

**HOUGHTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
AUGUST 15, 2025**

The Houghton County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Friday, August 15, 2025 at 2:00 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 Chairman Tikkanen at 2:00 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; Joel Keranen, District 2; Glenn Anderson, District 3; Gretchen Janssen, District 4; Roy Britz, District 5.

**Approval of Minutes: July 1, 2025 Work Session, July 8, 2025 Regular Meeting, August 4, 2025 Work Session, August 12, 2025 Regular Meeting:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the minutes of the July 1, 2025 Work Session, July 8, 2025 Regular Meeting, August 4, 2025 Work Session and the August 12, 2025 Regular Meeting as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

**Approval of Agenda/Additions:**

Commissioner Anderson requested adding #16 for New Business for WUPPDR, and #3 for Old Business for the Jail.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to approve the agenda with the two (2) additions as presented.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

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

None.

**Approval of Bills-\$1,419,057.13**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve paying the bills submitted of \$1,419,057.13 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Keranen, Anderson, Tikkanen, Janssen, Britz 5.

NO: None 0.

**Correspondence:**

Chairman Tikkanen stated the South Range VFW is doing a fundraiser.

## **Reports:**

### **Standing Committee:**

Commissioner Keranen reported to the Board on the following: Everything will be discussed in the Agenda.

Commissioner Janssen reported to the Board on the following: Thanked Faith Morrison and the League of Women Voters for their work on the jail campaign.

Commissioner Anderson reported to the Board on the following: Met with the DNR on the Marina ADA Compliance. Reminded everyone the Houghton County Fair is the following week. He will not be in attendance for the September 9, 2025 meeting.

Commissioner Britz reported to the Board on the following: Discussed Chassell Lakeshore Drive. The Road Commission is willing to help and clean the ditches and culverts. They need an assessment from the residents for access to the lake.

Stanton Township-the Greyrot River is unsafe to pass on the bridge. The Staton Township Board will not send out emergency services. Adams EMS has a vehicle to get out to the residents. The Sheriff and Coast Guard can arrive by Boat to that area.

Chairman Tikkanen reported to the Board on the following: He reminded everyone of Pasty Fest in Calumet.

### **County Officers:**

Clerk Kelly gave a report to the Board.

Sheriff Saaranen gave a report to the Board.

Todd LaRoux gave a report to the Board.

Dennis Hext gave a report to the Board.

### **Old Business:**

#### **1. FY2-26 Auditor Selection**

Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve a one (1) year contract with Anderson and Tackman.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Keranen, Britz 5.

NO: None.

#### **2. District Court Security Upgrades**

Commissioner Britz stated that he had a meeting with the Security Committee and UP Engineering. He is waiting on Judge Daavettila's approval. \$40,000 has been paid so far for the security upgrades.

#### **3. Jail**

The Board discussed County properties. Chairman Tikkanen discussed public meetings with minutes being done and monthly reports to the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioners Anderson and Keranen will look into County properties and the Transfer Station.

Commissioner Anderson will look into the Marina.

Commissioner Britz will look into the Sharon Avenue property and reusing the jail.

Chairman Tikkanen and Commissioner Janssen will look into the specific costs for the jail.

Commissioner Janssen will look into the 6 County owned parcels.

**New Business:**

**1. Marina Survey**

Chairman Tikkanen asked the public to do a survey for the marina that is on the County website.

**2. John Haeussler-Resignation Announcement**

**a. Motion to authorize positing an advertisement to fill the position**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to authorize Administrator Rheault to fill the position effective December 31 and to check with Treasurer Mattila for the correct category for the posting.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

**3. Dennis Hext-Retirement Announcement**

**a. Motion to authorize positing an advertisement to fill the position**

Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to post the advertisement and have applications due by September 12, 2025.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

**4. MAC Annual Conference**

Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the Commissioners, Administrator and County Clerk to attend the Conference if they are able to.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

**5. Resolution #25-19; Opposition to MDHHS Proposed Competitive Procurement Process for PIHP Selection**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve Resolution #25-19 as presented.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Britz, Anderson, Tikkanen, Keranen, Janssen 5.

NO: None.



**HOUGHTON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
401 E. Houghton Avenue, Houghton, Michigan 49931

**HOUGHTON COUNTY OPPOSITION TO MDHHS PROPOSED  
COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT PROCESS FOR PIHP SELECTION  
RESOLUTION #25-19**

**WHEREAS**, the State of Michigan currently operates a publicly managed and community-based system for the delivery of specialty behavioral health services through 10 Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHPs), which are responsible for managing Medicaid mental health, developmental disability, and substance use disorder services; and

**WHEREAS**, the current PIHP system has consistently demonstrated value, local accountability, and community engagement, while successfully managing costs and improving health outcomes for vulnerable populations; and

**WHEREAS**, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recently announced plans to initiate a competitive procurement process for the management of PIHP functions, which may open the door to private, non-profit health plans or managed care organizations (MCOs) assuming control over behavioral health services; and

**WHEREAS**, such privatization could disrupt longstanding relationships between local mental health authorities, providers, and the communities they serve, and jeopardize the person-centered, recovery-oriented approach that has been cultivated under the public system; and

**WHEREAS**, many stakeholders, including individuals receiving services, advocates, local officials, and providers have expressed significant concerns about the potential impact of a competitive procurement process on care quality, access, local control, and transparency; and

**WHEREAS**, counties across Michigan have historically played a vital role in the governance, funding, and oversight of the public behavioral health system, and any change to that structure without meaningful county input undermines the principle of local governance; and

**WHEREAS**, maintaining a publicly accountable and locally governed behavioral health system is essential to ensuring that individuals with mental health and substance use needs receive timely, appropriate, and high-quality care.

