

BERRIEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
Minutes of March 17, 2022

Roll Call Present: Jim Curran, Chairperson
Don Meeks Sr.
David Vollrath, Vice Chair
Julie Wuerfel

Absent:

Scheduled: Brian Dissette, County Administrator
Mac Elliott, BOC Chairman
Steve Pierangelli, Prosecutor
Paul Jancha Jr., Public Defender

Others: Amanda Kharkovyy, Children's Advocacy Center
Kaitlin Sieber, Children's Advocacy Center
Kaitlin Locke, Public Defender's Office

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 9:18 am.

Prosecutor's Office Update – Pierangelli, Kharkovyy & Sieber

Pierangelli discussed the SAR Team for adult survivors. He introduced Kharkovyy and Sieber, therapists at the Children's Advocacy Center. They reviewed the format of forensic interviews of minors, how they assist victims and non-offending caregivers and families. They offer unlimited counseling, which is at no cost to the victims' families. The facility has 3 therapy rooms, a mock courtroom, and nurse exam room. Discussions ensued regarding behavioral therapy and practices. They perform approximately 600 interviews per year and in 2021 had approximately 250 therapy clients. Clients are mainly from Berrien County, but there are a few from Cass, Van Buren and Kalamazoo as well. Pierangelli will set up a tour of the facility for the Commissioners. He noted two upcoming fundraisers – Emergency Shelter Services and the St. Joseph High School orchestra at GhostLight Theater as well as Spring Spirits fundraiser at the end of April.

Emerging Adults Task Force Discussion – Jancha Jr. & Locke

Jancha and Locke reviewed the proposal which includes clients up to age 25. Prosecution of youth has been increasing. Jancha stated clients are not meeting with lawyers and do not have an opportunity to review and contest States evidence. He noted that in the past 6 years, there's only been one contest. There has also been a large increase in minority prosecutions. This proposal is for 4 staff members – 2 attorneys, 1 investigator and 1 social worker. There is no local share for this specialized training and is contingent upon State funding. He anticipates State approval for at least 1 ½ years of funding. Jancha has been invited to tour the facility and review the format used at Lawndale Christian Legal Center in Chicago. He is requesting support for a resolution. The Committee agreed to move the proposal forward.

Q & A – Dissette & Elliott

Dissette noted the \$15.8M ARPA allocation and stated that, despite the Abonmarche report, there is a need for spending on the Road Department facilities. He is setting up a Committee of the Whole to work on options for the Road Department and the EOC. He is working on contracts and presentations. Discussions ensued regarding the status of several projects. Elliott noted that bonding conversations should happen in the Board of Commissioner meeting so that everyone is up-to-date.

Motion by Vollrath, supported by Wuerfel, to approve membership in NACo (National Association of Counties) and MAC (Michigan Association of Counties). Motion Carried.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Vollrath, supported by Wuerfel, to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2022 meeting. Motion Carried.

Resolutions

The following Resolution was moved forward to the full Board:

A2203219 – Authorize use of \$15.8M ARPA funds for lost revenue to be used for the purposes of investing in facilities that need improvements and/or upgrades.

Public Comments

None.

Meeting adjourned at 10:28 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

J Arent

Jennifer Arent
Recording Secretary