

**BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Annual Meeting Minutes**  
**October 10, 2019**

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

Chairperson R. McKinley Elliott called the Annual meeting to order at 10:30 A.M. in the Board of Commissioners' (BOC) room at the Berrien County Administration Center, 701 Main Street, St. Joseph, Michigan.

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

Commissioner Meeks led us in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

**INVOCATION:**

Commissioner Bob Harrison gave the invocation.

**ROLL CALL:**

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

8 PRESENT: Jim Curran, Teri Freehling, Robert Harrison, Michael Majerek, Don Meeks, Ezra Scott, David Vollrath and R. McKinley Elliott.

4 ABSENT: William Chickering, Christopher Heugel, Jon Hinkelman and Mamie Yarbrough.

**COMMUNICATION(S):**

County Clerk Sharon Tyler received and distributed to the Board the following:

- A resolution from the Alger County Board of Commissioners, supports providing Michigan voters with full information about their candidates for County Commissioner, and hereby are opposed to forcing a candidate for County Commissioner to run as a non-partisan candidate, received on October 7, 2019.

**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 and city, township, or village. (Article III, 3.9B-C):** None.

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

Commissioner Scott moved, seconded by Commissioner Vollrath, to approve today's Consent Calendar as presented:

<u>Resolutions #</u>	<u>Description</u>
F1910048	Weekly Bills
B1910095	Weekly Requisitions
A1910310	Apply for Grant DHHS for Legal Representation

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

8 YEAS: Curran, Freehling, Harrison, Majerek, Meeks, Scott, Vollrath and Elliott.

Motion carried, no nays.

**ADDED RESOLUTIONS:** None.

**BOARD OF ELECTION CANVASSERS APPOINTMENTS – Clerk Sharon Tyler:**

Clerk Tyler explained that the Board of County Canvassers is responsible for canvassing the votes cast within Berrien County and inspecting the County's ballot containers every four years. This consists of members from both major political parties (Republican and Democratic). The following names were given to the County Clerk from each Berrien County political party:

Cheryl Warner (Buchanan Township), to be reappointed with a term expiring October 31, 2023. (Selected by the Berrien County Republican Party).

Jess Minks (Buchanan Township), to be reappointed with a term expiring October 31, 2023. (Selected by the Berrien County Democratic Party).

Reappoint as an alternate to the Board of Canvassers:

Vicki Burghdoff (Bainbridge Township) - Term expiring: October 31, 2023. (Selected by the Berrien County Republican Party).

Appoint as alternate to the Board of Canvassers:

Larry Goldberg (Buchanan Township) - Term expiring: October 31, 2021. (Selected by the Berrien County Republican Party).

The Clerk's Office received two alternate nominees from the Berrien County Democratic Party. The Board will need to appoint one of the following alternate nominees to the Board of Canvassers:

Audrey Lester (St. Joseph Charter Township) or Gloria Stansberry (Sodus Township), to be appointed as an alternate member with a term expiring October 31, 2023. (Selected by the Berrien County Democratic Party).

Commissioner Meeks moved, seconded by Commissioner Vollrath, to approve the following to the Board of County Canvassers:

- Reappoint to the Board of Canvassers:
  - Cheryl Warner (Buchanan Township) - Term expiring: October 31, 2023.
  - Jess Minks (Buchanan Township) - Term expiring: October 31, 2023.
- Reappoint as an alternate to the Board of Canvassers:
  - Vicki Burghdoff (Bainbridge Township) - Term expiring: October 31, 2023.
- Appoint as alternates to the Board of Canvassers:
  - Larry Goldberg (Buchanan Township) - Term expiring: October 31, 2021.
  - Audrey Lester (St. Joseph Charter Township) - Term expiring: October 31, 2023.

Motion carried, no nays.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

The Administration, Personnel and Human Services, and Finance Committees presented their Committee Reports. Committee minutes are available at [www.berriencounty.org](http://www.berriencounty.org).

#### **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

Commissioners presented their outside committee reports.

Chairperson Elliott introduced former County Commissioner Ron Ferguson in the audience today.

#### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS - Those speaking during public comments may do so no longer than two minutes and shall identify themselves by name and city, township, or village. (Article III, 3.9B-C):**

Dick Bertog, Benton Charter Township, spoke about the problems he is having with his property and the Drain Department.

Adolf Pelzer, Hagar Township, spoke about the cost of health insurance and night meetings.

Michael Hoyh, Watervliet, spoke about "My Brothers' Keeper - Girls Equity Network Summit" to be held at the Lake Michigan College, Mendel Center, Benton Harbor, Michigan on November 1, 2019 from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. He announced that Kinexus will be hosting Sustainable Harbors on October 15<sup>th</sup>.

Darrin Schaer, Pipestone Township, commented about the Sheriff's Department and military equipment. He spoke about how the County handles Closed Session meetings.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Commissioner Freehling read the Amendment to her Conflict of Interest Disclosure.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/REMINDERS:**

Chairperson Elliott announced the following:

- October 26, 2019 – Berrien County Animal Control Trunk or Treat Event
- October 31, 2019 – No meetings will be held (5th Thursday).

Chairperson Elliott stated the Board will be going into Closed Session and the only business that will be conducted after reconvening to Open Session will be the approval of the Closed Session minutes.

**CLOSED SESSION – MCL 15.268 ( c ) – “For strategy and negotiations connected with the negotiations of a collective bargaining agreement if either negotiating party requests a closed session.” - Police Officers Labor Counsel – Non Command Unit:**

Commissioner Curran moved, seconded by Commissioner Meeks, to recess the public meeting and go into Closed Session at 11:15 A.M., for strategy and negotiations connected with the negotiations of a collective bargaining agreement if either negotiating party requests a closed session.” - Police Officers Labor Counsel – Non Command Unit.

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

8 YEAS: Freehling, Harrison, Majerek, Meeks, Scott, Vollrath, Curran and Elliott.

Motion carried, no nays.

The Board recessed at 11:15 A.M. to go into Closed Session.

The Board reconvened to Open Session at 11:20 A.M.

The approval of the Closed Session minutes will be deferred, until when the Board has a quorum of members who attended the September 12, 2019 Closed Session meeting.

A discussion was held whether the Board needed to vote on Commissioner Freehling's Amendment to her Conflict of Interest Disclosure. Chairperson Elliott will have Special Counsel review whether a vote is needed.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 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 full board meeting on October 17, 2019.***