

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 10, 2026**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the 3rd Floor Circuit Courtroom of the Courthouse, City of Houghton with the public viewing in person and by Zoom.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tikkanen at 6:00 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 Clerk Kelly:

Tom Tikkanen, District 1; Joel Keranen, District 2; Glenn Anderson, District 3; Gretchen Janssen, District 4.

Absent: Roy Britz, District 5.

Approval of Minutes: January 5, 2026 Work Session; January 13, 2026 Regular Meeting; January 30, 2026 Special Meeting; February 2, 2026 Work Session

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the minutes of the January 5, 2026 Work Session; January 13, 2026 Regular Meeting; January 30, 2026 Special Meeting; February 2, 2026 Work Session as presented.

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

Approval of Agenda:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to accept the agenda as presented.

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

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

None.

Approval of Bills-\$1,495,760.96:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve paying the bills submitted of \$1,495,760.96. as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Keranen, Anderson, Tikkanen, Janssen 4.

NO: None 0.

Reports:

Standing Committee:

Commissioner Keranen reported to the Board on the following:

He is working on the County Held Properties Committee report, and is waiting for the Canal View appraisal.

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following:

She attended the MSU Extension meeting, they have added a part time temporary position for the Safety Belt program and there is a Guide for Cottage Food Businesses called Michigan Cottage Foods.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following:

He discussed the ARPA funds report he received.

He thanked Administrator Rheault and Gail Ploe for their hard work on the Substance Abuse Grant.

He congratulated the City of Houghton for receiving a \$3.8 million grant.

Commissioner Britz provided a written report and Chairman Tikkanen read it regarding the Sharon Avenue Property and current Jail Committee that was in the Board's packet.

Chairman Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following:

He asked Faith Morrison to give a report on the Jail Committees. Faith discussed the February 2, 2026 Jail Committee meeting. A Facebook account is going to be set up. It will be called the Houghton County Jail Committee Group. The Committee is trying to get federal funding for engineering drawings through Congressman Bergman's Office. The Jail-Needs Subcommittee is trying to determine the needed square footage and the kinds of spaces needed for a new jail. She discussed the report with a table design showing 51 beds which is based on the proposed population. The next meeting is on February 11th at 9:30 am.

Chairman Tikkanen stated the rest of his items are on the agenda.

County Officers:

Clerk Kelly stated she is in the hiring process for one (1) person in the Register of Deeds Office, and she attended an Open Meetings Act webinar through the MSU Extension.

Todd LaRoux, Building Department Manager, provided a handout showing the increasing numbers from 2017 to present. He stated they received three (3) applications for the Full Time Building Inspector position. The deadline is on February 20, 2026.

Todd LaRoux gave a report for Tom Bingham. He stated the renovations in District Court are complete. The final walk through will be soon. The first-floor bathroom is complete. The men's and women's bathrooms on the second floor will be worked on next.

Casey Polkinghorn, Airport Manager, stated January 2026 was a good month. On a 5-year average, they were over 300 passengers from years past. The fuel truck had issues starting. The truck is 35 years old. They have begun doing the work on the pump house. The Airport has an active Facebook account now.

Sheriff Saaranen stated there are currently 20 inmates. The Pigs & Heat raised approximately \$19,000.00. He thanked everyone for their support and purchasing tickets.

Unfinished Business

1. Start Small, Funding request

Administrator Rheault stated the Board had approved \$200,000 over three (3) years with ARPA funds. The total paid so far is \$156,500. The available balance is \$43,500.00.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to authorize \$41,00.00 for the Start Small program.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Keranen 4.

NO: None 0.

2. Single Point of Entry

Administrator Rheault stated the Board had approved money for a single point of entry.

Todd LaRoux stated the woman's bathroom on the first floor would be eliminated. It is the most cost-effective option to use the first-floor entrance for the single point of entry.

Chairman Tikkanen stated the Board made a commitment. He asked if it was up for bids. Todd LaRoux stated it is in the costs. Commissioner Anderson discussed the cost for staffing the single point of entry.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to authorize \$193,000.00 for the single point of entry for the courthouse. UP Engineering should do an RFP.

