

Minutes
HOUGHTON TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING
February 16, 2026 6:00 P.M.
HOUGHTON TOWNSHIP BUILDING
5059 Fourth Street, Eagle River, MI 49950

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- Members Present: Jim Huovinen, Mel Jones, Robby Fischer, Julie Hamilton, Tom Hall, and Julie Newman
- Members Absent: Linda Paradiso (Linda was available by phone for questions and information)

AGENDA ADDITIONS/APPROVAL

- Jim Houvinen motioned to approve the agenda, and Tom Hall seconded. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL

- Robby Fischer motioned to approve the revised minutes of the January 19, 2026 meeting, and Tom Hall seconded. Motion carried.
- Jim Huovinen motioned, and Tom Hall seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report and to approve the payment of the bills. Roll call vote was taken. Motion carried.
 - Treasures' Report Balances in accounts as of January 31, 2026 General Fund \$69,953.39 Water Fund \$56,740.65; CD#2 \$12,018.41; CD#1 \$16,351.18; Cemetery Fund \$7,152,44
 - Spent since January 19th meeting
General Fund = \$5,269.75
Water Fund: = \$1,447.48
Cemetery Fund: = 0

Grand Total: \$6,717.23

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Assessing– Mark Erhart: No report.
- Water Department – Mel Jones: Samples have come back clear.
- Cemetery – Steve Kline: No report.
- Elections – Linda Paradiso: Julie Carlson organized an early voting meeting for all KC township clerks. Early Voting Agreement needs to be approved.
 - Robby Fischer made a resolution to approve the Early Voting Agreement, and Tom Hall seconded. Motion carried.
 - CCISD mileage is the only item for Keweenaw County on the ballot in May. No early voting, just in-house. Linda is working with Julie Carlson on a plan to accomplish this as Linda is out of the country and no other certified election director is available.
- General Maintenance – Dave Schumacher: No report.
- Park – Dan Steck: No report.
- Consolidation Committee Report:
 - There are multiple pathways to consolidation. Per the Bureau of Elections and our County Clerk, we are required to follow State of Michigan Election Law. This would mean elections are unable to be held until 2028.. However, if we can follow MCL 46.14-16, an election would not be required. If we follow 46.16a-h, elections are required. Because there are differing interpretations of these statutes (MCL 156 governing county commission law and MCL 168 governing election law), and a lack of clear direction given thus far by the MTA, the county and the state, the Board recommended getting our state legislators involved to work through the Attorney General and Secretary of State to advise us on proper next steps under State of Michigan law. The Board asked Steve to send the Consolidation Committee documents generated thus far to the Board and a Special Meeting will be called for the Board to review the documents. The Consolidation Committee also suggested

sending the proposed steps to the Keweenaw county clerk for input. Once we've got a township to work with, we need to review the steps and look closely at how consolidation would affect all involved parties. Next, a committee would need to come together representing both groups.

- o Jim Huovinen motioned to approve pursuing working through consolidation steps at the state level, Tom Hall seconded. Motion carried.
- o Jim Huovinen motioned to retain Roger Kershner as a lawyer on this topic, and Tom Hall seconded. Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Replacing the siding on the lower half of the building and painting the whole building.
 - a. Mel shared that we're trying to get bids on this project.
2. F-65 Report – Sue Sandford our accountant has finished and submitted this report.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Roger Kerschner as our attorney for the consolidation process- The board voted to retain Roger in this position.
2. Board of Review – member update and March meeting
 - a. Robby Fischer motioned to accept Josh Uhl to the Houghton Township Board of Review, and Jim Huovinen seconded. Motion carried.
 - b. Josh Uhl took the oath of office.
3. Coastal Management Project- A potential seawall to keep the mouth of Eagle River open was a Capital Improvement Plan item. Working with Cities Initiative and Stantec Engineering, their recommendation is a seawall would be too expensive (\$\$ millions), and it is most cost effective to continue periodic dredging, as has been done. They had some additional ideas to improve the area and will pass on their ideas.
4. Regional GIS-Based Asset Management System- A survey needs to be completed for WUPPDR. Jim Huovinen suggested the board could look at the survey together. Linda agreed to send the survey invitation link to the Board. Post-meeting note: Survey link was sent; Jim Huovinen completed the survey.
5. Elections – May 5 CCISD election. See above.
6. Millage renewal- Discussion tabled until the March meeting.
7. Salary Resolution
 - a. Robby Fischer made a motion to approve the salary resolution, and Jim Huovinen seconded. Roll call vote was taken. Motion approved.
8. 2026 – 2027 Budget
 - a. Within this discussion, we concluded that we need contractors to bid on the job for the township building. Jim Huovinen and Tom Hall are going to reach out to contractors.
 - b. Robby Fischer motioned to set the public meeting concerning the budget for 5:30 PM on March 16th, 2026, and Julie Hamilton seconded. Motion carried.
 - c. Robby Fischer motioned to allow the Deputy Treasurer Julie Newman to waive interest on winter taxes at her discretion, Jim Huovinen seconded. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public shall have an opportunity, under Public Comment, to address the Township Board for no more than 3(three) minutes on any matter.

ADJOURNMENT

- Robby Fischer motioned to adjourn, and Jim Huovinen seconded. Motion carried.

I hereby certify that these minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Houghton Township meeting held on February 16, 2026, as approved by the township board on _____.

Signed: _____

Township Clerk

Date: _____