

**BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Virtual Board Meeting Minutes**  
**January 21, 2021**

**Staff Present:** County Administrator Brian Dissette  
Executive Assistant to the Administrator Annette Christie  
Chief Deputy Clerk Diane Mensinger

**BOC Present:** Chairperson R. McKinley Elliott  
(in-person)

**CHAIRMAN TO CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:**

Chairperson Elliott called the virtual regular meeting to order at 10:32 A.M. in the Board of Commissioners' (BOC) room at the Berrien County Administration Center, 701 Main Street, St. Joseph, Michigan.

**INVOCATION:**

District 6 Commissioner Julie Wuerfel gave the invocation.

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

District 4 Commissioner Rayonte Bell led us in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

**ROLL CALL:**

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

12 PRESENT: Rayonte Bell (via Zoom in City of St. Joseph, MI), Jim Curran (via Zoom in Niles, MI), Teri 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, Benton Charter Township, MI), Ezra Scott (via Zoom in New Buffalo Township, MI), David Vollrath (via Zoom in Coloma, MI), Julie Wuerfel (via Zoom in Royalton Township, MI), Mamie Yarbrough (via Zoom in City of Benton Harbor, MI) and R. McKinley Elliott.

0 ABSENT.

**APPROVE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 14, 2021 MEETING:**

Commissioner Majerek moved, seconded by Commissioner Meeks, to approve the BOC virtual meeting minutes of January 14, 2021.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call the roll resulting as follows:

12 YEAS: Curran, Freehling, Harrison, Hinkelman, Majerek, Meeks, Scott, Vollrath, Wuerfel, Yarbrough, Bell and Elliott. Motion carried, no nays.

**COMMUNICATION(S):**

Chief Deputy Clerk Diane Mensinger received and distributed the following communications:

- Vicki Schroeder, City of Benton Harbor, MI – email received on January 15, 2021 - commented on adhering to the Governor's indoor dining extension.
- Sharon Davarn, City of St. Joseph, MI – email received on January 15, 2021 - commented on adhering to the Governor's indoor dining extension.
- Rev. Sid Mohn, Baroda Township, MI – email received on January 19, 2021 - commented on supporting the State's Public Health Directives.

- Patty Nowlin, Midwest Energy & Communications, Cassopolis, MI - email received on January 19, 2021 commented on the Broadband Study and the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction.
- Karen Laetz, St. Joseph, MI – email received on January 20, 2021 - commented on adhering to the Governor’s and the MDHHS COVID-19 guidelines.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

**Health Department COVID-19 Update - Nicki Britten, Health Director**

Director Britten gave updates on COVID-19 and on the vaccination process. Discussion followed.

**800 MHz Update – Caitlin Sampsell, 911 Director**

Director Sampsell gave an update on the 800 MHz Public Safety Radio Systems. Discussion followed.

**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:**

Commissioner Bell moved, seconded by Commissioner Meeks, to approve today’s Consent Calendar as presented:

<u>Resolutions #</u>	<u>Description</u>
F2101015	Weekly Bills
B2101061	Weekly Requisitions
F2101108	Road Payables

The Chair instructed the Clerk to take 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):** None.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

The Administration Committee and Finance Committee presented their Committee Reports. Parent Committee minutes are available at [www.berriencounty.org](http://www.berriencounty.org).

**BOARD APPOINTMENTS:**

Finance Committee:

Commissioner Yarbrough moved, seconded by Commissioner Freehling, to appoint the following:

- Kathy Valdes to the Workforce Development Board to fill the term of Kathy Miller for the MDHHS position – Term Expiring on 12/31/2021;
- Matthew Moser to the Planning Commission – Term Expiring on 12/31/2023;
- Gary Wood to the Planning Commission – Term Expiring 12/31/2021;
- Chris Heugel to the Planning Commission – Term Expiring 12/31/2021;
- Arthur Havlicek to the Planning Commission – Term Expiring 12/21/2023.

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

12 YEAS: Harrison, Hinkelman, Majerek, Meeks, Scott, Vollrath, Wuerfel, Yarbrough, Bell, Curran, Freehling and Elliott. Motion carried, no nays.

**COMMISSIONER REPORT(S):**

The Commissioners presented their outside Commissioners' Reports.

**ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:**

Administrator Brian Disette gave his Administrator's Report.

**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:**

- Adolf Pelzer, Hagar Township – stated he misses the opportunity to speak for two minutes during public comments. He also inquired about the side effects of the COVID vaccination.
- Tony Benhart, Sodus Township - commented on road commission expenditures.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** None.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS:**

- Merit will host an informational webinar on January 25th at 8:30 A.M. The public can contact <https://www.merit.edu/event/berrien-county-data-collection-informational-webinar/> to attend the informational webinar.
- Administration Committee will meet at 9:00 A.M. on Wednesday, January 27, 2021.
- Finance Committee meeting will be held at 9:00 A.M. on Thursday, January 28, 2021.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:12 P.M.

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R. McKinley Elliott, Chairperson

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Diane Mensinger, Chief Deputy Clerk

***Minutes are to be approved at the next BOC meeting.***