

**BERRIEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of April 21, 2022**

**Roll Call Present:** Jim Curran, Chairperson  
Don Meeks Sr.  
David Vollrath, Vice Chair  
Julie Wuerfel

**Absent:**

**Scheduled:** Brian Dissette, County Administrator  
Mac Elliott, BOC Chairman  
Annette Christie, Administration  
Elvin Gonzalez, Family Court/Juvenile Center

**Others:** Undersheriff Heit, BCSD  
Sheriff Bailey, BCSD

**Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 9:22 am.

**\*ADDED\* Draft Resolution A2204254 – Dissette, Bailey & Heit**

Dissette reviewed the draft resolution that would put Animal Control officers under the purview of the Sheriff's Office. This would allow for more applicants as well as endure the latest training, equipment and oversight of the officers. Undersheriff Heit noted it would also allow them to maintain their COLES certification. Discussions ensued and it was noted that this is only the officers and the kennel remains under Animal Control. The Committee supported advancing the resolution to be ready next week. Dissette will meet with kennel staff to make sure there are no misunderstandings.

**Family Court & Juvenile Center Update – Gonzalez**

Gonzalez reviewed the quarterly briefing. The Pre-Arrest Diversion Program has been successfully launched. The Family Empowerment Services organization meets with youth and family that are referred directly from law enforcement. It is a rapid response within 48 hours of the referral. He will be tracking youth for outcomes and variables and will report on that data. They are continuing virtual court via Zoom for juveniles that are in compliance. If they are not in compliance, they must appear in person to speak directly to the Judge.

The Juvenile Center personnel is full at 45. There are currently 17 vacancies and Kendell Casey will also be leaving next month. Due to the vacancies, they are limited in the programming they are able to offer. They are currently only running the detention unit of 16 beds and tether, of which they would max out at 40. He is currently working on a 2022 wage survey and will present data when it is compiled and complete.

Gonzalez reviewed the chart showing weapons offenses which peaks at ages 15 to 16. This data is for 2018 through 2021 and they have been seeing an increase in 2022 of 17 year olds due to Raise the Age. He noted 17 year olds with serious weapons offenses are typically waived into adult court.

He discussed a partnership with the Box Factory to provide art programming for the Juvenile Center. Four artists have expressed interest in donating time to come to the center to teach the children. They will go through background checks prior to working with them. The supplies will be purchased using the Berrien County Generous Juror Fund and is expected to be approximately \$4,000.

**Q & A – Dissette, Elliott & Christie**

Christie reviewed the 3 applications received for the 911 Advisory Board. There is one citizen opening. Curran recommended appointing Dennis Sexton as he has extensive experience. Wuerfel stated there

should be new people appointed. Discussions ensued. There was consensus by the Committee to recommend the Board of Commissioners appoint Dennis Sexton.

Christie reviewed the 2 applications received for the Community Corrections Advisory Board. There is one citizen and one business community opening. These two applicants fit the citizen opening. Discussions ensued regarding experienced versus new potential appointees. There was consensus by the Committee to recommend the Board of Commissioners appoint Debra Panozzo to the citizen opening. Christie noted there have not been any applications received for the business community opening.

Christie will contact the remaining applicants that were not selected and inform them of openings on other County boards for their consideration.

Christie reviewed the budget for West Michigan Guardianship. Discussions ensued regarding sources of funding. The Committee concurred to move forward with a resolution next week for a 3 year agreement with a 2% annual increase of funding.

*\*ADDED\** Christie noted there was a request from Animal Control to place a memorial boulder in the landscaping in front of the building in memory of a long time employee who passed away. The Committee gave concurrence for the resolution.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Wuerfel, supported by Meeks, to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2022 meeting. Motion Carried.

### **Resolutions**

The following Resolutions were moved forward to the full Board:

A2204246 – Authorize grant application to be submitted for the FY23 Community Corrections Advisory Board for a one year term.

A2204252 – Execute agreement with Buchanan Township for additional police protection for Red Bud Track & Trail from June 30 to July 3.

A2204258 – Approve the conversion of Blue Ridge Path from a private road to public road.

A2204259 – Authorize application for McCoy's Creek Trail Extension Phase IV.

### **Sheriff Funds Distribution**

Curran has approved Berrien Community Foundation funding for the Sheriff's Department to use funds in the amount of \$2,750.00 for expenses for the Paw Paw Lake Bayview Boat using funds donated by Kihlstrand Family.

### **Public Comments**

Jerry Sirk, Benton Charter Township – Asked if any ghost guns have been confiscated.

Josh Gitlan, Lincoln Charter Township – He is working with Kevin Stack regarding the conversion of Blue Ridge Path.

Meeting adjourned at 10:20 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

JArent

Jennifer Arent  
Recording Secretary