

TO THE HONORABLE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF BERRIEN COUNTY: Your County Administration Committee respectfully recommends the adoption of the following:

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, the Berrien County Public Defender's Office and the Berrien County Trial Court support the idea of implementing best practices in providing quality legal representation to families involved in Child Protective proceedings in Berrien County; and

WHEREAS, the model of pairing a social worker with an attorney representing a parent in a Child Protective proceeding, as a collaborative team, has proven to be an effective way to deliver quality legal representation to families; and

WHEREAS, the Berrien County Trial Court has applied for grant funding for the period of October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021 of approximately \$130,000 through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and Title IV-E that could be used to fund social worker(s) in this capacity; and

WHEREAS, said grant funding would be sufficient to hire two part-time social workers on an independent contractor basis at a total estimated cost of \$55,000 each; and

WHEREAS, legal representation is provided to indigent parents in Berrien County Child Protective proceedings by a group of private attorneys who have entered into a contract with Berrien County for the provision of these legal services; and

WHEREAS, said contract for legal services is monitored and supervised by the Berrien County Public Defender's Office; and

WHEREAS, the Berrien County Public Defender's Office is willing to assist in implementing the social workers/attorney model by developing a contract for this purpose, assisting in interviewing/selecting potential independent contractors and monitoring the contract entered into between Berrien County and the independent contracting social worker(s); and

WHEREAS, the social workers would not be provided an office, access to case management software or equipment by the Berrien County Public Defender's office and would be responsible for providing their own space and equipment; and

WHEREAS, the contract for social worker services has been reviewed and approved by County Corporate Counsel.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Berrien County Board of Commissioners is supportive of this practice of pairing contracted social workers with contracted attorneys representing families involved in Child Protective proceedings and authorizes the Chairperson to enter into a one year contract effective October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,
BERRIEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE



Jim Curran, Chair



Michael J. Majerek, Vice Chair



Don Meeks



Chris Heugel

RESOLUTION APPROVED AS TO FORM	
Administrator 	Date <u>8-26</u>
Comments Attached _____	
Corporate Counsel 	Date <u>8-26/20</u>
Comments Attached _____	