



Berrien County Administrator Office
Berrien County Administration Center
701 Main St.
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Date: Thursday, June 18, 2020

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Berrien County Board of Commissioners' meetings continue to be held Virtually

Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer issued Executive Order 2020-21 in March which ordered residents to remain at home or in their place of residence to the maximum extent feasible, which included limitations on workplaces across the state. Public access to Berrien County buildings ended on March 23, 2020 in response to the spread of COVID-19. In addition, she issued an Executive Order 2020-15, authorizing remote participation in public meetings and hearings, that order was rescinded and re-issued as 2020-48 and 2020-75 and ultimately 2020-129 which is current through July 31, 2020.

Through a series of Executive Orders since that time, the Governor has relaxed some of the restrictions on movement and workplaces; however, what remains is the requirement that businesses, operations and government agencies adhere to sound social distancing practices and additional measures. As such, the Berrien County Board of Commissioners approved the COVID-19 preparedness and response plan on June 11, 2020 and have moved to Phase 2 of the plan, the re-opening of County buildings (with the exception of buildings under the authority of an elected office, such as the Sheriff and the Courts). The re-opening of the Berrien County Administration Center at 701 Main St., St. Joseph and common location for the Board meetings, occurred on Monday, June 22, 2020.

The Berrien County Administration Center is an "enclosed public space", or areas frequented by the public. Visitors and employees in the building must wear a face covering, and in addition, should practice social distancing, keeping 6' between individuals. Health screening is also occurring at the entrance of the building. The Governor's Executive Order 2020-110 is still valid and limits the number of people in a meeting to 10 people. The Berrien County Board of Commissioners cannot host a meeting in person and for the public at the Berrien County Administration Center and still fall within the guidelines of the Governor's Executive Order. Therefore, the Berrien County Board of Commissioners will continue to hold their meetings virtually and will update the County website (www.berriencounty.org) weekly with current information, including how to access those meetings, held on Thursday's at 10:30 a.m., with exceptions.

Berrien County officials encourage all residents to continue taking individual precautions to protect their own health, the health of their families, and the County as a whole, in particular those at highest risk of serious illness. The following basic personal-hygiene measures are recommended to prevent the spread of the virus:

- wear a face covering when in a public space;
- maintain a distance of 6' when in contact with individuals outside of your immediate family;
- wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are unavailable;
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands;
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
- avoid handshakes;
- avoid contact with sick people and stay home when you are sick.