

**BERRIEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of January 22, 2026**

**Roll Call Present:** Jim Curran, Chairman  
David Vollrath, Vice Chair

**Absent:** Sharon Tyler  
Alex Ott

**Scheduled:** Brian Dissette, Administration  
Mac Elliott, BOC Chair  
Carrie Smietanka-Haney, Trial Court (for FOC)  
Don Trail, Building & Grounds  
Mark Heyliger, Road Department

**Others:** Stacy Loar-Porter, Clerk  
Don Goolooze, Weighmaster

**Call to Order**

Chairman Curran called the meeting to order at 9:25 am.

**Friend of the Court Resolution P2601124 – Smietanka-Haney**

Attorney Referee Part Time Option – Smietanka-Haney reviewed the resolution. There are currently two full-time positions open. They would like to amend the job description to include the option of part-time with benefits. The addition of allowing benefits for part time could be a potential draw for applicants. The committee concurred.

**Building & Grounds Update – Trail**

Trail provided the updated list. The Administration security project has been updated, and it is ready to go to bid to see what the actual cost is going to be. He reviewed the drawing and noted they plan to keep the integrity of the building structure while ensuring it will be ADA compliant. The 4<sup>th</sup> floor will be an alternate to see what those costs will be. Trail has met with all the elected officials, and all are satisfied and there is a consensus to move forward. Loar-Porter concurred. Discussions ensued. Curran requested a digital copy of the final drawing be emailed to the committee. After the committee has reviewed it, they will meet with Trail to answer any possible questions prior to moving forward to the full Board.

Trail noted Benton Charter Township fixed the water main break at 2100 E. Empire and there was no damage to the building.

**Road Department Update – Heyliger**

Heyliger reviewed the update. Discussions ensued regarding the wind blowing and drifting snow. He reported the snow and ice removal have been typical. He noted the photos attached to the report showing how the ice and snow get caked on the equipment, which demonstrates why the equipment needs down time after each shift to allow it to thaw and melt off. Heyliger noted Critical Bridge funding for 2028 has been set. The Coloma Road bridge over the Paw Paw River is estimated to be \$2,115,000 and the Log Cabin Road bridge over the Galien River is estimated to be \$1,458,000. He has been attending Township Board meetings and speaks during the Public Comment period letting them know he is available to answer any questions they may have. He has been well received. The 2026 Highway Conference and Road Show will be held March 24 through 26 and Commissioners are welcome.

Heyliger reported on the process of addressing road damage. An excavating company accidentally scraped asphalt and seal coating off a road. Typically the county charges for the cost of labor and materials for the repair and sends an invoice. Discussions ensued regarding self-reporting and other examples of contractors

and farmers damaging roads. Heyliger would like a policy regarding this. Curran requested Heyliger draft a policy for the committee to review.

Curran asked why the Road department wasn't using fund balance to cover the funding shortfall. Heyliger explained that of that \$9.5M fund balance, approximately \$500,000 is cash. The remaining value is made of building, equipment, inventory, and property.

Weighmaster Goulooze requested a fee schedule for Right-of-Way permits. Discussions ensued.

#### **Q & A – Dissette & Elliott**

Elliott confirmed the consent calendar.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Vollrath, supported by Curran, to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2026 meeting. Motion Carried.

#### **Resolutions**

The following resolutions were signed by the Committee:

A2601109 – Authorize Animal Services to partner with MSU College of Veterinary Medicine Mobile Unit Program.

A2601130 – Authorize Bizstream Youth Center case management software for 2026.

#### **Sheriff's Funds Distribution Request**

None.

#### **Property Use Request**

None.

#### **Miscellaneous**

None.

#### **Public Comments**

Michael Haskins, Pipestone Township – Sunday at 5:00 a.m. the Road Department was plowing his road, which is a secondary road. While on the road, he was unable to see the plow due to the snow accumulation on the equipment. Also, we need two weighmasters with one out on the road full time and one that is half office and half roads.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*J Arent*

Jennifer Arent