

BERRIEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
Minutes of January 23, 2020

Present: Jim Curran, Chair
Michael Majerek, Vice Chair
Chris Heugel

Absent: Don Meeks Sr.

Scheduled: Chris Renna, Public Defender
Bill Wolf, County Administration
Mac Elliott, BOC Chair

Others: Sheriff Bailey, BCSD
Undersheriff Heit, BCSD
Elvin Gonzalez, Family Division
Tony Benhart, Public
Mike Haskins, Public
Darren Schaer, Public

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 9:25 am.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Heugel, supported by Majerek, to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2020 meeting.
Motion Carried.

Added to Agenda: Sheriff - Millage Enhancement Request

Sheriff Bailey discussed the enhancement request for the Public Safety millage in regards to the budgetary concerns Commissioners had. Bailey stated the increase would take the millage from 0.35 to 0.45. Undersheriff Heit reviewed the financials, positions and special teams all covered. Bailey stated some of the millage goes to courts, treatment programs, drug lab and the marine division. With the millage enhancement, there would be a reduction in overtime. May 12 is the deadline to have it added to the August ballot. The Committee concurred to approve the FBI position and send the request to PHSC.

Public Defender Update

Renna distributed photos of the new office space. They expect to occupy it within the next two weeks. The 1st Quarter report is not due for a few more weeks, but he anticipates being under budget due to costlier items happening later in the year. He reviewed the arraignments and case files numbers. The numbers are average for a typical quarter. He reported the 8 days of in-house training of the new attorneys were successful. He was also able to get free furniture for the Niles office from a local business. Renna's last day will be March 20. He appreciates the support of the elected officials as Berrien County continues to be a model for other counties.

Added to Agenda: Juvenile Center Resolutions

Gonzalez reviewed the 3 resolutions before the Committee. He also discussed the need for a training center to be constructed at the Juvenile Center as the old, mobile unit has been removed and the old Lakeland building has been torn down. The training is essential as it involves scenarios of disruptive and violent juveniles and how to hand the situations.

Q & A with Bill Wolf and BOC Chair Elliott

Elliott confirmed the consent calendar. Heugel was appointed to the interview committee for Renna's replacement.

Resolutions

The following Resolutions were approved and signed:

A2002154 – Approve the Professional Services Agreement for sustaining the Multi-Systemic Therapy and Multi-Systemic Therapy-Problem Sexual Behavior programs for 2020.

A2002155 – Approve the Professional Services Agreement for providing on-site outpatient psychiatric services to youth placed at the Juvenile Center for 2020.

A2002158 – Approve agreement with Correctional Healthcare Companies.

A2001159 – Support of MDOT's plan for Benton Charter Township road improvements related to the US-31 bypass project.

Public Comment

Tony Benhart, Sodus Township – In regards to the resolution for the Empire bridge, someone is lying. The Township Police and Fire are against it. Curran read the letter of support written by Benton Charter Township officials. Benhart then asked where the Road Department is getting so much money to purchase equipment, referring to the requisition list.

Mike Haskins, Pipestone Township – Why the rush on the Empire issue? These plans started last year, so it's not necessary to rush it through. It will be cheap paving for a short term fix. Elliott stated if it is not mission critical, it can wait.

Darren Schaer, Pipestone Township – The Sheriff says he wants to raise the millage. If everyone can carry a gun, why the need for more deputies? If the Sheriff found money in his budget, why increase the millage? Is the 2nd Amendment group that requested the resolution only doing this in Berrien County? Curran stated the resolution is letting the governor know that the County supports the State and U.S. Constitutions in regards to Second Amendment rights.

Meeting adjourned at 10:18 am.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jennifer Arent