

Meeting Minutes – January 8, 2024

Houghton County Recreation Authority

WUPPDR, 400 Quincy St 8th Floor, Hancock, MI

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm.

2. Roll call

Tim Gasperich, Chairperson, performed roll call:

- **Members present:**

- Tim Gasperich, Calumet Charter Township
- Keith Meyers, Chassell Township
- Mary Sears, Franklin Township
- Glenn Anderson, Houghton County
- Jeff Ratcliffe, KEDA
- Craig Hughes, Nonmotorized Interests
- Mark Halkola, Osceola Twp
- Bruce Peterson, Portage Charter Township
- Brad Barnett, Visit Keweenaw
- Jerald Wuorenmaa, WUPPDR

- **Members absent:**

- Andrew Ranville, Village of Calumet (*via video*)
- Rick Freeman, City of Hancock
- Eric Waara, City of Houghton

- **Others present:**

- Louise Hunt, DNR – McLain State Park
- Stephen C. Pummill, Lake Linden DDA
- Michael Stanitis, WUPPDR
- Chad VanBennekom, Keweenaw Trails Services (*became member where noted in minutes*)
- Jeff Kakuk, DNR (*via video*)
- Stacy Haughey, DNR (*via video*)
- Jared Hyrkas, OHM Advisors (*via video*)
- Kitty Beleck, Keweenaw Trails Services (*via video*)
- Zach Freyer (*via video*)
- Connie Julien (*via video*)
- Dan Dulong (*via video*)

3. Approval of agenda

Mary Sears moved to approve the agenda, supported by Jeff Ratcliffe. All in favor; motion carried.

4. Approval of minutes (October 9, 2023)

Mark Halkola moved to approve the agenda, supported by Keith Meyers. All in favor; motion carried.

5. Consideration of potential motorized representative: Chad VanBennekom

Glenn Anderson moved to appoint Chad VanBennekom as the board representative of motorized interests, supported by Brad Barnett. All in favor; motion carried.

Chad VanBennekom began participation as board member representing motorized interests.

6. DNR/trails update

Jeff Kakuk provided updates on:

- Trail culvert issues
- High priority of reopening the Freda trail
- FEMA grant application related to the Bill Nichols multiuse trail and Adams Township water main, which had been resubmitted and is more favorable due to economic impact report provided by Ratcliffe; project cost \$7 million
- Expectation, after working with Superior Snowmobile Club in Baraga, that Trail 109 would reopen next season
- Logging impacts on Trails UP 24 & UP 14

7. Municipal member contributions – discussion

Tim Gasperich and Jerald Wuorenmaa asked for feedback on a request for member governments to make financial contributions of \$100 to \$200 each to cover future incidental expenses of the Authority, since currently it has no funds. Specific uses of potential contributions were not yet known. Members were asked to have their governing bodies consider their willingness to make contributions. No further action was suggested, pending more information about budget and audit implications.

8. FY2024 General Appropriations Act – budget adoption

Wuorenmaa explained that the Authority is required by law to adopt a budget, which may be referred to as the General Appropriations Act. Anderson moved to adopt the FY2024 General Appropriations Act, supported by Brad Barnett. All in favor; motion carried.

9. Financial audit requirement

Wuorenmaa explained the apparent requirement for the Authority to receive a biennial financial audit and that he was exploring options, with input from WUPPDR's auditor.

10. Keweenaw Trails Services and ATV Club updates – Chad V.

VanBennekom provided updates on Keweenaw Trails Services and Keweenaw ATV Club.

11. Member updates

- Ratcliffe: KEDA’s annual report would be presented at a meeting on Wednesday.
- Meyers:
 - Hancock Trails Club is near securing easements for the Hancock trails.
 - Working with DNR and KEDA on potential removal of Chassell-Arnheim rail grade track to develop a trail
 - Chassell Township is proceeding with its DNR Spark grant.
 - Assisting with potential Copper Shores Health Foundation grant application by Baraga County Convention and Visitors Bureau (Barb McEwen) for a canoe and kayak launch at the Otter Lake Outlet
 - Chassell public meeting is scheduled for 6 pm February 8 regarding the Sturgeon River kayak launch project.
- Craig Hughes: Swedetown Trails would be submitting a grant application and would request a letter of support from the Authority.
 - Ratcliffe moved to authorize the requested letter, supported by Anderson. All in favor; motion carried. Hughes would provide a sample.
- Bruce Peterson: Portage Township Recreation Plan would be finalized in February.
- Barnett: Visit Keweenaw would soon be releasing its Destination Development Program grant opportunity and would distribute notice to the Authority, which itself would be eligible to apply.

12. Other business

Wuorenmaa and Barnett suggested that the Recreation Authority consider priority projects for 2024, including continuation of Houghton Douglass Falls project and engineering for Hancock-Lake Linden nonmotorized trail.

In response to question by Wuorenmaa, Kakuk reminded that the Authority needs to provide a cost estimate from an engineer to submit with the grant application for the trail design [earlier referred to as “scoping”]. Jared Hyrkas indicated he might be able to provide the estimate.

13. Public comment (three-minute limit)

- Stephen Pummill mentioned Lake Linden is updating its five-year recreation plan and considering how to incorporate the trails there.
- Connie Julien mentioned the North Country Trail’s presence in the area.

14. Adjourn

Wuorenmaa moved to adjourn, supported by Halkola. All in favor; motion carried.