

**BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes**  
**October 24, 2019**

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

Chairperson Elliott called the regular meeting to order at 8:35 A.M. in the Board of Commissioners' 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:

10 PRESENT: Jim Curran, Teri Freehling, Robert Harrison, Christopher Heugel, Michael Majerek, Don Meeks, Ezra Scott, Dave Vollrath, Mamie Yarbrough and R. McKinley Elliott.

2 ABSENT: William Chickering and Jon Hinkelman.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE:**

Commissioner Meeks requested a Moment of Silence for Kevin White, Benton Charter Township Supervisor, who died unexpectedly yesterday morning and his family.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 17, 2019 MEETING:**

Commissioner Vollrath moved, seconded by Commissioner Heugel, to approve the Committee of the Whole minutes of October 17, 2019. Motion carried, no nays.

1 ABSTAIN: Yarbrough. (Due to being absent at the October 17, 2019 meeting.)

**REQUISITION REVIEW:**

Executive Administrative Assistant Annette Christie presented the requisitions to the Board for their review and discussion. Annette Christie reminded everyone about the following:

- October 26, 2019 – Berrien County Animal Control Trunk or Treat Event from 9:00 A.M. to Noon.
- Puppy Preventer and Feline Fix Fundraiser – Spay/Neuter “Fur” Raiser.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – Per the Berrien County Board of Commissioners' Bylaws, 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.

**SCHEDULED DISCUSSION:**

Administrator William Wolf introduced Equalization Director Tony Meyaard who discussed the Truth and Taxation process to increase the Parks' millage (PA 90 millage) and working with the budget.

Parks and Recreation Commission Director Brian Bailey gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Berrien County Parks and discussed the following:

- Love Creek Nature Center/County Park
- Silver Beach County Park
- History Center at Courthouse Square County Park
- Madeline Bertrand County Park
- Paw Paw River County Park
- Rocky Gap County Park
- Galien River County Park
- Linear Park
- Capital Project Requests for 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024
- Priorities
  - Design the concession stand at Silver Beach (\$25,000 to \$50,000).
  - Playground at Silver Beach.
  - Cross country skis, etc.

Discussion was held.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

The following Parks and Recreation Commissioners spoke on the County Parks:

- J.B. Hoyt, Lincoln Charter Township
- Richard Schinkel, Berrien Springs
- Carl Keefer, Buchanan Township

John Chipman, Harbert, spoke about the Friends of the Berrien County Trails and introduced the group.

The following spoke in support of the County Parks and trails:

- John Montiro, Lincoln Charter Township
- Rick Rasmussen, Watervliet
- Bob Clark, Lake Charter Township
- Heather Cole, Lincoln Charter Township
- J.B. Peacock, Niles
- Steve Ellis, Sawyer
- Pete Janke, Indiana
- Jill Underhill, Harbert
- Art Anderson, Chikaming Township

Tony Benhart, Sodus Township, discussed the Parks and maintenance costs.

Ken Schneider, Eau Claire, spoke about the Parks and stated that the County needs to live within their budget.

Jocelyn Verlee, business owner on Red Arrow Highway, suggested the County needs to review the Parks return on investments and prioritize the projects.

Dick Bertog, Benton Charter Township, spoke about his residential property.

Darrin Schaer, Pipestone Township, spoke about the burden being placed on Berrien County residents and suggested the County find different ways of funding the Parks, rather than increasing the millage.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Commissioner Scott spoke about his visit to Washington D.C. and discussed federal grants available for parks.

Commissioner Yarbrough is very proud and pleased with the County Parks.

Commissioner Freehling stated she will abstain from voting on Requisition #37877 as included in Resolution #B1910097, due to a possible conflict of interest.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 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 November 7, 2019.***