

**BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**September 28, 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 Chokwe Pitchford gave the invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Commissioner Robert Harrison 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:

12 PRESENT: Rayonte Bell (Arrived at 10:39 A.M.), Jim Curran, Teri Sue Freehling (Arrived at 10:39 A.M.), Robert Harrison, Jon Hinkelman (Arrived at 10:38 A.M.), Michael Majerek, Alex Ott, Chokwe Pitchford, David Vollrath, Julie Wuerfel, Mamie Yarbrough (Arrived at 10:41 A.M.) and R. McKinley Elliott.

0 ABSENT.

Chairperson Elliott announced the Finance Committee was still meeting and going over the bid process.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 21, 2023 MEETING:**

Commissioner Majerek moved and supported by Commissioner Pitchford, to approve the BOC regular meeting minutes of September 21, 2023. Motion carried and no nays.

**COMMUNICATION(S):**

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

- A resolution from Clair County Board of Commissioners, opposing any legislation preempting local control for solar and wind developments, received on September 22, 2023.
- An email from Ashley Butler, Cornerstone Alliance, regarding Round Barn receiving approval from the Niles City Commission for a tax abatement to rehabilitate the historic Grace United Methodist Church into a restaurant and a tasting room, received on September 25, 2023.
- A resolution from Osceola County Board of Commissioners, opposing any legislation preempting local control for solar and wind developments, received on September 25, 2023.
- A resolution from Clinton County Board of Commissioners, opposing any legislation preempting local control for solar and wind developments, received on September 27, 2023.

**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:** None.

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

Commissioner Pitchford moved and supported by Commissioner Harrison, to approve today's Consent Calendar:

<u>Resolution(s) #</u>	<u>Description</u>
F2309048	Weekly Bills Approval & Road Payables
B2309095	Weekly Requisitions
P2309301	Approve multi-county Memorandum of Understanding for emergency response

F2309303 Apply for Blight Elimination program funding Land Bank  
A2309304 Apply Seven Oh Seven Grant for outdoor dog kennels Animal Control  
A2309305 Accept the Raise the Age grant funding

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

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

Motion carried, no nays.

**ADDED RESOLUTION(S):** None.

**BOARD APPOINTMENTS – Personnel & Human Services Committee:**

Commissioner Pitchford announced that he will be abstaining on the Mental Health Authority appointment of Lauren Scott, since this is his fiancée out of an abundance of caution. Discussion was held.

**Motion**

Commissioner Harrison moved and seconded by Commissioner Majerek, to appoint Lauren Scott to the Mental Health Authority to fill the vacancy (M. Pater), term expires on March 31, 2025.

Motion carried. 0 Nays 1 Abstain – Commissioner Pitchford

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

The Finance, Personnel & Human Services (PHSC) and Administration 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.

**ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:**

Administrator Brian Disette gave his Administrator's Report.

**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):**

Jim Martin, Benton Charter Township, spoke about the staffing needs at the Juvenile Center. He asked why the County Commissioner representing Benton Charter Township is not assigned to committees.

Adolf Pelzer, Hagar Township, spoke that he was not on the screen where he is sitting in the audience for YouTube and it needs to be corrected. He spoke about the opioid settlement.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Chairperson Elliott stated former County Commissioner Catherine Thieneman. He spoke about her service to the County and requested a moment of silence be held.

A moment of silence was held for former County Commissioner Catherine Thieneman.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS:**

Commissioner Yarbrough announced the Land Bank Authority will be meeting today at 1:00 P.M.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:11 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.***