

BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
February 16, 2023

CHAIRMAN TO CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:

Chairperson R. McKinley Elliott called the regular Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting to order at 8:40 A.M. in the Board of Commissioners' (BOC) room at the Berrien County Administration Center, 701 Main Street, St. Joseph, Michigan.

ROLL CALL:

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

12 PRESENT: Rayonte Bell, Jim Curran, Teri Sue Freehling, Robert Harrison, Jon Hinkelman, Michael Majerek, Alex Ott, Chokwe Pitchford, David Vollrath, Julie Wuerfel, Mamie Yarbrough and R. McKinley Elliott.

0 ABSENT:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 2, 2023 MEETING:

Commissioner Pitchford moved and seconded by Commissioner Bell, to approve the Committee of the Whole minutes held on February 2, 2023. Motion carried, no nays.

REQUISITION REVIEW - Annette Christie:

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

PRESENTATIONS –

- **Broadband Internet Update**
- **Facility Projects Update**
- **Night Meeting Discussion**

Broadband Internet Update Discussion – Administrator Brian Dissette

Administrator Brian Dissette and Commissioner Freehling gave a Broadband Internet Update. Administrator Dissette discussed the Berrien County Broadband Internet Task Force (bcbit) letter that was sent out to all local units and a variety of townships, who had sought grant funding from the County. Administrator Dissette informed the BOC of the upcoming grant programs offered from the State of Michigan. We will have two townships completed, Oronoko and Bainbridge Townships, with high speed internet by year end. Commissioner Freehling stated that other communities have other projects going on, using RDOF (Rural Digital Opportunity Fund) funds. Administrator Dissette informed the COW that March 14, 2023 is the deadline to apply for ROBIN funding. The Berrien County Broadband Internet Task Force (bcbit) will be having a ZOOM meeting on March 21, 2023 at 1:30 P.M.

Administrator Dissette and Commissioner Freehling gave a PowerPoint presentation on Berrien County Broadband Internet and discussed the following:

- Berrien County Michigan Broadband StoryMap
 - Download Speeds
 - Upload Speeds
 - Availability by the Numbers
- FCC/Survey Broadband Comparison
- Download Speeds
- Rural Broadband in Berrien County
- FCC 2020 Report
- Actual Serviced Areas
- Actual Unserved
- RDOF Funded Areas
- How to Read the Maps

- Going Online
- The Numbers
- Berrien County ARPA Broadband Funding Requests
- BCBIT Dashboard – Berrien County

Discussion was held.

Facility Projects Update – Administrator Brian Dissette

Administrator Dissette gave a Facility Projects Update. He spoke about the Road Department's tour this afternoon. He informed the COW that they have engaged Wightman and DLR on the Juvenile Center design. Administrator Dissette started the discussion on whether to build or just keep fixing existing facilities. The COW discussed project costs, funding and financing. Chairperson Elliott recommended going back to Andrews University to update what they did ten years ago. Discussion was held.

Night meeting discussion – Administrator Brian Dissette

Administrator Dissette requested to allow Annette Christie, to make the arrangements for night meetings and to stay with four night meetings for 2023.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Per the Berrien County Board of Commissioners' Bylaws, 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, 3.9 B-C): None.

OTHER BUSINESS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 A.M.

R. McKinley Elliott, Chairperson

Kristene Walton, Chief Deputy County Clerk

Minutes are to be approved at the next Committee of the Whole meeting.