

BERRIEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
Minutes of February 26, 2026

Roll Call Present: Jim Curran, Chairman
David Vollrath, Vice Chair
Sharon Tyler
Alex Ott (arrived at 9:30 a.m.)

Absent:

Scheduled: Mike Sepic, Interim Administrator
Mac Elliott, BOC Chair
Scott Sanford, Public Defender

Others:

Call to Order

Chairman Curran called the meeting to order at 9:18 am.

Public Defender's Office Update – Sanford

Sanford is working on the grant application, which is required in March due to no new standards. He will provide it to the committee prior to submitting a resolution. Discussions ensued regarding insufficient attorneys to meet caseload standards, as he is down by six. There is also the possibility that the age of "youthful offenders", which has been age 18 to 21, may be raised up through 24. He noted he has summer interns scheduled in the MIDC budget and has four 3rd-year law students graduating in May that he would like to offer an employment package to. He inquired when the minimum starting wage request will be addressed. Discussions ensued. The Committee members directed Sanford to provide a memo for their review prior to presenting it to PHSC with basic information showing the reason for a higher starting step and the Administration Committee will support it. He reported he has hired an Attorney III from the east side of the State. Sanford noted there are serious issues with the current Juvenile contract attorneys that have been brought to his attention and he is meeting with corporate counsel, Jean Lawrence and Judge Berger regarding the matters. Discussions ensued.

Q & A – Sepic & Elliott

Sepic noted there was a decision made in 2025 to eliminate historically unfilled positions to help balance the budget. He is looking for feedback of the criteria Commissioners expect in determining whether to add a position back. He currently has a request. Discussions ensued.

Discussions ensued regarding the approval of county property use requests. Elliott noted it was established years ago that the Administration Committee Chair has the authority to approve requests. There is no formal vote taken. Vollrath requested Elliott appoint his ex-officio seat on the Public Works board due to those meetings conflicting with the 911 Advisory Council he is also serving on. Tyler stated she will look at her calendar to check availability to serve on that board. Discussions ensued regarding Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health Authority.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Tyler, supported by Vollrath, to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2026 meeting. Motion Carried.

Resolutions

The following resolutions were signed by the Committee:

A2602155 – Authorize agreement with Point Blue to conduct a pre-demolition environmental review.
A2603156 – Authorize agreement with Reliable Disposal for the Animal Services Department.

A2603158 – Appoint Capt. Albers as the Emergency Management Coordinator and Lt. Higgs to Deputy Coordinator.

A2603162 – Approve contract with MDOT for removal of structure #965 (bridge) on Glendora Road over the Galien River.

A2603164 – Authorize agreement with VFP Fire Systems for testing and inspection of extinguishers at all County facilities.

Sheriff's Funds Distribution Request

Curran approved Berrien Community Foundation funding for the Sheriff's Department to use funds in the amount of \$5,000.00 for training through MSA.

Curran approved Berrien Community Foundation funding for the Sheriff's Department to use funds in the amount of \$1,091.50 for motorcycle unit insurance.

Property Use Request

None.

Miscellaneous

None.

Public Comments

None.

Meeting adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

J Arent

Jennifer Arent