

**REGULAR SESSION MEETING  
BERRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2024  
6:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman, Ronnie Gaskins, called the regular session meeting of the Berrien County Board of Commissioners to order on Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. Members of the Board of Commissioners present were Commissioners Pixie Harrod, Robert Griner, John Nugent and Jimmy Parker.

**Invocation:** Commissioner Jimmy Parker

**Pledge:** Commissioner Robert Griner

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve the January 2, 2024 Regular Session Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner. The motion carried unanimously.

**INVITED GUESTS:**

A. Jessica Culp – addressed the board about her property located at 5415 Garner Rd. She states the county is pumping water from the old landfill pond onto her property and it is washing out her driveway and flooding her property. Public Works does drain the pond, at times, into a ditch which is the natural water flow. Commissioner Pixie Harrod presented a map to the commissioners as well as Ms. Culp showing that she is in a flood area. The board stated they will look at it to see if anything can be done.

B. Katie Harnage – Blue Sow Branch Ln. She asked the board to consider pulling ditches and build the road up and maintain it. This is a private road.

C. Lisa Webb – Ms. Webb stated that she has concerns about some of the people serving on Enigma Fire Department. She presented the board with some material for their review. She would like to see the county not let them service the county fire department.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

A. **DAMAGE ASSESSMENT TOOL – EMA** - Administration received a request from Sandy Mizell to purchase a Damage Assessment Tool. This tool would be a huge asset in times of a disaster. It can also be used as work orders for the Public Works Department to track maintenance on roads which is now going to be required in disaster situations. Two quotes are provided, and EMA is requesting approval on the Orion quote.

|                |                         |  |
|----------------|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Quotes:</b> | <b>Orion (Futurity)</b> | <b>\$2,200.00</b>                        |
|                | <b>Crisis Track</b>     | <b>\$2,384.00 (3% increase annually)</b> |

Commissioner Jimmy Parker made the motion to approve the Damage Assessment Tool through Orion in the amount of \$2,200.00, seconded by Commissioner Pixie Harrod. The motion carried unanimously.

B. **SOLID WASTE LICENSE – 2024** - Administration sent out applications for the 2024 Solid Waste License Renewals. We received four requests. The board agreed in

December to raise the Solid Waste License Fee to \$400.00 and not charge tonnage. To date, everyone has paid tonnage and is current. Applications received were from Rest EZ, Golden Environmental, Greenway Services and Advanced Disposal/Waste Management. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made the motion to approve the 2024 Solid Waste License as presented, seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner. The motion carried unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. AGREEMENT FOR GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SERVICES WITH SGRC** – Administration received from Greg Nimmo to renew our Agreement with SGRC on the Geographic Information System Services. This is an annual agreement which is a budget item. Greg Nimmo, Chief Appraiser, stated there is a \$200.00 increase this year so the total is \$4,900.00. Commissioner Jimmy Parker made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner John Nugent. The motion carried unanimously.

**B. UPL GROUND AMBULANCE PAYMENTS – The Department of Community Health has** received approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for the SFY 2024 Ground Ambulance Payments UPL Calculation. On March 23, 2023, the department paid an interim supplemental payment to eligible ambulance providers. The Department will pay the final payment by February 29, 2024. The breakdown on the payment for Berrien County is:

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| \$55,683.92        | Federal Share                                      |
| <u>\$28,826.51</u> | State Share (This is the State’s part of Medicaid) |
| \$84,510.43        | Final Supplemental UPL Payments                    |

We have to make the payment by wire transfer and then they will send us the \$55,683.92 payment. Administration is requesting approval to do the wire transfer.

Commissioner Robert Griner made the motion to allow County Administrator to make the wire transfer, seconded by Commissioner Pixie Harrod. The motion carried unanimously.

**C. EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION – NASHVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT** – Administration received a request from Marc Mathis to remove and replace a lightbar on one of the trucks. One quote was provided by McLaggan Communications & Rada Services, Inc. in the amount of \$2,945.00. Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner John Nugent. The motion carried unanimously.

**D. VOCA GRANT APPROVAL – DA** – Administration received a request from Distract Attorney Chase Studstill to approve the VOCA Grant #C23-8-101 which covers the grant period of October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024. The award amount is \$126,210.00 and the match is waived. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

**E. EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION – NASHVILLE FIRE DEPT.** – Administration received a request from Marc Mathis to purchase extrication equipment for Nashville Fire Department. Two quotes were provided. Municipal Emergency Services \$58,344.00 and AEST Fire & Safety \$69,674.00. Commissioner Jimmy Parker made a motion

to approve the purchase from Municipal Emergency Services in the amount of \$58,344.00, seconded by Commissioner Pixie Harrod. The motion carried unanimously.

