

MINUTES
HOUGHTON TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING
August 17, 2026 6:00 P.M.
HOUGHTON TOWNSHIP BUILDING
5059 Fourth Street, Eagle River, MI 49950

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- Members Present: Linda Paradiso, Julie Hamilton, Jim Huovinen
- Members Absent: Robby Fischer, Tom Hall

AGENDA ADDITIONS/APPROVAL

- Jim Huovinen requested addition of the dumpster to the agenda
- Jim Huovinen motioned to approve the agenda, Julie Hamilton seconded. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL

- Jim Huovinen motioned to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2026 meeting, Julie Hamilton seconded. Motion carried.
- The old EPB laptop is not compatible with Windows 11, which is now required by the Michigan Bureau of Elections. Jim Huovinen motioned to approve the new EPB laptop purchase of \$1,684.00, Julie Hamilton seconded. Motion carried.
- Jim Huovinen motioned to approve the Treasurer's report and payment of bills, Julie Hamilton seconded. Motion carried.
- Treasurers' Report:
 - Balances in accounts as of July 31, 2026
 - General Fund: \$84,486.20
 - Water Fund: \$71,031.74
 - Cemetery Fund: \$5,823.94
 - CD#1: \$16,451.17
 - CD#2: \$12,192.92
 - Balances in accounts as of 08/17/2026:
 - General Fund: \$68,852.92
 - Water Fund: \$70,116.72
 - Cemetery Fund: \$5,630.01
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 - Funds spent since 7/20/2026:
 - General Fund: \$18,398.99
 - Water Fund: \$2,086.36
 - Cemetery Fund: \$193.93
 - **Total: \$20,679.28**
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 - From General Fund, donations remaining:
 - For building repairs: ~\$2,000
 - For maintenance of Houghton Township Park: \$967.00
 - From Bridge Fest: \$0
 - Amount remaining for residing and painting HT Community Center: \$5,188.32

- Motion by Jim Huovinen, seconded by Julie Hamilton to remove Leslie Fischer as a signer at the Superior National Bank Calumet; add Linda Paradiso, Clerk; and retain Julie Hamilton, Treasurer; Julie Newman, Deputy Treasurer; and Melvin Jones, Deputy Clerk as signers at the Superior National Bank Calumet. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- Assessing– Mark Erhart (absent)
- Water Department – Mel Jones (absent)
- Cemetery – Linda Paradiso, Steve Kline
 - Status of items discussed with MTU last Spring – Jim Huovinen again offered to follow up with Tim Scarlett, MTU.
- Elections – Linda Paradiso
 - We need additional election inspectors for the November 2026 General Election. The position pays \$20/hr. If interested, please contact Linda Paradiso.
- General Maintenance – Dave Schumacher (absent)
- Park – Dan Steck
 - Donations from June – August turned in for deposit.
- Consolidation Committee Report – Rob Fischer (absent)
 - Rep. Greg Markkanen’s office responded to Supervisor Robby Fischer on August 3 and recommended he speak with MTA Member Information Services. He did so on August 5 whereas MTA stated they have heard similar problems from other small townships but do not have a ready response nor concrete plan. This is similar information received by our Supervisor and previous Clerk on prior contacts with MTA in 2025.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Upcoming Summer Fun date: Music in the Park Aug 20, 6:30p. See Cindy Melican’s recent email on remaining volunteer needs to ensure this is a successful event.
- Following up on contact with Rep. Greg Markkanen at the July 21 LEO Rural Prosperity meeting on small communities’ struggles, where he requested the details on our consolidation struggles, a letter was sent on August 12 containing those details. No response has been received to date.
- Keweenaw County Master Plan Public Meeting is September 28, 4:00p. The draft Plan is on the Keweenaw County website. All are encouraged to review the Plan, provide feedback via the link on the website, and to attend the meeting, if available.
- Outcome from Allouez Fire Dept. regarding dry hydrants. Allouez Fire Department responded on June 23 that a dry hydrant behind the Eagle River dam is not necessary. If firefighters need water from the dam, they will drop floating screened hoses into the pond and pull it with a portable pump with perhaps another relay pump to get it to 4th St. Jim Huovinen suggested a possible use for the old dry hydrant. After discussion this item was tabled until the next meeting.
- Recommendations from Risk Management
 - Playground equipment removed, next steps, potential funding may be available via MEDC
 - Emergency lights and exit signs placed, potential Par Plan funding/reimbursement possible
- Special Meeting Aug. 10 regarding Main Street Bridge options. UPEA agreement for limited services to provide two options for repair or replacement of the walking bridge and an estimate for removal of the bridge was approved for \$3,000. Motion to approve the Special Meeting Minutes by Jim Huovinen, seconded by Julie Hamilton. Motion carried.

