There should be \$280,000 left that was previously approved. The staff and jury are Judge Daavettila's concerns. Nickole Jollimore, Administrator, does not know what construction can be cut back. Judge Brennan stated he does not know what to cut back on either.

Chairman Tikkanen stated everyone should look at the plans, and Commissioner Britz will schedule a committee meeting soon with everyone.

Faith Morrison stated the District Court changes for security should be considered if the jail millage passes.

### **8. Tri-County Public Defenders**

David Gemignani stated they are submitting their monthly profit/loss statements. There has been no state money yet. He is concerned about the FSRs and questioned the contract status.

Chairman Tikkanen stated Roger Zappa, County Attorney, is reviewing the proposed contract. Should be ready very soon. He is unsure what the state is doing with the FSR's and thought more questions could be coming.

## 9. WUPPDR

Lisa McKenzie stated Melissa Davis will be at the August 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. She discussed the Michigan Hope Recipients. It is a \$1.5 million grant through MSHDA for \$25,000 maximum per home.

They have 1 project where \$5,500 is not covered. The roof had rotting wood under the roofing. Requested the County CDBG Committee to assist with the \$5,500.

The second project is a home covered in mold, and ceiling tiles are falling. Requested the County CDBG Committee to assist with \$23,000.

The total requests are \$28,500. There is over \$100,000 in the CDBG Fund.

She encouraged the Board to apply for future funding as there is money available.

Chairman Tikkanen asked that Lisa McKenzie, Lisa Mattila and Alex, Finance Manager to get the Board a recommendation for the August 12<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

### **Public Comment-\*(3-minute limit):**

Judge Brennan stated Houghton County was the only County that gained in population in 2020 and are above 3% in poverty level.

### **Announcements:**

Faith Morrison reminded everyone to vote on Tuesday.

### **Adjournment:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to adjourn at 11:02 a.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