

**Berrien County Board of Commissioners
Committee of the Whole Minutes
December 5, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairperson Elliott called the meeting to order at 8:37 A.M. in the Board of Commissioners' Room at the Berrien County Administration Center in St. Joseph, Michigan.

ROLL CALL:

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

11 PRESENT: Bill Chickering, Jim Curran, Teri Freehling, Bob Harrison, Chris Heugel, Jon Hinkelman, Mike Majerek, Don Meeks, David Vollrath, Mamie Yarbrough and R. McKinley Elliott.

1 ABSENT: Ezra Scott

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Heugel moved, seconded by Commissioner Vollrath, to approve the Committee of the Whole minutes of November 21, 2019. Motion carried, no nays.

REQUISITION REVIEW

- Annette Christie presented the requisitions for the Board's review.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Tony Benhart, Sodus Township – spoke about the Road Department and township contributions toward road repairs.

RECOGNITION:

Administrator Wolf recognized Warren Parrish, Equalization Department Assistant Director, on achieving his Michigan Master Assessor status (Level 4). This is quite an accomplishment as it is a strenuous educational process to be completed in one year. There are only 155 in the State of Michigan out of 1800 assessors.

SCHEDULED DISCUSSION:

Board of Commissioners Bylaws - Commissioner Chickering

Overview included:

- Deferred 2018 Proposed Modifications.
- Full Personnel and Human Services Committee (PHSC) review of entire Bylaws and Attachments.
- Several Simplification Changes and Grammatical Points.

2018 Proposals:

- Term Limitations on Chair – Not recommended by PHSC.
- Vice-Chair Mentoring Option – Recommended; Section 2.2c.
- Chair/Vice Chair Active Agenda Role – Not recommended by PHSC.
- Duplicated Meeting Conduct Rules – Not recommended by PHSC.

- Parent Chair Removal Process – Partially recommended, Section 2.1C.

Key Changes:

- Section 1.6: Tie Board of Commissioners (BOC) to other Elected Officials.
- Section 3.5: Committee of the Whole Standing Agenda.
- Section 2.3: Simplified Chain of Leadership.
- Section 3.1c: Night Meeting Limitations and Committee Process.
- Section 3.3e: PHSC Bylaw Review Bi-annually (odd years).
- Section 5.1: Definition of the Committee on Committees.

Corporate Counsel Recommended Changes:

- Section 3.11: Closed Session Language Clarifications.
- Section 4.3: Gifts and Process (Statutory).
- Section 4.5: Political Activities (Statutory).
- Section 4.6: Public Speaking (Statutory).

New Concepts:

- Section 4.8: Commissioner Educational Meetings
 - Commissioners may attend approved educational meetings annually as determined by the BOC. Commissioners shall follow the County travel policy on reimbursement. The BOC may choose to suspend the Board Rules and Procedures to consider accommodating additional meetings.
 - New Commissioners may attend the New County Commissioner Training workshop provided by the MSU Extension, in conjunction with the Michigan Association of Counties. If available, a senior Commissioner or the County Administrator may attend to inform the new Commissioners about Berrien County processes.
- Section 4.9: Internal Issues – In the event a formal complaint between Commissioners, from a Commissioner against a county employee, or from an employee against a Commissioner, the matter will be referred to the Chair, or his/her designee, for resolution. The Chair shall work with any Elected Official and/or the Administrator if the complaint involves an employee of theirs. If a proposed resolution by the Chair is deemed inadequate to the complaining party, the matter will be sent to the Committee on Committees for their action. Failing mutual resolution at that state, the matter will be resolved by the BOC in an open meeting unless there is a request for a closed session per MCLA 15.268(a). Decisions of the BOC will be the final on the matter.

Discussion was held.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Commissioner Freehling stated that she abstained from approving Requisition 38317 due to potential conflict of interest.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 9:14 A.M.

R. McKinley Elliott, Chairperson

Diane Mensinger, Chief Deputy Clerk

Minutes are to be approved at the full board meeting on December 12, 2019.