- Bridge Michigan interviews with Linda, Mel and other small communities. The resulting articles are educational and insightful. In these articles, it is noted that 75% of Michigan townships and villages are having a hard time filling mandatory elected positions, Michigan is one of the few states that has not eliminated or reduced the number of townships or reduced the mandated services conducted by townships. Links to articles:
<https://bridgemi.com/michigan-government/other-states-shrink-local-governments-michigan-law-preserves-archaic-mess/>
<https://bridgemi.com/michigan-government/rural-michigan-in-crisis-too-many-governments-that-too-few-want-to-lead/>
<https://bridgemi.com/michigan-government/facing-money-woes-michigan-villages-mull-extreme-solutions-ceasing-to-exist/>
<https://bridgemi.com/michigan-government/michigan-counties-towns-spend-30b-a-year-could-collaboration-get-more-done/>

NEW BUSINESS

- **Keweenaw Heartlands Update – Julia Petersen**
 Julia Petersen and two DNR colleagues, Brad Carlson, Baraga Unit Manager for Forest Resources Division, carlsonb@michigan.gov, and Bob Wild, Park Supervisor Fort Wilkins Historic State Park, wildr@michigan.gov gave an update on the Keweenaw Heartlands project. A link to additional land the DNR is planning to purchase can be found on:
<https://www.mlive.com/environment/2026/08/michigan-set-to-buy-4500-acres-of-keweenaw-peninsula-forestland-for-49-million.html>. Bios for the candidates for the Keweenaw Heartlands Board of Directors November 3, 2026 election will be posted in September on:
<https://www.vote411.org/>
- **Keweenaw County Zoning, Board of Commissioners Meeting, August 19, 6:30p**
 One item on the agenda is Keweenaw County zoning. All are encouraged to attend the meeting.
- **Dumpster**
 Many inappropriate items are found in the dumpsters (no garbage tags, boxes, etc.). Discussion of whether a camera mounted on the dumpster enclosure would be beneficial to identify violators. Questions were raised as to how this would be monitored and followed up with violators. Further discussion was tabled for now.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Steve Kline reported Jared Hyrkas from UPEA met with himself and Gary Bays on Aug. 17 to do initial inspections following the approval by the Board at the August 10 Special Meeting. UPEA will provide estimates for the proposed work.
- Mark and Kathy McEvers expressed their concerns about the draft Keweenaw County Master Plan and its potential impact.
- Kathy McEvers asked about the status of the mouth of Eagle River project that was discussed at the June Board meeting. Linda Paradiso responded that once cost estimates, potential funding sources and details are identified, a Public Meeting will be held to review the scope of this Coastal Management proposal. Although this project is included in the 2023-2033 Houghton Township

Capital Improvement Plan, it is unlikely that the Township can secure adequate funding at favorable terms. It is a work in progress.

- Tim Olson commented that sparse attendance by elected officials and the public at this meeting was concerning.

ADJOURNMENT

- Linda Paradiso motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:20pm, Jim Huovinen seconded. Motion carried.

Next regular Board meeting – September 21, 6:00pm

I, the undersigned, Linda Paradiso, Clerk for the Township of Houghton, Keweenaw County, Michigan, DO CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of the certain proceedings taken by the Township Board of said Township at a regular Board meeting held on the 17th day of August, 2026.

Handwritten signature of Linda J. Paradiso in cursive script.

Linda J. Paradiso, Clerk, Houghton Township