

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**HOUGHTON TOWNSHIP BOARD**  
**Monday, January 16th, 2022**

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Supervisor Ray Chase called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The Board and those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Supervisor Ray Chase, Clerk Marjie Marshall, Trustee Tom Hall, Trustee Steve Kline

**ABSENT:** Treasurer Mary Long

**AGENDA ADDITIONS/APPROVAL:** Motion by Tom, seconded by Steve to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

**CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL:**

- Motion by Steve, seconded by Tom, to approve minutes of December 19th, 2022 Regular Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.
- Marjie read the Treasurer's report. Motion by Steve, seconded by Tom, to accept Treasures Report. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion by Ray, seconded by Steve, to approve Payment of Bills. Motion passed unanimously via roll call.
  - General Fund: Check #5695 to Verizon for \$23.40, #5696 to UPPCO for \$472.20, #5697 to Election Source for \$615.00, #5698 to Marjie Marshall for \$507.92, #5699 to Tom Hall for \$78.50, #5700 to Ray Chase for \$387.87, #5701 to Steve Kline for \$78.50, #5702 to Sara Huuki for \$369.40, #5703 to UPPCO for \$495.20, #5704 to Keweenaw Petroleum for \$316.80, #5705 to Mary Long for \$554.66, #5706 to Up and Running for \$188.00, #5707 to Dave Schumacher for \$300.52, #5708 to Carol Jones for \$46.17. (Total \$4434.14)
  - Water Fund: Check #1702 to UPPCO for \$44.17, #1703 to White Water for \$20.00, #1704 to Keweenaw County for \$62.00, #1705 to Keweenaw Petroleum for \$543.19, #1706 to Postmaster for \$63.00, #1707 to Mel Jones for \$240.11, #1708 to Mary Long for \$163.23. (Total \$1135.70)
  - Cemetery Fund: No Activity
  - Bridge Fund: No Activity
  - Park Fund: No Activity
  - For a Final Total of \$5569.84

**BUDGET AMENDMENTS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- Water Project Report-Linda: Our revised Intent to Apply has been submitted, it was revised so that all of our funding request was moved to 2024. Traverse Engineering hopes to have a draft report by March for public input and then review by EGLE. Dick Supina must include alternatives in case we don't get full funding. Steve Kline reviewed statistics from neighboring townships for water rates and found that Houghton Township charges the least, as shown in the graph he presented (below). He added that the engineer recommended that we increase our water rates to \$50.00 based on 4500 gallons per month for a contingency reserve. Those present understood the need for a larger reserve but felt that a rate increase should be discussed when more of the water customers are in town. One of the funding alternatives is loan repayment using a water rate increase. This number is just in case we don't get fully funded but Dick Supina needs a number for alternates included in his report. The general feeling of the township residents present at the meeting was that an increase from the current \$30 for 4500 gallons per month to \$60 could be borne by the water customers. That would be enough to support a loan of approximately \$450,000. Ray asked if that would be enough, but the answer to that question is unknown until the the project is scored in the fall. Further discussion was had regarding water usage and gallons lost per year via leaks, unmetered deer park, and main flushing. It was suggested that a survey be sent to water users with their water bill to get their input, and that the public water project meeting be moved from March to April to allow for more input. Dan Steck asked about the possibility of checking the underground pipes for leaks.
  - Motion by Steve, seconded by Ray, to table the water rate increase for a contingency reserve until the June meeting. Motion passed unanimously. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Capital Improvement Plan:** Steve Kline reported that the plan is on the website for review. To simplify communication Steve suggested anyone that has input can email Marjie (houghtontwp@psty.net) and she will pass it on to the Board. The plan shows the needs for capital improvements and the funding needed for various projects. Residents are especially urged to review the fiscal year 2023 column in the Capital Improvement Plan because 2023 planned expenditures will be in the township's budget for 2023. The township's water Project Plan submission must be supported by a Capital Improvement Plan. Further discussion was had with community members attending the meeting. Kathy Harri-McEvers stated she feels that no zoning changes should be in the Capital Improvement Plan without community input. Some members of the community do not want any zoning changes. She also said that if a property owner wants their property rezoned it is their responsibility to go to the County and apply for it, not the Township's. Steve read from the draft Capital Improvement Plan noting that the draft does discuss existing zoning but does not make rezoning recommendations.
- **Cemetery Committee Report:** Steve updated the plot list to reflect the loss of 14 graves due to the green burial plots being 5' wide. The committee will be looking at sales and fee structures, and still hoping to get the existing road redone.
- **Motion by Marjie, seconded by Ray, that Elaine Hall, Jim Huovinen, and Dave Schumacher be appointed to the Board of Review for the term beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 and ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.** Motion passed unanimously. Motion by Ray, seconded by Steve to appoint Linda Paradiso as an alternate for the Board of Review. Motion passed unanimously. Elaine, Linda, and Dave were all sworn in after the meeting. Marjie will meet with Jim to swear him in as well.
- **Auto Payment of bills:** Motion by Ray, seconded by Steve, to approve enrolling in auto pay for the Wix, QuickBooks, UPPCO, and Verizon bills. Motion passed unanimously via voice vote.
- **Website Administrator:** It was suggested during the December meeting to appoint an Administrator for our website as it needs updating. Marjie indicated that as the webmaster she is capable of updating the website as needed but would support the appointment of an administrator if the Board so desired. The Board decided an administrator was not needed.

