

**BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Virtual Board Meeting Minutes**  
**April 16, 2020**

**Staff Present:** County Clerk Sharon Tyler  
Annette Christie, Executive Assistant to the Administrator  
William Wolf, County Administrator  
Nicki Britten, Health Officer (via Zoom)  
Warren Parrish, Deputy Equalization Director (via Zoom)  
Tony Meyaard, Equalization Director (via Zoom)  
Dave Agens, 911 Administrator (via Zoom)  
Caitlin Sampsell, Asst. Dispatch Center Director (via Zoom)  
Shelley Jasper, Human Resources Director

**BOC Present:** Chairman R. McKinley Elliott

**CHAIRMAN TO CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:**

Chairperson R. McKinley Elliott called the regular meeting to order at 10:36 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: R. McKinley Elliott, Mamie Yarbrough, Robert Harrison, Jon Hinkelman, Ezra Scott, Jim Curran, Don Meeks, Christopher Heugel, Michael Majerek, William Chickering, David Vollrath and Teri Freehling.

0 ABSENT.

**INVOCATION:**

Executive Administrative Assistant Annette Christie gave the invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:**

County Clerk Sharon Tyler led us in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

**APPROVE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 2, 2020 MEETING:**

Commissioner Vollrath moved, seconded by Commissioner Meeks, to approve the BOC virtual meeting minutes of April 2, 2020.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call the roll resulting as follows:

12 YEAS: Yarbrough, Harrison, Hinkelman, Scott, Chickering, Vollrath, Freehling, Curran, Heugel, Majerek, Meeks and Elliott.

Motion carried, no nays.

**COMMUNICATION(S):**

County Clerk Sharon Tyler received an email communication on April 15, 2020 from Jennifer Runyon, Research Staff of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Reston VA, informing the Board that the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, at its April 9, 2020 meeting, approved the proposal to apply the new name Damon Lake to a previously unnamed lake in Berrien County.

**HEALTH OFFICER UPDATE – Nicki Britten (via phone):**

Health Department Director Nicki Britten, gave an update on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Berrien County. She stated there are 133 confirmed cases and 7 deaths. She stated there are a lot more people out there who have the virus that have not been tested. Nicki Britten stated there are a limited supply of test kits available. They are hoping for an outreach of more testing for the virus. She stated it is hard to get supplies. The Berrien County Health Department is not a testing site. The hospital is not near to capacity. The hospitals are approximately 20% to 30% filled. She stated they are working on the recovery process. The Health Department has not heard of any regional approach for the recovery by the Governor. The Board thanked Nicki Britten and her staff for the excellent work they are providing. Discussion was held.

## **EQUALIZATION REPORT – Warren Parrish:**

Deputy Equalization Director Warren Parrish and Equalization Director Tony Meyaard presented the 2020 Berrien County Equalization Department Annual Report and Equalization Report. Warren Parrish discussed the following:

- Main Function of the Equalization Department.
- Equalization Department Annual Report Activities over the last year.
- Overview of 2020 Equalization Report.
  - What is the Equalization Report
  - Quick States from the Report
  - Assessed Value:
    - Residential – 68.72%
    - Developmental – 0.00%
    - Personal – 5.30%
    - Agricultural – 5.20%
    - Commercial – 7.93%
    - Industrial – 12.84%
  - Taxable Value:
    - Residential – 66.58%
    - Developmental – 0.00%
    - Personal – 6.49%
    - Agricultural – 3.38%
    - Commercial – 8.22%
    - Industrial – 15.33%
  - Berrien County Equalized and Taxable Values by Year.
  - 10 Year Trend in Gap between Equalized and Taxable Value (All Properties).
  - Local Unit Change in SEV and Taxable Value.

Discussion was held.

**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 through the You Tube chat during public comments shall identify themselves by name (including last name) and city, township, or village:**  
None.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR:**

Chairperson Elliott requested Resolution #B2004221 - Honorary Resolution be pulled from the Consent Calendar and be presented separately.

Commissioner Scott requested Resolution #A2004223 - Apply RAP Grant be pulled from the Consent Calendar for further discussion and presented separately.

Commissioner Heugel moved, seconded by Commissioner Majerek, to pull Resolutions #B2004221 and #A2004223 from the Consent Calendar to be presented separately, and to approve today's Consent Calendar:

<u>Resolutions #</u>	<u>Description</u>
P2004004	Monthly Per Diems
F2004027	Weekly Bills
B2004073	Weekly Requisitions
F2004114	Road Payables
P2004218	Approve Comprehensive Agreement Amendment #3
F2004219	Approve the Annual Equalization Report
A2004220	Approve Natural Gas Provider Agreement Renewal
B2004222	State-wide Hazard Pay
A2004224	Approve Contract with State of Michigan

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call the roll resulting as follows:

12 YEAS: Yarbrough, Harrison, Hinkelman, Heugel, Scott, Chickering, Vollrath, Freehling, Curran, Majerek, Meeks and Elliott.

Motion carried, no nays.

