

**BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes**  
**February 12, 2026**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairperson R. McKinley Elliott called the regular Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. in the Board of Commissioners' Room at the Berrien County Administration Center, 701 Main Street, in St. Joseph, Michigan.

**ROLL CALL:**

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

11 PRESENT: Rayonte Bell, Jim Curran, Teri Sue Freehling, Jon Hinkelman, Alex Ott, Chokwe Pitchford, Sharon Tyler, David Vollrath, Julie Wuerfel, Mamie Yarbrough and R. McKinley Elliott.

1 ABSENT: Robert Harrison.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 5, 2026, MEETING:**

Commissioner Freehling moved and was seconded by Commissioner Vollrath, to approve the Committee of the Whole minutes from February 5, 2026. Motion carried, no nays.

**REQUISITION REVIEW - Annette Christie:**

**Executive Administrative Assistant Annette Christie presented the requisitions to the Board for their review and discussion.**

**SCHEDULED DISCUSSION: GALLAGHER BENEFITS SERVICES, INC. PRESENTATION- MICHAEL HAGERTY, AREA SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT.**

Michael Hagerty, Gallagher Benefits Services, Inc Area Senior Vice President, introduced himself to the Board and provided background information on Gallagher Benefits Services, Inc. They are an insurance brokerage and risk management company, they provide support to human resource departments.

The scope of health insurance services included in the approved contract with Berrien County. Services include:

- Renewal Analysis
- Periodic Plan Financial Reports
- Annual Financial Reports
- Carrier Marketing and Negotiations
- Legislative and Regulatory Compliance Support
- Day to day Administrative Assistance
- Employee Education Programs
- Communication Materials
- Benefit Administration Assessment
- Market Benchmarking Studies
- Benefit Plan Design or Redesign

The current contract does not include services for the employees or retirees. Gallagher has a Benefit Advocate Center that would provide employee services through an additional premier service at an additional cost. The additional service would provide support benefits to staff, including:

- Education and support during open enrollment
- ID card resolution
- Explanation of eligibility rules and requirements
- Coordination of Benefits
- Claims support
- Dedicated 800 number and email address

- Nurse Advocate
- Medicare Experts

Kristin Reynolds, County Human Resources Director, stated the estimated cost for this additional service is \$1.25 per employee, \$1,000 per month. She stated due to not having a current County Benefits Manager, this service would assist in providing employees and retirees with quicker responses. The department is currently receiving 10-12 insurance-related calls per day and is working to respond as quickly as possible.

Consensus of the Board was to have the PHS committee discuss the additional service option during today's committee meeting and consider recommendation of approval to the Board of Commissioners at the next regular Board of Commissioners meeting.

**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, 3.9 B-C): None.**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 A.M.

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R. McKinley Elliott, Chairperson

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Stacy Loar-Porter, County Clerk

***Minutes are to be approved at the next Committee of the Whole meeting.***