

# Berrien County Finance Committee

## Board of Commissioners Room

Held Virtually Due to Covid-19

Minutes of February 4, 2021

### Finance Committee Attendance:

Commissioner Mamie L. Yarbrough–Chairperson (Via Zoom-BH City)	<b>Present</b>
Commissioner Jon Hinkelman – Vice-Chair (Via Phone-Bainbridge Twp.)	<b>Present</b>
Commissioner Ezra Scott (Via Zoom-New Buffalo Twp.)	<b>Present</b>
Commissioner Teri Freehling – (Via Zoom-Baroda Twp.)	<b>Present</b>

**Others Present:** County Administrator Brian Dissette, Secretary Stephanie Carlson, Executive Assistant to Administrator Annette Christie, and Financial Services Director Doug James.

Meeting was called to order at 9:00am.

**Public Comments:** Tony Benhart, Sodus Twp. – Happy that it has finally come out that MIBid isn't always the best. MIDeal is just an easy way to buy without specs being written.

**Q&A Administrator** - Administrator Dissette briefly discussed the Purchasing Policy and the practices of the county since COVID started in the spring. He stated that staff has been communicating via email with the bid documents, which has been working, but said that a committee member had brought to his attention. Since Finance is meeting on a regular basis, should we look at the policy as to whether the Finance Committee needs to look at these bids before going out to bid? Since the use of virtual meetings, Finance Department has reached out to the Finance Committee alerting them with any documents going out to bid. When the bids come back, the bid opening was viewed in open meetings.

Brian turned it over to Doug to go over some of the changes. Doug said he would like to break down the current Purchasing Policy in to 3 separate policies; Vendor Management, Purchasing Policy, and Competitive Bidding and Proposals. Doug stated that he didn't see anything in the accounting regulations saying that the bids had to go to committee for approval before going out for bid, although that is something that the county has always done and briefly went over it.

Brian asked the committee what their comfort level was on how we take things out for bid. There was a brief discussion and the committee agreed they didn't feel they needed to see the bids before going out for bid. Commissioner Scott questioned whether there should be a policy for signing documents, because since COVID, the committee isn't signing documents. Commissioner Freehling suggested giving the committee a list of what's going out for bid like what's done with the requisitions. Administrator Dissette followed up on some of the comments from the committee and said that the Chair is physically coming in to sign documents on behalf of the board, however, he doesn't know when zoom will stop and everyone physically comes back in. He will work with Judge Dewane to put together a policy on Virtual meetings and everything associated. He said Annette has been making it work

really well but there is not a formal policy that addresses the current pandemic situation and meeting structure. Brian continued going over the changes to be made to the policy and asked the committee if they were comfortable with the changes mentioned and he will bring a draft back to the committee for approval. There was a brief discussion. Brian and Doug followed up on the comments, and said the general consensus is for lower cost standard bid items, if we notify the committee, there's a level of comfort, for higher cost capital improvement purchases, we need to notify and get consent to proceed. He will work with Doug on the language and come back to the Finance Committee in a couple weeks.

Next, Brian put up a draft copy of a "Request for Waiver of Competitive Bidding" form and Doug briefly went over it. Brian said he and Doug have been talking about MIDeal and they aren't always the lowest price. The committee liked the form and asked that it be emailed to them to take a better look at it. Commissioner Scott was questioning some purchases by the Road Department and didn't think this document would pertain to them. Doug said he disagreed and said that it would apply to all departments, including the Road Department. He said he would finalize the edits to the form and get it out to the Finance Committee later today and then will work with Doug on the edits for the Purchasing Policy to be taken to the board for formal adoption.

### **Committee Business**

#### **Resolutions signed by Committee:**

F2101017 – Approval of Weekly Bills

F2102110 – Road Payables

The committee gave concurrence to move the above resolutions to the full board for action.

#### **Minutes Approval:**

Commissioner Scott motioned to approve the virtual minutes from Thursday, January 28, 2021, supported by Commissioner Freehling. Roll call vote: 4 yays, 0 nays. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:56

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Carlson

Financial Services