

PUBLIC HEARING
MEETING MINUTES HOUGHTON TOWNSHIP BOARD
MONDAY, JULY 8, 2024
Houghton Township Community Building

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Supervisor Ray Chase called the special meeting to order at 6:00 pm and led the Board and those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Supervisor Ray Chase, Clerk Wanda Kolb, Deputy Clerk Linda Paradiso, Treasurer Mary Long, Trustee Tom Hall and Trustee Steve Kline

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

GUESTS PRESENT: Gary Bays, Cheryl Becker, Paul Becker, Elaine Hall, Jim Huovinen, Patty Jaeger, Brian Jaeger, Mel Jones, Sarah Kelly, Dan Steck, Tim Olson

AGENDA: The Notice of Public Hearing served as the agenda for the meeting.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING: Public hearing on the proposed revisions to the Water Service Ordinance and proposed new resolution on Water Service Regulation and Rates (Houghton Township Resolution 2023-2)

PRESENTATION: Steve Kline presented the background and history on the proposed revised Water Service Ordinance and new Resolution on Water Service Regulation and Rates and why these were separated into two documents. Water service regulation and rates likely need to be updated more frequently than is an ordinance and is easier to do as a Resolution than if embedded in an Ordinance. He explained the new water maintenance and service fees for residential versus commercial water users versus the old rates. The new rates will realize approximately \$20,000 additional to the water system account per year. The current rates are some of the lowest in the State and are the lowest in Keweenaw County.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Supervisor Chase read correspondence from one water system customer. Roger Kershner expressed via email prior to the meeting that the water rates are not high enough to support failing drinking water system infrastructure and that the ordinance was too extensive for a small township. The email correspondence is on file in the township office as a matter of public record.

Cheryl Becker asked who is considered the 'authorized employee of the Township' responsible for turning on and off the water, as outlined in the revised Ordinance. Mel Jones replied it is himself, as the Township Water System Supervisor.

Mel Jones indicated the previous rate increase was in 2008. He also summarized the history and condition of the water system.

Gary Bays expressed that 16 years is a long time to go without a rate increase and the system has worked well. Thus, a rate increase at this time is certainly justified given the age of the system.

Cheryl Becker mentioned that it seemed like additional rate increases may be necessary in the future, and it would be advantageous to inform water system users of this potential eventuality.

Dan Steck asked if the new fee structure is high enough to cover the types of repairs that have been needed to the existing system historically and Mel answered 'yes'.

Paul Becker and Tim Olson mentioned the documents were very well prepared. They thought it was wise to include clauses in the Ordinance that may seem irrelevant now but may be important at some time in the future.

Brian Jaeger asked if the rates were higher for those who are not full-time residents and for commercial customers. The answers were 'no' and 'yes', respectively.

There were no objections to the proposed new water rates.

Supervisor Chase and the Board thanked those present for their attendance and comments.

Houghton Township plans to adopt the revised Water Service Ordinance and new Water Service Regulations and Rates at the regular Board meeting on July 15, 2024. The Board also will decide when the new rates will go into effect.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Tom Hall, seconded by Mary Long. The meeting adjourned at 6:38 pm.

Linda Paradiso

Deputy Clerk, Houghton Township

-CERTIFICATION-

I, the undersigned, Linda Paradiso, the duly qualified deputy 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 special board public hearing held on July 8, 2024.

Linda Paradiso

Deputy Clerk, Houghton Township