Discussion:

Chairman Tikkanen stated the need for a single point of entry to improve the security for the safety of the public and the staff. This is a high priority.

Sheriff Saaranen discussed the physical security limits. He has some ideas that he will share with the Board or a committee.

Commissioner Keranen questioned if the engineering costs are close to the contractors' prices. Todd LaRoux stated District Court came in lower.

Chairman Tikkanen stated the outside of the building will have to be improved for the public. Todd LaRoux stated the engineering costs were only for the inside of the building.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Keranen, Tikkanen, Janssen 4.

NO: None 0.

New Business:

1. Self-help Center Update/Request, Tracey Beauchamp

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to table this matter as no one was present to discuss the request.

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

2. MERS COLA Update

Administrator Rheault explained a request should have been done in the fall of 2025. She did not know. She has spoken with the company, and they stated it would take 4-5 weeks if she sends a request, or the Board could approve a 2% COLA increase that will be retroactive to January 2026.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to a Authorize the annual 2% COLA for the Sheriff Department and retirees retroactive to January 1, 2026.

Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Keranen 4.
NO: None 0.

3.HKCD FAP Forester

Commissioner Janssen stated the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District has received grant money and have hired Joash Pfeiffelman.

Joash stated he will provide forestry services for private landowners for local or state forest land. He will be the local contact for this land-based program that the DNR runs. There will be a tree sale coming up soon.

Commissioner Janssen stated Houghton County did a letter of support to get Joash his position.

4. Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Award

Chris VanArsdale, Emergency Manager, stated the plan is for the five (5) surrounding counties. Houghton County is the fiduciary. In November a RFP was done. There were five (5) bids. He recommended accepting the bid from WUPPDR.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the bid from WUPPDR for \$239,400 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Janssen, Anderson, Tikkanen, Keranen, 4.
NO: None. 0

5. Resolution #26-01 E911 Administrative Findings, The Emergency Service District Final Plan

Jon Giacchino, Under Sheriff, stated the E911 Plan has to be updated every three (3) years. There are minor changes to the plan for the fire and police.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to adopt Resolution #260-011 for the E911 Plan as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Keranen, Janssen, Tikkanen, Anderson 4.
NO: None. 0
Absent: Britz 1.



HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

401 E. Houghton Avenue, Houghton, Michigan 49931
Telephone: (906) 482-8307

HOUGHTON COUNTY E911 ADMINISTRATIVE FINDINGS RESOLUTION FOR THE EMERGENCY TELEPHONE SERVICE DISTRICT FINAL PLAN RESOLUTION #26-01

WHEREAS, under the Michigan Public Act 29 of 1994, as amended, MCL 484.1101 et. Esq, as amended, the Houghton County Board of Commissioners have previously established and adopted a Houghton County E911 Emergency Telephone Service District; and

WHEREAS, the Houghton County Board of Commissioners is authorized to make Administrative Findings regarding, among other things, administrative changes in carriers (suppliers), minor administrative wording, and agencies to be covered by the Houghton County E 9-1-1 Service District Plan; and

WHEREAS, this plan amends the Response Agencies, Telecom Companies and some administrative verbiage;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Houghton County Board of Commissioners make this Administrative Findings resolution of the Houghton County E911 Emergency Telephone Service District Final Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution shall augment, supersede, modify or replace any inconsistent prior Resolution or Motion;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Clerk shall send a copy of this resolution and its Administrative Findings to each service supplier, PSAP, and emergency service provider within the County.

Upon a call of the roll, the vote was as follows:

Moved by Commissioner:

Supported by Commissioner:

Roll Call Vote:

Yes:

No: None (0)

Motion carried.

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman
Houghton County Board of Commission

Date

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

STATE OF MICHIGAN)
)ss.
COUNTY OF HOUGHTON)

I, the undersigned, the duly qualified County Clerk of the County of Houghton, State of Michigan do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a Resolution adopted by the County Board of the County of Houghton at its Special Meeting held on February 10, 2026, the original of which Resolution is on file in my office.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my official signature, this 10th day of February, 2026.

