

BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
August 19, 2021

CHAIRMAN TO CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:

Chairperson R. McKinley Elliott called the regular meeting to order at 6:05 P.M. at the Chikaming Township Hall/Fire Department, 13535 Red Arrow Highway, Harbert, Michigan.

INVOCATION:

Pastor Rob Nash, Sawyer Highlands Church, gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

Chikaming Township Supervisor David Bunte 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:

11 PRESENT: Rayonte Bell, Jim Curran, Robert Harrison, Jon Hinkelman, Michael Majerek, Don Meeks (Arrived at 6:12 P.M.), Ezra Scott, David Vollrath (Left at 7:44 P.M.), Julie Wuerfel, Mamie Yarbrough and R. McKinley Elliott.

1 ABSENT: Teri Sue Freehling.

APPROVE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 12, 2021 MEETING:

Commissioner Scott moved and supported by Commissioner Vollrath, to approve the BOC regular meeting minutes of August 12, 2021. Motion carried and no nays.

COMMUNICATION(S):

County Clerk Sharon Tyler received and distributed to the Board the following communication(s):

- Mackinac County Board of Commissioners, a resolution in support of Delta County Resolution of Management of Wolves in Michigan, received on August 13, 2021.
- Kathy Randolph, Union Pier, MI, an email in support of the development of a linear park along Red Arrow Highway, received on August 16, 2021.
- Emails received on August 17, 2021 – in support of the linear park:
 - Claudia Parish, Harbert, MI.
 - Anne L. Smith, Harbert, MI.
 - Louis Price, Union Pier, MI.
- Emails received on August 18, 2021 – in support of the linear park:
 - Dennis Snow, Sawyer, MI.
 - Brandon Nelson, Harbert, MI.
 - Benjamin Almquist, Union Pier, MI.
- Emails received on August 18, 2021 – in support of requiring schools to mandate masks:
 - Kristen Robinson, St. Joseph Charter Township, MI.
 - Sarah Helms, Bridgman, MI.
 - June Bowman, St. Joseph, MI.
 - Emily Heenan, St. Joseph, MI.
- Emails received on August 19, 2021 – in support of requiring schools to mandate masks:
 - Jacquelyn Lin, Stevensville, MI.
 - Molly and Blayne Smith, Lincoln Charter Township, MI.

- Bill Marske, Chikaming Township Trustee, an email thanking the BOC for their help and support, received on August 19, 2021.
- Rose Williams, BOC District 6, an email for freedom of choice on wearing masks in schools, received on August 19, 2021.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

Administrator Brian Dissette introduced the following special guest speakers for our “Red Arrow Gateway Developing a Comprehensive Vision” presentation:

- Kevin Stack, Road Department Engineering Supervisor
- Chris Cook, Interim Road Department Director
- Marcy Hamilton, Deputy Executive Director/Senior Planner SWMPC

REQUISITION REVIEW:

Executive Administrative Assistant Annette Christie presented the requisitions to the Board for their review.

PRESENTATION – RED ARROW GATEWAY:

Road Department Engineering Supervisor Kevin Stack gave a PowerPoint presentation on the “Red Arrow Gateway Developing a Comprehensive Vision” and spoke about the following:

- Background Information.
- Entities Involved in Red Arrow Gateway.
- Red Arrow Gateway Plan: Red Arrow Highway - State Line to Bridgman.
 - State Line to Grand Beach Road.
 - Marquette Greenway.
 - Marquette Greenway to Union Pier.
 - Union Pier to Main Drive.
 - Main Drive to Sawyer Road.
 - Sawyer Road to Bridgman.
- Community Dialogue.
- Economic & Social Benefits of Trails.
- Safety Benefits of Road Diets.
- Safety Benefits of Trails.
- Capacity Concerns of Road Diet.
- Funding Opportunities - Deputy Executive Director/Senior Planner SWMPC Marcy Hamilton spoke on funding opportunities.

Interim Road Department Director Chris Cook was available for the presentation to answer any questions and for the discussion.

Discussion was held.

Commissioner Scott asked about the four to three lanes and the non-motorized pathway. He wanted more clarification on who is responsible for the path. Kevin Stack responded that a district could be created and an agreement could be created between the Township and the County regarding responsibilities as a partnership.

