

**BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Organizational Meeting Minutes**  
**January 5, 2023**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER:**

County Clerk Sharon Tyler (Temporary Chair) called the Organizational meeting to order at 8:35 A.M. in the Board of Commissioners' room at the Berrien County Administration Center in St. Joseph, Michigan.

Clerk Tyler introduced her new Chief Deputy Clerk Kristene Walton.

**INVOCATION:**

Pastor Michael Roth, Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Joseph, gave the invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

County Clerk Sharon Tyler led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:**

The Temporary Chair instructed the Chief Deputy County Clerk Kristene Walton to take a roll call with the following results:

10 PRESENT: Rayonte Bell, R. McKinley Elliott, Robert Harrison, Jon Hinkelman, Michael Majerek, Alex Ott, Chokwe Pitchford, David Vollrath, Julie Wuerfel and Mamie Yarbrough.

2 ABSENT: Jim Curran and Teri Sue Freehling.

**ELECTION OF CHAIR (following election, Chair takes over leading the meeting):**

Clerk Tyler opened the floor for nominations for Board Chair.

Commissioner Yarbrough moved, seconded by Commissioner Pitchford, to close the nominations for Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners and to elect Commissioner Elliott to the two-year term as Chairperson.

**Motion:**

Commissioner Yarbrough moved, seconded by Commissioner Pitchford, to elect Commissioner Elliott to the two-year term as Chairperson.

The Temporary Chair instructed the Chief Deputy Clerk Kristene Walton to call the roll resulting as follows:

10 YEAS: Elliott, Harrison, Hinkelman, Majerek, Ott, Pitchford, Vollrath, Wuerfel, Yarbrough and Bell.

Motion carried, no nays.

Clerk Tyler handed the gavel over to Chairperson Elliott.

**ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR:**

Chairperson Elliott opened the floor for nominations for Board Vice Chairperson.

Commissioner Wuerfel nominated Commissioner Freehling as Vice Chairperson, Commissioner Vollrath concurred and to close the nominations for Vice Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners and to elect Commissioner Freehling to the one-year term as Vice-Chair. Voice vote. Motion carried, no nays.

**CHAIRMAN COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS: Administration, Finance, Personnel & Human Services**  
Chairperson Elliott made the following appointments:

**Finance Committee**

Mamie Yarbrough, Chair  
Jon Hinkelman

Teri Freehling  
Rayonte D. Bell

**Administration Committee**

Jim Curran, Chair  
David Vollrath  
Julie Wuerfel  
Alex R. Ott

**Personnel and Human Services Committee**

Robert Harrison, Chair  
Michael J. Majerek  
Chokwe Pitchford

Chairperson Elliott asked former Administration Committee Vice Chair Vollrath to chair the Administration Committee today due to Commissioner Curran's absence. Administrator Brian Dissette stated that Commissioner Curran reached out to him and his intent is to place Commissioner Vollrath back as Vice Chair again.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 22, 2022 MEETING:**

Chairperson Elliott noted that the two new Commissioners can abstain from the December 22, 2022 meeting minutes.

Commissioner Harrison moved and supported by Commissioner Yarbrough, to approve the BOC regular meeting minutes of December 22, 2022. Motion carried and no nays.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

County Clerk Sharon Tyler received and distributed to the Board of Commissioners (BOC) the following communications:

- Berrien County MSU Extension, an email on the Michigan State University Extension's Upcoming Events in Berrien County, received on December 22, 2022.
- A resolution from Alcona County Board of Commissioners, support for an Economic Impact Study of Consumers Energy Dams, received on December 27, 2022.

**CHAIRMAN APPOINTMENTS: PARLIAMENTARIAN - SERGEANT AT ARMS - CHAPLAIN**

Chairperson Elliott made the following appointments:

**Parliamentarian:** Teri Sue Freehling

**Sergeant At Arms:** Jim Curran

**Chaplain:** Mamie Yarbrough

**APPROVAL OF BOARD BY-LAWS AND RULES OF PROCEDURES:**

Chairperson Elliott tabled the approval of Board By-laws and Rules of Procedures until next week, so that Commissioner Freehling and Commissioner Curran can participate in the process.

**APPROVAL OF INTERIM CALENDAR FOR 2023 COMMISSIONERS' MEETINGS:**

Chairperson Elliott spoke about the Interim Calendar for 2023 Commissioners' meetings.

**Motion:**

Commissioner Pitchford moved, seconded by Commissioner Vollrath, to approve the Interim Calendar for 2023 of Commissioners' meetings. Voice vote. Motion carried, no nays.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST WAIVERS DISTRIBUTION:**

Chairperson Elliott explained Conflict of Interest and the Conflict of Interest Disclosure form. Executive Administrative Assistant Annette Christie distributed the forms to the Board. The forms can be turned in today or by the next meeting.

**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):**

Melissa Clapper, St. Joseph Charter Township, welcomed the new members. She spoke about extending night meetings and to include one Committee of the Whole meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** None.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS:**

Chairperson Elliott announced the following:

- Committee meetings will take place following the Organizational meeting and there will not be a 10:30 A.M. Board of Commissioners meeting.

Chairperson Elliott noted that Tony Benhart passed away a couple of days ago and he had attended Board meetings. He will be missed.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 A.M.

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R. McKinley Elliott, Chairperson

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Sharon J. Tyler, County Clerk

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