#### **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- **Assessing – Sara Huuki:** Sara will be scheduling the Board of Review and will let the Board know when the date and time are finalized. Everything looks good with the assessing with no rate increases necessary this year.
- **Water Department – Mel Jones:** Dick Supina had Mel take the temperature of the well water, it was 43 degrees. He'll take the temperature again once the lake freezes over
- **Cemetery/Committee – Marjie Marshall:** Nothing to report.
- **Elections – Marjie Marshall:** Nothing to report.
- **General Maintenance – Dave Schumacher:** Nothing to report.
- **Parks – Dan Steck:** Nothing to report.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Dan Steck submitted his written public comment regarding the Capital Improvement Plan via email. It reads as follows:

Comments on the Capital Improvement Plan v1.7

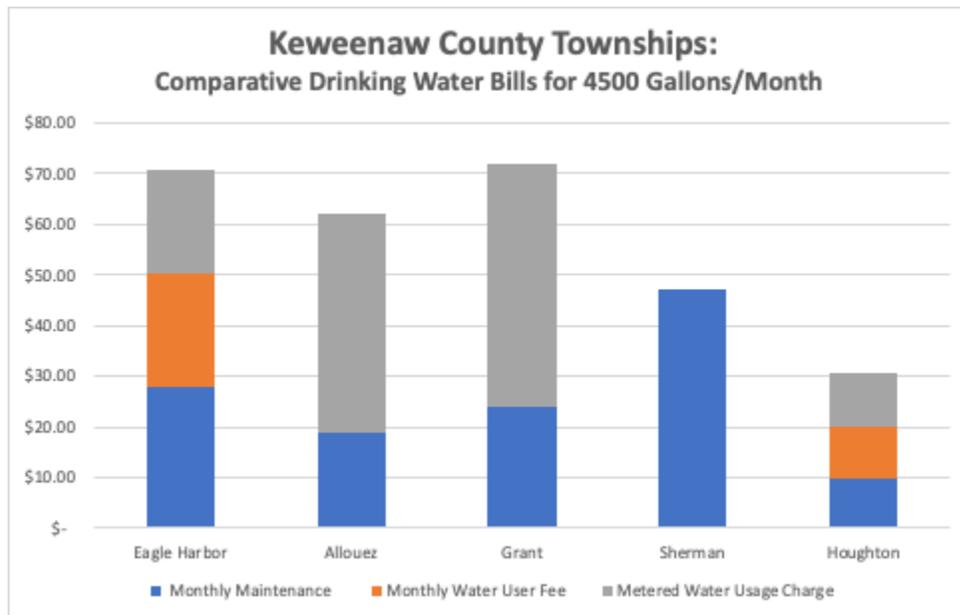
1/16/2023

Houghton Township Board

I want to thank Steve and Linda for their time and effort developing the new Capital Improvement Plan. This is a bold and complex plan. I have only started to try to understand its implications for the township. I would like start by focusing on big issues; policy and process, and let the granular details of specific projects for future meetings. I feel that the plan's guiding policies need to be established before specific projects and timelines are developed and approved. The policies need to be shaped inclusively with opportunities for input from all interested stakeholders. That means we need to try to inform and survey as many of the townships property owners as possible and give

them time to give you their opinions. The current plan includes some policies that I believe are not widely favored by township residents. The plan should not be based solely on my policy preferences, or Steve's, or Kathy's, or [REDACTED]. But the board should know what policies and projects people are willing to support and what they will oppose. For example, I support the general policy to improve the water system but I oppose the policy to make Eagle River more like Copper Harbor by changing Eagle River's zoning from rural residential to resort services. We need to have an extended review process so that you know what other residents want. Our last capital improvement project, the township square park, was started in January four years ago. Before the board approved the final plans, we found out what residents wanted through surveys and discussions in meetings that were held into the summer months. Since I was willing to donate hundreds of thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours of time to make the project a success, the project's demand on township resources was minimal. That probably won't be the case in the future. We need a clear-eyed assessment of the resources that are, or are likely to be, available for the newly proposed projects. That means a careful look at the township's income, grants, volunteers and donors. A quick review of this year's township income suggests that there will only be about \$73,000 of annual income for the next few years provided the currently approved property tax rate doesn't decrease. The water fund has about \$50,000. Other special funds have much less. It seems unlikely that the current financial condition could support new capital projects of more than a few tens of thousands of dollars. Some sources of funding for the proposed projects could put the township in financial peril. I hope the Board decides to extend the review and revision of this Capital Improvement Plan through June.

Dan Steck



Meeting adjourned: Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Next regular meeting – February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

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Marjie Marshall, Clerk  
Houghton Township

**CERTIFICATION**

I, the undersigned, Marjie Marshall, the appointed 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 19th day of September, 2022.

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Marjie Marshall, Clerk, Houghton Township