

BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Virtual Board Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2021

Staff Present: County Administrator Brian Dissette
Clerk Sharon Tyler
Executive Assistant to the Administrator Annette Christie

BOC Present: Chairperson R. McKinley Elliott
(In-person) David Vollrath

CHAIRMAN TO CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:

Chairperson R. McKinley Elliott called the virtual regular meeting to order at 10:34 A.M. in the Board of Commissioners' (BOC) room at the Berrien County Administration Center, 701 Main Street, St. Joseph, Michigan.

INVOCATION:

Commissioner Jon Hinkelman gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

Commissioner Michael Majerek led us in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

ROLL CALL:

The Chair instructed the Clerk to take a roll call with the following results:

12 PRESENT: Rayonte Bell (via Zoom in St. Joseph City, MI), Jim Curran (via Zoom in Winter Haven, FL), Teri Sue Freehling (via Zoom in Baroda Township, MI), Robert Harrison (via Zoom in Lincoln Charter Township, MI), Jon Hinkelman (via Zoom in Watervliet, MI), Michael Majerek (via Zoom in Niles, MI), Don Meeks (via Zoom in Benton Charter Township, MI), Ezra Scott (via Zoom in New Buffalo Township, MI), David Vollrath, Julie Wuerfel (via Zoom in Royalton Township, MI), Mamie Yarbrough (via Zoom in Benton Harbor City, MI) and R. McKinley Elliott.

0 ABSENT.

APPROVE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 25, 2021 MEETING:

Commissioner Vollrath moved and supported by Commissioner Meeks, to approve the BOC virtual regular meeting minutes of February 25, 2021.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call the roll with the following results:

12 YEAS: Curran, Freehling, Harrison, Hinkelman, Majerek, Meeks, Scott, Vollrath, Wuerfel, Yarbrough, Bell and Elliott.

Motion carried, no nays.

COMMUNICATION(S):

County Clerk Sharon Tyler received and distributed to the Board the following communications:

- Ostego County Board of Commissioners, a pandemic resolution, received on February 25, 2021.
- Sara Duris, Watervliet, an email regarding Jason Latham, received on February 25, 2021.
- Margaret Van Dyke, Niles, an email regarding the Letter to the Governor, received on February 26, 2021.
- Joann Stone, Stevensville, an email regarding Berrien Bus, received on February 26, 2021.

- Crawford County Board of Commissioners, a resolution supporting local businesses, received on February 26, 2021.
- Robert Burgess, Stevensville, an email regarding COVID relief, received on February 26, 2021.
- St. Joseph Charter Township Board, an email supporting Jason Latham, received on March 2, 2021.

PRESENTATION(S) – Trial Court Administrator Carrie Smietanka-Haney

Trial Court Administrator Carrie Smietanka-Haney gave a Trial Court update regarding COVID-19. The court has been approved to move to Phase 3 of the Return to Full Capacity Guide, effective Monday, March 8th. The court may begin holding jury trials and will allow walk-in filings. Discussion was held.

COMMITTEE REPORT(S):

- **Personnel & Human Services Committee**
- **Finance Committee**

The Personnel & Human Services and Finance Committees presented their Committee Report. Discussion was held. Parent Committee minutes are available at www.berriencounty.org.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING RESOLUTIONS - Public comments at this portion of the meeting must be related to resolutions listed on today’s agenda only. Those speaking through the You Tube chat during public comments shall identify themselves by name (including last name) and city, township, or village. The public should refer to the resolution # that they are commenting on as a part of their comments: **None**.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Chairperson Elliott recommended that Resolution #P2103177 be moved from Added Resolution(s) and to be included on the Consent Calendar.

Commissioner Curran moved and supported by Commissioner Scott, to move Added Resolution(s) #P210377 to the Consent Calendar, and to approve today’s Consent Calendar as presented:

<u>Resolutions #</u>	<u>Description</u>
F2103021	Weekly Bills
B2103068	Weekly Requisitions
F2103112	Road Payables
P2103177	Approve agreement with Lake Michigan College for event space

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call the roll with the following results:

12 YEAS: Freehling, Harrison, Hinkelman, Majerek, Meeks, Scott, Vollrath, Wuerfel, Yarbrough, Bell, Curran and Elliott.

Motion carried, no nays.

ADDED RESOLUTION(S):

Resolution #P2103177 - Approve agreement with Lake Michigan College for event space was moved to the Consent Calendar.

COMMISSIONER REPORT(S):

The Commissioners presented their outside Commissioners’ Reports. Discussion was held.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT: None.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS – Those speaking through the You Tube chat during public comments shall identify themselves by name (including last name) and city, township, or village:

Leroy Jenkins, Coloma Charter Township, commented on broadband and increasing high speed internet by satellite.

William Gordon, St. Joseph Charter Township, commented on the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

Alex Riley, Coloma Charter Township, requested an update on Jason Latham and supports him.

Babu Frik, St. Joseph Charter Township, commented on personal rights.

Tony Benhart, Sodus Township, commented on Jason Latham and the Road Department.

Adolf Peltzer, Hagar Township, commented on restrictions by the pandemic and asked why he has to wear a face mask at the gym.

Bruce Binger, Benton Charter Township/Benton Harbor, supports Jason Latham and the Road Department.

Jake Corns, Royalton Charter Township, asked if the County can move forward independently or do we need go by the epidemic orders.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Per the Public Comment by Leroy Jenkins, Commissioner Freehling spoke about the broadband survey and the deadline will be March 26th to have it completed. She discussed possible grants for broadband.

Commissioner Freehling asked Administrator Brian Dissette to give the Board an update on the recent Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) epidemic orders. Administrator Dissette highlighted the two orders, allowing for increased capacity limits at various venues, larger residential and nonresidential gatherings and expanded visitation opportunities at residential care facilities. The new changes to the gatherings and mask order go into effect Friday, March 5th, and remain in effect through Monday, April 19th. The Board discussed writing another letter or resolution to the Governor regarding the rationale of their approach. Discussion was held.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS:

Chairperson Elliott announced the following:

- Finance Committee meeting to be held virtually next Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 8:30 A.M.
- BOC Meeting will be held virtually next Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 10:30 A.M.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 A.M.

R. McKinley Elliott, Chairperson

Sharon J. Tyler, County Clerk

Minutes are to be approved at the next BOC meeting.