

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
MAY 11, 2026**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session on Monday, May 11, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. in the 5th 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 requested adding #9 for discussing Canal View.

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

None.

Houghton County Board of Commissioners Work Session:

1. Catherine Thorp, Wage Study Presentation

Catherine Thorp gave a presentation on the findings and recommendation for the Wage Study. She gave the classification recommendations to Administrator Rheault. The company reviewed 73 jobs for 143 employees. A couple employees changed to FLSA and 12 were vacant or no salary provided. She recommended 25-grade midpoint-based pay structure. The non-exempt was \$18 per hour and the exempt were \$20.52 per hour. Option #1 was an increase of 2.11% and option #2 was a 3.82% increase.

Chairman Tikkanen asked how the County implements this wage study. Catherine stated Administrator Rheault will give the Commissioners the handout, and implement it, if the budget is available now or later. She advised to address the misclassified positions as it is a compliance issue. She discussed getting documentation on training the managers. She also discussed a COLA increase and how that increases the structure and most of it goes to flexibility. Creating a portal to review the market to reclassify all jobs. She recommended adjusting the structure every year or whenever the base structure changes and to do a new study every 3-5 years depending on fluctuation in the market. She provided Administrator Rheault with the list of employee changes last week.

2. Easton Laitila, ARPA Update

Easton Laitila gave a handout to the Commissioners and Administrator Rheault. He stated the ARPA monies is over-obligated by \$320,000. He gave a second handout to the Commissioners and Administrator Rheault. He stated the County was given \$6.9 million in ARPA monies and the Board had spent \$5.1 million per the General Ledger. \$1.5 million is not recorded to the General Ledger. The ARPA funds must be spent by the end of December 2026. There is \$1

million unaccounted for. The \$1.2 million spent to purchase the Sharon Avenue property must have written documentation and support to be in compliance with ARPA regulations.

3. Brendon Presnell, Proposal for Transfer Station Improvements and MMP Budget Update

Brendon Presnell, with WUPPDR, was by Microsoft Teams. He stated the County is paying \$210 per ton for waste and \$30 per ton for recycling. The recycling cost should be lower than the transportation cost. He discussed the aging of the Transfer Station and developing a capital implementation plan for a recycling tipping floor and have a feasibility study done. He recommends applying for grant money and to do a feasibility study and then present it to the Board. He believes the County could be a hub for others if the County hosts recycling. There is \$450,000 in grant support available through EGLE.

Chairman Tikkanen stated Commissioners Janssen and Keranen will work with Brendon.

4. Jaikob Djerf, Enhanced Public Access Policy

Jaikob provided 3 samples from other counties. He asked the Board to formally adopt a policy at their monthly meeting tomorrow night. He asked the Board to wait to adjust the fee schedule until 2027.

5. Trevor Kadlec, Community Corrections

Trevor Kadlec provided handouts to the Board and Administrator Rheault. He stated Marquette, Alger, Dickinson are in the program. They may add Iron County and hopefully Houghton, Baraga and Keweenaw Counties. There is no cost to join the UP Community Corrections program. It takes booking officers 10 minutes to do a phone practice risk assessment. He stated pre-trial supervisor helps with jail capacity. Pre-trial drug screening needs a location and is scheduled at random. Electronic monitoring is paid by WUPPDR through grant money. Most are GPS house tethers. He discussed Tri-Cap in Saginaw that is a MDOC entity that is in-patient treatment and they will pick up people from the Houghton County Jail. There is a 70% completion that inmates did not go back to jail. He discussed the \$14.2 million in funding with that increasing to \$15.2 million and how that will help to get a program in Houghton County.

Judge, Brittany Bulleit, stated she supports this program.

Trevor stated 1 Commissioner would be on their Board. There are 6 meetings per year.

6. RAP Grants

Administrator Rheault stated Paige had sent a list of the RAP grants to the Board. The last one was done in 2023/24.

7. Tri-County Public Defenders, Ann Harris, Updates/Concerns

Ann Harris stated she has been having a meeting with Administrator Rheault once a week and they have completed the paperwork. She stated the communication is better.

8. FY2025 Audit Update

Administrator Rheault stated the trial balance does not balance with the auditors. Her extension request was denied. She believes everything should be completed by the end of May or June. She is waiting on information for the Airport and Transfer Station. Commissioner Janssen stated money comes in late every year for the Airport.

9. Canal View Appraisal Discussion

Chairman Tikkanen asked that this go on tomorrow's agenda. The appraisal was received. It shows a \$14.4 million value. Pensions are a concern.

Commissioner Janssen and Britz both said that everyone they spoke to all said to not sell the Canal View property.

Jenny DeYacaza, Union Rep, stated she supports Canal View.

Public Comment-*(3-minute limit):

Alex Radke stated he hopes the County will have more recycling.

Krissy Sundstrom stated Marquette County wants Houghton County to bring the recycling to them.

Announcements:

The Facility Manager position at the Transfer Station has an application deadline this Friday.

Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to adjourn at 12:29 p.m.

Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk

APPROVED _____

JK