

**BERRIEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of July 18, 2019**

**Present:** Jim Curran, Chair  
Michael Majerek, Vice Chair  
Chris Heugel  
Don Meeks Sr.

**Absent:**

**Scheduled:** Christopher Renna, Public Defender  
Bill Wolf, County Administration  
Mac Elliott, BOC Chair

**Others:** Bill Chickering, Board of Commissioners  
Melissa Clapper, Public  
John Matuszak, Herald Palladium  
Tony Benhart, Public  
Darren Schaer, Public

**Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 9:14 am.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Meeks, supported by Majerek, to approve the minutes of the June 27, 2019 meetings.  
Motion Carried.

**Public Defender's Update**

Renna reported they filled the position for Assistant Public Defender and now are at a full complement. He discussed the FY20 Compliance Plan. The State Commission is still reviewing all plans and Renna expects Berrien County's to be accepted in August. Renna reviewed the quarterly FSR. The numbers do not include the Juvenile contracts. He expects to come in under budget in FY19 by approximately \$150,000 to \$200,000, which will roll into FY20's grant. Discussions ensued regarding office space. Renna is looking to keep the space at 100 Church Street as the main office and to identify additional office space to expand new offices into.

**Q & A with Bill Wolf and BOC Chair Elliott**

Curran requested an update on the Transportation Plan. Wolf will obtain an update from Evan Smith. Discussions ensued regarding water access below the Courthouse, including usage by the City of St. Joseph, and the condition of the grassy area.

**Resolutions**

The following resolutions were approved and signed:

A1907267 – Authorize submission of Intake Assessment Coordinator and laboratory confirmation services applications to SMBH.

A1907273 – Approve speed limit change on Pucker Street to 45mph.

A1907274 – Approve speed limit change on Browntown Road to 40mph.

A1907275 – Approve speed limit change on Tower Hill Road to 40mph.

A1907276 – Approve speed limit change on Marquette Road to 35mph.

### **Public Comment**

Melissa Clapper, St. Joseph Charter Township – There are so many empty businesses around the Mall area and the Mall itself. What are the responsibilities of Benton Charter Township, Berrien County, and the Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber? How much money is leaving our area due to the empty stores? Heugel noted the Chamber is charged with keeping businesses in the area and Cornerstone Alliance is the organization that works to attract new businesses to the area. Curran stated it is up to the local leaders at the Township. Discussions ensued.

John Matuszak, Herald Palladium – The previous owner of the Orchards Mall is still listing it on his website. The business that bought the mall from the previous owner also purchased another failing mall from the same person in another location. When one of the current tenants requested a repair, the new owner said they had to check with Mike (the previous owner).

Tony Benhart, Sodus Township – Is the kayak launch being built to help the man who rents kayaks there? What about all the concrete and rebar at the site by the bridge?

Darren Schaer, Pipestone Township – Putting inexperienced people on a kayak in a river that opens into the lake is a recipe for disaster. Who's carrying the liability? Is the County going to promote it? Kayak launches should have warning flags like beaches. There should also be E.coli testing daily with results posted of all the local sites to be able to compare.

### **Miscellaneous**

Majerek asked Chickering how the new board members are selected for Riverwood, as they seem to go through the County. Chickering stated Riverwood provides the names of board members to the PHSC for appointment.

Meeting adjourned at 10:08 am.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jennifer Arent