

**BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**January 19, 2023**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER:**

Chairperson R. McKinley Elliott called the Board of Commissioners' (BOC) regular meeting to order at 10:35 A.M. in the BOC's boardroom at the Berrien County Administration Center, 701 Main Street, St. Joseph, Michigan.

**INVOCATION:**

Commissioner Hinkelman gave the invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Commissioner Jim Curran 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, Teri Sue Freehling, Robert Harrison, Jon Hinkelman, Michael Majerek, Alex Ott, Chokwe Pitchford, David Vollrath, Mamie Yarbrough and R. McKinley Elliott.

1 ABSENT: Julie Wuerfel.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 12, 2023 MEETING:**

Commissioner Vollrath moved and supported by Commissioner Pitchford, to approve the BOC regular meeting minutes of January 12, 2023. Motion carried and no nays.

**COMMUNICATION(S):** None.

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE:**

Commissioner Hinkelman spoke of allowing the County Road Department to dump shoulder scrapings on his property.

Commissioner Bell stated he was on the Board of The Avenue Family Network and gives grants to the elderly.

Commissioner Harrison stated that his son is employed by Green Earth Electronics Recycling and the Parks Department has a contract with them. He is a board member of the Berrien Community Foundation. Also, a Health Committee Chair for the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi. His brother-in-law is a volunteer driver for the Veterans program.

Commissioner Pitchford stated he was a co-chair of ALPACT.

Commissioner Curran has no conflict of interest to disclose.

Commissioner Vollrath has no conflict of interest to disclose.

Commissioner Ott stated his dad owns and operates Larry F. Ott Excavating and Trucking Company, who does work for the Drain and Road departments.

Commissioner Majerek stated his brother rents space from the county's Three Oaks building.

Commissioner Freehling stated she owns Baroda Valley Farms and has rented equipment from REV Excavation, which Berrien County also does business with.

Commissioner Yarbrough stated that she is a Berrien Community Foundation member.

Chairman Elliot stated he was a Gateway Community Foundation member.

### **2023 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING CALENDAR:**

Commissioner Pitchford moved and seconded by Commissioner Vollrath, to approve the tentative 2023 Board of Commissioners meeting calendar as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion was held and Chairman Elliott stated in regard to the night meetings, they should plan on discussing this topic in February. The calendar is approved for now and we will defer setting night meetings for another month or so.

### **BOARD OF COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENTS:**

Chairman Elliott made the following appointments:

Re-appoint Jim Curran and Dave Vollrath to 911 Advisory Board – term expires 12/31/25.

Re-appoint Jim Curran and Dave Vollrath to Public Safety Communications Center Operations Committee / 911 Technical Committee – term expires 12/31/25.

Appoint Julie Wuerfel to Brownfield Authority replacing Bob Harrison – term expires 5/25/26.

Appoint Julie Wuerfel to Land Bank Authority to fill vacancy – term expires 05/22/24.

Re-appoint Jon Hinkelman to Land Preservation Board – term expires 6/30/26.

Appoint Alex Ott to Solid Waste Planning to fill a vacancy.

Appoint Rayonte Bell to BC Employees Amended Retirement Board as Finance member.

Appoint Alex Ott to the Pokagon New Buffalo Area Local Revenue Sharing Board to fill vacancy – term expires 7/31/26 (BOC Chairman to be alternate).

Appoint Alex Ott to the Sewage Appeals Board to fill vacancy.

Appoint Alex Ott to Health Department Well & Septic Review Board to fill vacancy.

Appoint Bob Harrison to the BOC Adhoc Committee-Broadband to fill a vacancy.

Appoint Chokwe Pitchford to Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency to replace Julie Wuerfel – term expires 12/31/24.

Re-appoint Julie Wuerfel to the Michigan Association of Counties Health & Human Services Committee and Agriculture & Tourism Committee – term expires 12/31/24.

Re-appoint Dave Vollrath and Rayonte Bell to the Michigan Association of Counties Judiciary & Public Safety Committee – term expires 12/31/24.

Re-appoint Dave Vollrath to the Michigan Association of Counties General Government Committee – term expires 12/31/24.

Re-appoint Michael Majerek to the Brownfield Authority – term expires 5/25/26.

Re-appoint Rayonte Bell to the Community Corrections Advisory Board – term expires 12/31/25.

Re-appoint Mamie Yarbrough to the Land Bank Authority – term expires 5/22/27.

Re-appoint Mamie Yarbrough to the Parks & Recreation Commission – term expires 01/01/26.

Re-appoint Dave Vollrath to the Public Works Board – term expires 12/31/25.

Re-appoint Dave Vollrath to the Area Agency on Aging – term expires 12/31/24.

Re-appoint Jim Curran, Teri Freehling, Julie Wuerfel to the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission – term expires 12/31/24.

Re-appoint Mamie Yarbrough and Julie Wuerfel to the Workforce Development Board – term expires 12/31/25.

Re-appoint Bob Harrison to the Berrien County Human Services Council – term expires 12/31/24.

Re-appoint Teri Freehling to the Housing Resource Network – term expires 12/31/24.

Re-appoint Teri Freehling to the MSUE District Advisory Council – term expires 12/31/24.

Chairman Elliott stated that these are the appointments for now and if they need to be tweaked, they can do it in the next week or two.

**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 (including last name) and city, township, or village. (Article III, 3.9 B-C). The public should refer to the resolution # that they are commenting on as a part of their comments:**

Michael Haskins of Pipestone Township, spoke on Resolution #P2301117 in regard to the beach wheelchairs.

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

Commissioner Curran moved and supported by Commissioner Harrison to approve today’s Consent Calendar:

<u>Resolution(s) #</u>	<u>Description</u>
P2301001	Monthly Per Diems
F2301015	Weekly Bills & Road Payables
B2301062	Weekly Requisitions
A2301398	Approve Watervliet Township Krengle Road Abandonment
A2301111	Fresh Start Program Contract for Jail inmates
A2301112	Literacy Classes for Jail inmates
A2301115	Hazard Mitigation Plan approval
P2301117	Apply for grant for Beach Wheelchair
P2301118	MSUE Annual Work Plan
B2301119	Support for Local Parks Grant Project
P2301120	Accept Public Health mini grant
P2301121	Orchard Landfill Recycling Agreement

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

11 YEAS: Curran, Freehling, Harrison, Hinkelman, Majerek, Ott, Pitchford, Vollrath, Yarbrough, Bell and Elliott.

Motion carried, no nays.

**COMMITTEE REPORT(S) – Administration, Finance and Personnel & Human Services Committees:**

The Administration, Finance and Personnel & Human Services (PHSC) Committees presented their Committee Reports. Parent Committee minutes are available at [www.berriencounty.org](http://www.berriencounty.org). Discussion was held.

**COMMISSIONER REPORT(S):**

The Commissioners presented their outside committee reports. Discussion was held.

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

Melissa Clapper of St. Joseph Township, spoke about the location of the night meetings.

Adolf Pelzer of Hagar Township, spoke about the water fountain and the microphones not working.

Matthew Kirkus of New Buffalo, spoke about the microphones, Michigan Proposal 3 and California SB107.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** None.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS:**

Commissioner Bell announced that Paul Jancha is being sworn in today at 3:30 PM in the courthouse and invites the commissioners to attend.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:21 A.M.

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R. McKinley Elliott, Chairperson

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Kristene Walton, Chief Deputy County Clerk

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