

**BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMISSIONERS**  
**Virtual Board Meeting Minutes**  
**July 23, 2020**

**Staff Present:** Chief Deputy Clerk Diane Mensinger  
Annette Christie, Executive Assistant to the Administrator  
Brian Dissette, County Administrator  
Community Development Director Dan Fette  
Equalization Director Warren Parrish  
FOC Director Tom Watson  
I/S Personnel – Braeden Wilson and Russ Beland

**BOC Present:** Vice-Chairperson Ezra Scott

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON TO CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER**

Vice-Chairperson Scott called the meeting to order at 10:30 A.M. in the Board of Commissioners' (BOC) room at the Berrien Administration Center, 701 Main Street, St. Joseph, Michigan.

**INVOCATION:**

Commissioner Mamie Yarbrough gave the invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:**

Chief Deputy Clerk Diane Mensinger led us in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

**ROLL CALL:**

The Vice-Chairperson instructed the Clerk to take a roll call with the following results:

11 PRESENT: Bob Harrison, Ezra Scott, Don Meeks, Michael Majerek, Dave Vollrath, Mamie Yarbrough, Jon Hinkelman, Jim Curran, Chris Heugel, Bill Chickering, and Teri Freehling.

1 ABSENT: Mac Elliott

**APPROVE MINUTES OF THE JULY 16, 2020 VIRTUAL MEETING:**

Commissioner Heugel moved, supported by Commissioner Majerek, to approve the minutes of the July 16, 2020 Meeting.

The Vice-Chairperson instructed the Clerk to take the roll with the following results:

11 YEAS: Yarbrough, Harrison, Hinkelman, Scott, Chickering, Vollrath, Freehling, Curran, Heugel, Majerek and Meeks.

Motion carried, no nays.

**COMMUNICATION(S):**

- Email received from Government Liaison Officer Allan Barker, USNRC Region III, on the 2019 safety performance of the Donald C. Cook nuclear power plant. They will be holding a virtual public meeting on July 21, 2020 from 6:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M., received on July 20, 2020.

**PARENT COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- Personnel and Human Services – Discussed three resolutions regarding complement changes in FOC (Res # P2007300), Equalization (Res # P2007297) and the Health Department (Res #P2007291).
- Administration
  - Discussed the Resolution A2007299 for the Courts to apply for a grant for x-ray machines for the courthouses.
  - They also shared information that there are approximately 115 pending felony jury trials that are backlogged due to the Governor's Executive Order that does not allow for large crowds to gather in one inside location. The Jury Assembly Room does not allow enough space for the large number of people needed for a jury pool. The Courts are requesting approval to rent the Vineland Center for remote jury selection. There are substantial costs involving rent, technology, security presence, etc. in the amount of approximately \$60,000. The Administration Committee said to proceed into looking into this arrangement in case the Governor's Executive Order has not been lifted. Administrator Dissette stated that there is a chance that the CARES Act funds might be able to be used for reimbursement.
  - Discussed the Resolution A2007296 for Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant.
  - Discussed recommendation that the BOC approve an additional \$5,000 for security services at the Administration Building which would cover through the end of August, 2020.
- Finance
  - Discussion regarding the bidding process. It was suggested to develop a process to create a history of when the lowest bidder is not awarded a bid. It was also suggested that when the COVID-19 pandemic is over, that local businesses be included in the bidding process and not just use the MiDeal program.

Parent Committee minutes are available at [www.berriencounty.org](http://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:** None

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

Executive Assistant to the Administrator Christie announced that as a result of the Finance Committee meeting being held prior to the Board meeting, Resolution B2007086 is being amended to include requisition #44393 in the amount of \$54,662.50 resulting in a total Resolution amount of \$437,432.51.

\*Commissioner Freehling abstained from voting on the Requisition 44729 included on Resolution B2007086.

\*\* Commissioner Yarbrough abstained from voting on Check #207324 included on the Road Department's Accounts Payable Voucher #15 on Resolution #F2007122.

Commissioner Curran moved, supported by Commissioner Harrison, to approve the Consent Calendar as presented including the change to the amount of Resolution B2007086 to \$437,432.51.