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**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Houghton County Board of Commissioners formally opposes the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' (MDHHS) plan to implement a competitive procurement process for Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHPs); and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board urges Governor Whitmer, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), and the Michigan Legislature to halt any plans for privatization and instead work collaboratively with counties, PIHPs, Community Mental Health Services Programs (CMHSPs), service users, and other stakeholders to strengthen and improve the public behavioral health system, by only allowing public organizations with experience in managing Michigan's public mental health system to be part of any bid process should one occur; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to Governor Gretchen Whitmer, MDHHS Director Elizabeth Hertel, members of the Michigan Legislature representing Houghton County, and the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC).

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.

**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 Regular Meeting held on August 12, 2025, the original of which Resolution is on file in my office.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my official signature, this 12<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2025.

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Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk  
County of Houghton

**6. Tri-County Public Defenders-Unapproved MIDC Expenditures**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve paying \$50,172.21 to MDIC once we receive the disallowed expenditures from 2019-2024 that the Tri County Public Defenders has reimbursed.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Keranen, Britz 5.  
NO: None. 0

**7. Tri-County Public Defenders-June 2025 Payment Request \$107,087.37 (\$229,574.02 loan remaining before this payment)**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to pay \$107,087.37 to Tri County Public Defenders for June 2025.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Keranen, Britz 5.  
NO: None.

**8. Marina Purchase Request: Lawn Mower-\$3,059.15**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to pay \$3,059.15 for a new lawnmower for the Marina.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Britz, Tikkanen, Keranen, Janssen 5.  
NO: None 0.

**9. Marina Service Request: Connectivity Upgrades-\$19,650.00**

Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve the \$19,650.00 for the Connectivity Upgrades for Wi-Fi.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Janssen, Tikkanen, Keranen, Britz 5.  
NO: None. 0

#### **10. Marina Service Request: Windows-\$16,564.19**

Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to pay \$15,939.05 for new windows at the Marina. The Board deducted \$625.14 in sales tax from the bill.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Anderson, Britz, Tikkanen, Keranen, Janssen 5.  
NO: None. 0

#### **11. Western U.P. Planning & Development Region-Annual Contribution FY26**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve \$14,871.00 for the WUPPDR FY26 contract.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

#### **12. UPCAP FY 2026 Dues**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Janssen to approve \$1,100 for the UPCAP FY26 dues.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

#### **13. MAC FY 2026 Dues**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to approve the MAC FY26 dues of \$5,610.82, and to have the bill changed to Administrator Rheault's name.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

#### **14. Copper Country Mental Health Services FY 2026 Funding Request**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve \$164,495.00 in a quarterly payment to Copper Country Mental Health Services. This has been the same amount since 1996.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

#### **15. Western U.P, Health Department 2026 Appropriations**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve the Western U.P, Health Department 2026 Appropriations of \$276,426.00.

Chairman Tikkanen suggested looking into the County having their own Health Department.

Commissioner Janssen stated the residents would pay more if Houghton County does not participate with the WUPHD.

Commissioner will discuss this at the next meeting.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

#### **16. WUPPDR**

Lisa McKenzie discussed the 2 properties that total \$28,500. One is in the City of Hancock and the other in the City of Houghton.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Britz and seconded by Commissioner Keranen to approve \$28,500 from the CDBG fund for the 2 homes.

The Motion carried by the following vote.

YES: Britz, Keranen, Tikkanen, Anderson, Janssen 5.

NO: None. 0

**17. Travel**

**1. Jaikob Djerf, Equalization Director: September 8-9, 2025**

**2. Drew Bastman, FOC: September 25-26, 2025**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Janssen and seconded by Commissioner Britz to approve \$285.00 for Jaikob Djerf and \$1,000 for Drew Bastman.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

**Appropriations:**

None.

**Public Comments:**

Faith Morrison addressed the Board.

Dave Gemignani addressed the Board.

Jim Rautiola addressed the Board.

Teresa Kariniemi addressed the Board.

Mary Ellen Hyttinen addressed the Board.

**Announcements:**

None.

**Adjournment:**

A Motion was made by Commissioner Keranen and seconded by Commissioner Tikkanen to adjourn at 4:05 p.m.

The Motion carried by a voice vote. Ayes 5, Nays 0.

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Tom Tikkanen, Chairman

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Jennifer Kelly, County Clerk