Commissioner Yarbrough asked if the American Rescue Fund can be used for the project. Administrator Dissette responded yes, but the rules have not been finalized at this time.

Chairperson Elliott opened the discussion for public comments. The following individuals spoke about the trail:

- Susan Stephens, Harbert, MI.
- Darth Taylor, Harbert, MI.
- J. V. Peacock, Sawyer, MI.
- Jill Underwood, Harbert, MI.
- John Chipman, Harbert, MI.
- Cynthia Brookside, Lakeside, MI.

- Keith Ellis, Sawyer, MI.
- Bob Clark, Lake Charter Township, MI.
- Joe Sipkick, Harbert, MI.

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 during public comments may do so no longer than two minutes and shall identify themselves by name and city, township, or village. (Article III, 3.9B-C): None.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Commissioner Vollrath moved and supported by Commissioner Harrison, to approve today's Consent Calendar as presented:

<u>Resolutions #</u>	<u>Description</u>
P2108008	Monthly Per Diems
F2108043	Weekly Bills
B2108090	Weekly Requisitions
F2108124	Road Payables
P2108268	Comprehensive Agreement FY21-22
P2108298	ELPH Funding for COVID related expenses
P2108300	Acknowledge receipt of Compensation Study
A2108301	Approve Traffic Control Order

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

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

Motion carried, no nays.

ADDED RESOLUTION(S): None.

COMMITTEE REPORT(S) – Personnel & Human Services Committee:

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

COMMISSIONER REPORT(S):

The Commissioners presented their outside Commissioners' Reports.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS - Those speaking during public comments may do so no longer than two minutes and shall identify themselves by name and city, township, or village. (Article III, 3.9B-C):

Amy Foster, Lincoln Charter Township, spoke about the Health Department and they are going to demand masks after the fair. Also, she supports the choice to wear masks in schools.

Mannie Watkins, Lincoln Charter Township, spoke about the importance of facial expressions.

Kevin Byrd, BOC District 7, spoke about the BOC supporting the Health Department in their decisions.

Chokwe Pitchford, Benton Harbor, spoke about children and the need for child care.

Melissa Clapper, Benton Harbor, asked if the Health Department has the authority to demand that we wear masks and if the Health Department recommends masks be worn, the BOC should comply.

Bette Pierman, Benton Charter Township, spoke about the schools and supports mandating masks in schools.

Renee Donarski, St. Joseph, supports the choice to wear masks in schools.

Vikki Wade, Lincoln Charter Township, spoke against mandated masks in schools.

Stephanie Mead, Three Oaks, spoke against mandated masks in schools.

Angela Baiers, St. Joseph, spoke against mandated masks or vaccines.

Fred Nitz, Baroda, opposes mandated masks.

Jill Underwood, Chikaming Township, supports masks in schools and the BOC needs to support the Health Department's decision.

Robert Donarski, St. Joseph, supports the choice in wearing masks in schools.

Angela Thompson, St. Joseph, supports mandated masks.

Dr. Katie Button-Simons, Lincoln Charter Township, supports mandated masks.

Cindi Belcher, Stevensville, supports the choice in wearing masks in schools.

New Buffalo Mayor John Humphrey, spoke about public health and felt this is a very hard decision that will create a divide.

Chairperson Elliott responded to Melissa Clapper's question and discussed the authority of the BOC, Health Department and schools.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Commissioner Curran gave the Administration Committee report. He introduced Chikaming Township Fire Chief Mike Davidson who is the president of the Michigan Fire Chiefs Association. Chief Davidson gave a brief report.

Commissioner Scott thanked Chikaming Township Supervisor David Bunte for hosting the BOC meeting here today.

Chairperson Elliott recognized New Buffalo Township Supervisor Michelle Heit.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS:

Chairperson Elliott announced the following:

- August 26, 2021 – Standard Board of Commissioner meeting schedule:
 - 8:35 A.M. Committee of the Whole meeting
 - 9:15 A.M. Committee Meetings
 - 10:30 A.M. Board of Commissioners meeting

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 P.M.

R. McKinley Elliott, Chairperson

Sharon J. Tyler, County Clerk

Minutes are to be approved at the next BOC meeting.