6. Letter in Support of SB109

Chris VanArsdale discussed the revamping of the disaster fund. There is an increase from a \$500,000 to \$2.5 million for people to request assistance. The fund size is increasing from \$3 to 5 million to \$75 million. In his letter, he asked for the 10% cap to be removed.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to Approve the letter of support for SB109 as presented.

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

7. RFP for Accounting Services

Administrator Rheault explained that Joe's last day is next Tuesday. She has spoken with Treasurer Mattila who is concerned about reconciling the cash. She has prepared an RFP to look for another accounting service to assist the County.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to authorize an RFP for accounting services to reconcile the cash balances for the county.

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

8. Wester UP Health Department Board Appointment

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to appoint Commissioners Keranen, Anderson and Britz to the Western UP Health Department Board.

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

9. Copper Country Community Mental Health Board Appointment

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to appoint Commissioners Britz and Zach Edgerton to the Copper Country Community Mental Health Board. Zach Edgerton shall serve a 3-year terms ending March 31, 2029.

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

10. Motion to accept Lawsuit

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to accept and acknowledge receipt of the David Walby lawsuit and have the County contact our insurance company to cover the employees.

Discussion:

Commissioner Anderson read a statement.

Commissioner Keranen asked that the statement be put in the minutes.

Per 5/13/26 written statement from Commissioner Anderson:

Commissioner Anderson commented on the incident on March 23, 2024, where Benjamin Walby severely beat up his girlfriend and intentionally inflicted serious injuries to himself which drew a law enforcement response, including Houghton County Sheriff deputies. The responding police officers were able to save the life of the woman, but Mr. Walby died from self-inflicted injuries. Commissioner Anderson praised the police response for saving the life of the woman in a very tragic incident.

Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Keranen 4.

NO: None 0.

11. Circuit Court Electrical Service Request, \$6,000.00-Within Budget

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to authorize \$6,000.00 for the electrical wiring upgrades as presented.

Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Keranen 4.

NO: None 0.

12. Superior Tech Wizards, Contract

Alex Radke provided a Services Agreement. He is insured and will provide proof to Administrator Rheault. A background check was done on Alex Briggs who is working part-time with him. He stated he would cover all county facilities.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to approve the Service Agreement with Superior Tech Wizards LLC.

Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, 3.

NO: Keranen 1.

13. Final Jail Committees Report, April Deadline

Chairman Tikkanen stated he would like to see reports from the Jail, Sharon Avenue Property and current Jail Committee, and the County Held Properties in April 2026. The deadline would be before April 14, 2026.

14. Scheduling Jail & Sheriff's Office Millage

Chairman Tikkanen discussed when to put the millage on the ballot. He stated the options are August and November.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to proceed with putting the millage for the Jail and Sheriff's Office on the ballot on November 4, 2026.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen 3.

NO: Keranen 1.

15. Sharon Ave RFP Language

Todd LaRoux, Building Manager, discussed the need for an RFP for the Sharon Avenue Property. Todd would work with Administrator Rheault on the RFP.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to authorize an RFP for the Sharon Avenue Property.

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

16. Tri-County Public Defenders January 2026 Payment Request-\$85,524.82

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to pay \$65,524.82 to the Tri-County Public Defenders for the January 2026 payment as presented.

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

17. Appropriations

- a. Western Upper Peninsula Health Department-\$69,106.50**
- b. Copper Country Community Mental Health-\$13,707.91**

A 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 4, Nays 0.

Public Comments:

Wanda Kiiskila asked if a grant was available to fix the walk ways in Atlantic Mine like Marquette County did.

Chairman Tikkanen stated Commissioner Britz would be in contact with her.

Faith Morrison advised the Board that they will need to vote on the ballot language at their July meeting. She commented how George Stockero promoted the CCISD ballot language for the CTE program.

Announcements:

None.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Chairman Anderson to adjourn at 7:46 p.m.

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

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk

APPROVED: _____

Clerk's Initials