<u>Resolution #</u>	<u>Description</u>
F2007040	Weekly Bills
B2007086	Weekly Requisitions
F2007122	Road Payables
P2007291	Complement Change Health Dept. - Family Program Manager
A2007296	2019-2020 Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant
P2007297	Complement Change Equalization – Add Appraiser
2007299	RAP Grant Application Replacement - X-ray Machines
P2007300	Complement Change FOC
P2007302	CPBC Amendment – Increase in Funding
P2007303	FY2021 CPBC Agreement
B2007304	CARES ACT Funding Request

The Vice-Chairperson instructed the Clerk to take the roll with the following results:

11 Yeas: Harrison, Hinkelman, Scott, Chickering, Vollrath, Freehling\*, Curran, Heugel, Majerek, Meeks and Yarbrough\* \*.

**DISCUSSION: Oakland County – Dan Fette, Community Development Director**

Director Fette discussed a Michigan State Supreme Court decision regarding a foreclosure sale in Oakland County. The landowner (plaintiff) sued the County

because the taxes owed were less than \$10 and the County sold the property at a large profit and put the money in their general fund. The plaintiff stated that he should have received the money left after taxes were paid. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiff. There are other similar cases in the courts at this time.

Our Blight and Demolition Program here in Berrien County is on hold now. While Berrien County does not put any profit of sales into the general fund, it does go into a special Foreclosure fund designed to cover blight and demolitions. Local municipalities have a say in which foreclosed properties in their jurisdiction should be demolished. The Land Bank Authority is a partner in this program as well.

Attorney John Axe will be here on August 6, 2020 to discuss the situation with the Board of Commissioners. Commissioners should submit any questions they have on this topic to Administrator Dissette prior to August 6<sup>th</sup>.

**COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

Individual Commissioner Reports were forgone until the August 6<sup>th</sup> BOC meeting so that the Broadband Committee could give a report today.

Administrator Dissette stated that the committee continues to work with the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission on this issue and hopes to bring a full detailed report to the Board on August 6<sup>th</sup>.

**ADMINISTRATOR REPORT: Brian Dissette, County Administrator**

Administrator Dissette stated that the County received great news last night from State leaders. They have approved that State Revenue Sharing, which had been cut to \$97,000,000 statewide will now be funded with COVID-19 funding and is up to \$150,000,000.

**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.**

- Tony Benhart, Sodus Township – Thanked the Finance Committee for the new process for the Road Department bidding and gave comments about MiDeal.
- Cheryl Marie of the Lynch Family, New Buffalo Township - Suggested the Board create a resolution regarding the wearing of masks.
- Eric Lester, St. Joseph Township – Thanked the Board for making the meeting available online. He also commented on the fact that Broadband is not just a geographical issue but also a financial issue for low income residents.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Salary Study – Discussion was held as to the makeup of the membership of the Committee on Committees. The following are the are on the committee: Commissioners Chickering, Curran, Yarbrough, Scott and Elliott along with Administrator Dissette, HR Director Shelley Jasper, Clerk’s Office Representative, Court Representative and Health Department Representative.

Commissioner Scott discussed the following:

- As of last Friday, the County is no longer under the Emergency Declaration. Our EOC is still continuing to meet but with a slightly different focus in order to stay on top of things with COVID-19.
- Now that Administrator Dissette would like committees to start meeting on a weekly basis, committees need to move forward again with Admin Policy 51-80 regarding resolutions coming before the Board.

Budget Meetings – Administrator Dissette and Executive Administrative Assistant Christie discussed schedule options for upcoming virtual budget meetings in September. Consensus was to have Administrator Dissette to work out a schedule to present to the Board on August 6<sup>th</sup>.

**ANNOUNCEMENT/REMINDERS**

- No Board of Commissioner meetings – Thursday, July 30, 2020.
- Finance Committee will meet virtually next week with time and day to be determined.
- Thursday, August 6, 2020 – originally scheduled for a night meeting – will be held at the regular time of 10:30 a.m. and will be held virtually at the Administration Center.
- Thursday, September 10, 2020 – originally scheduled for a night meeting – will be held at the regular time of 10:30 a.m. and will be held virtually at the Administration Center.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:52 P.M.

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Ezra Scott, Vice-Chairperson

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Diane Mensinger, Chief Deputy Clerk