**HONORARY RESOLUTION #B2004221 PRESENTATION (via Zoom):**

Commissioner Yarbrough moved, seconded by Commissioner Vollrath, to approve Honorary Resolution #B2004221.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call the roll resulting as follows:

12 YEAS: Curran, Freehling, Harrison, Heugel, Hinkelman, Majerek, Meeks, Scott, Vollrath, Yarbrough, Chickering and Elliott.

Motion carried, no nays.

Chairperson Elliott read the following Honorary Resolution #B2004221:

*WHEREAS, a resident of Berrien County his whole life, Dave Agens has dedicated his career to serving the public; and*

*WHEREAS, he graduated from Lakeshore High School and went on to further his education at Lake Michigan College and Western Michigan University studying Criminal Justice; and*

*WHEREAS, his career here included 21 years serving within the ranks of the Berrien County Sheriff's Office and 19 years as the 911 Administrator; and*

*WHEREAS, under the leadership of Dave Agens as its Administrator, the Berrien County 911 system has consolidated county-wide and evolved into one of the finest group of emergency tele-communicators in the State of Michigan with the most reliable communication technologies available; and*

*WHEREAS, Dave Agens' leadership, experience and commitment to the citizens of Berrien County will be missed as he enters into the next chapter of his life, retirement, effective April 30, 2020; and*

*WHEREAS, Dave has exhibited the mission of Berrien County to provide leadership, cooperation with all units of government, sound fiscal management and planning, thereby promoting public safety, health, well-being and prosperity in order to improve the quality of life for present and future generations.*

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Berrien County Board of Commissioners acknowledges the dedication of Dave Agens in the various roles he has performed for Berrien County and its citizens, and thanks him for his 40 years of service.*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Dave Agens' life, actions and contributions to this community reflect most favorably upon himself, his family, the County of Berrien, the State of Michigan and the United States of America.*

The Board thanked Dave Agens for his years of service to the citizens, wishing him a retirement filled with happiness and good health.

**Resolution #A2004223 - Apply RAP Grant**

Commissioner Scott discussed why he requested Resolution #A2004223 to be pulled from the Consent Calendar. Commissioner Scott was concerned about purchasing the Skytron 1140 Sentry Single Emitter System for the jail at a cost of approximately \$41,029.25. Commissioner Scott is concerned about stopping the spread of pathogens in the environment, such as the jail. He stated he researched online other types of equipment with a lower cost. Commissioner Scott would like to see the Sherriff's Office research this type of equipment further.

#A2004225 - Apply RAP Grant

Commissioner Curran moved, seconded by Commissioner Harrison, to authorize the Berrien County Sherriff's Office to submit a MMRMA RAP Grant for up to \$25,000 for the purchase of UVC devices to be matched by the grant up to \$25,000, with the understanding that a local match would be subject to receiving it through the RAP Grant for the jail and directs the County Administrator and the Undersheriff to execute the application on behalf of Berrien County.

The Chair instructed the Clerk to call the roll resulting as follows:

12 YEAS: Freehling, Harrison, Heugel, Hinkelman, Majerek, Meeks, Scott, Vollrath, Yarbrough, Chickering, Curran and Elliott.

Motion carried, no nays.

**PARENT COMMITTEE REPORT(S):**

Finance Committee Chairperson Yarbrough gave the Parent Committee Report for the Finance Committee. Parent Committee minutes are available at [www.berriencounty.org](http://www.berriencounty.org).

**COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

Commissioner Curran stated that Commissioners Harrison, Vollrath and he have been attending the last EOC briefings and gave an update. He stated that there are a lot of good things going on. He discussed the recovery efforts and that it will take some time. Commissioners Curran, Harrison and Vollrath thanked the Health Department, Sheriff's Office and staff.

**ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:**

Administrator William Wolf spoke about the County millage renewals. Discussion was held.

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS – Those speaking through the You Tube chat during public comments shall identify themselves by name (including last name) and city, township, or village.**

Tony Benhart, Sodus Township, spoke about purchases made by the Road Department

Don Meyer, Lake Charter Township, thanked the Board for holding a virtual meeting and suggested having them at night meetings too.

Julie Wuefel, St. Joseph, spoke about the County passing a resolution regarding the stay-at-home order.

David Yardley, St. Joseph City, thanked the Board for holding the Zoom meeting and would like them to continue to hold Zoom meetings after the stay-at-home order. Also, he would like to keep the meetings online and not have them removed later. He asked about the hiring of the County Administrator's position.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

The Board thanked Annette Christie and the staff for putting the meeting together today.

Discussion was held on the Board drafting a resolution regarding the stay-at-home order.

Discussion was held on the Census Report and only 50% have reported at this time.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS:**

Chairperson Elliott stated the Board will probably not meet next week, but will meet on April 30<sup>th</sup> (5<sup>th</sup> Thursday) instead. The Finance Committee will still meet on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:21 P.M.

---

R. McKinley Elliott, Chairperson

---

Sharon J. Tyler, County Clerk

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