**F. STATEWIDE MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT – EMA** – Administration received a request from Sandy Mizell, EMA Director, requesting approval of the Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement. Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

**G. RESOLUTION FOR THE OKEFENOKEE SWAMP AND AGAINST THE TWIN PINES MINERALS STRIP MINE** – Administration received a request to approve a Resolution for the Okefenokee Swamp and Against the Twin Pines Minerals Strip Mine. Commissioner Robert Griner said that chairs around the area asked us to approve a resolution to keep the swamp environmentally protected. Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Pixie Harrod. The motion carried unanimously.

**H. BOARD APPOINTMENT – BOARD OF HEALTH** – Administration received a request from the Board of Health to reappoint Dr. Donnie Nash and Joe Barkman for another 5-year term which will be February 2, 2024 to January 31, 2030. Commissioner Jimmy Parker made a motion to reappoint Dr. Donnie Nash and Joe Barkman which a term ending January 31, 2030, seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner. The motion carried unanimously.

**I. BOARD APPOINTMENT – AIRPORT** – Administration received a request from the Airport Authority Board requesting to reappoint Kien Morrison and Lyle Hendley to the board for another 4-year term which will expire March 2028. Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to reappoint Ken Morrison and Lyle Hendley with terms ending March 2028, seconded by Commissioner Pixie Harrod. The motion carried unanimously.

**J. BOARD APPOINTMENT – LIBRARY BOARD** – Administration received a request from Angi Hughes, Library Director, to make an appointment to the library board. Jessca Akins was nominated but have not confirmed if she would be willing to serve. This is a 3-year appointment. Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to approve Jessica Akins if she is willing to serve, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

**K. EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION - WBFD** – Administration received a request from Marc Mathis to purchase a winch for the West Berrien Fire Department’s new truck. Two quotes were received from D&S Wheels & Deals for \$3,677.00 installed, Buckstop Truckware \$2,294.00 not installed. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve D&S Wheels & Deals, who is local, in the amount of \$3,677.00, seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner. The motion carried unanimously.

**L. FUEL MASTER UPGRADE – ROAD DEPT.** – Administration received a request from Ben Warren, Public Works Director, to upgrade the Fuel Master System. One quote was provided from Fuel Master in the amount of \$14,398.75. This can be paid for out of TSPLOST because it is transportation. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve the Fuel Master upgrade in the amount of \$14,398.75, seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner. The motion carried unanimously.

**M. BUILDING INSPECTOR/CODE ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT –**

Administration is requesting the board enter into an agreement to contract with Dennis Admas to do necessary building inspections and code enforcement issues until a replacement is found. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

**N. RLF LOAN APPROVAL – IRON WERKS FITNESS –**

Administration received a request to approve a RLF Application from Tony Lanier for the new gym and building at the complex he's doing on Hwy 168. The total project cost is \$665,000.00 with 10 jobs created. He is requesting a RLF Loan in the amount of \$200,000.00. Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

**O. EQUIPMENT PURCHASE – NASHVILLE FIRE DEPT. –**

Administration received a request from Steve Adams, Nashville Fire Department, to purchase the mechanical opener for the rollup door. They received one quote from Don's Repair Service in the amount of \$1,795.00. Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Commissioner Pixie Harrod. The motion carried unanimously.

**P. SURPLUS VEHICLE/EQUIPMENT –**

Administration is requesting the board approve the items listed as surplus items. There will be a public auction on March 9, 2024. (list attached to minutes) Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve the list as presented as surplus, seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner. The motion carried unanimously.

**Q. DRUG COURT SUPPLIES –**

Administration received a request from the Drug Court Administrator to purchase drug court testing supplies. The items are purchased on-line with only one quote provided from Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics Web Shop in the amount of \$4,093.20, Commissioner Jimmy Parker made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner. The motion carried unanimously.

**R. MOTOR GRADER – Discussion –**

Administration stated that the board approved to exercise the buyback on a motor grader that the lease expires this month along with getting an extended warranty. We have requested a new quote on that warranty as it was months ago. The representative had surgery and that quote will come to us next week. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to give the Chairman authority to approve the extended warranty when it's received, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

**S. ENIGMA FIRE DEPARTMENT (COUNTY) – DISCUSSION –**

There was discussion on the County Fire Department serving Enigma. County equipment/vehicles are stored at the Town of Enigma Fire Station. There have been some changes to the fire department for the Town of Enigma and Berrien County will be working through issues to establish a safe operation for the county fire station to serve Enigma. Several spoke about the fire station as follows: Marc Mathis, County Fire Coordinator, Gary Spears, Enigma Fire Chief, Michael Baldree, Jackie Laska and Ronald Harbin.

**T. AMBULANCE – DISCUSSION** – Gerald Sumner, EMS Director, stated that Custom Trucks and Body Works brought the Type III Ambulance to Berrien County. EMS Director noted numerous things wrong and did not meet the specs of the bid advertisement. It was not diesel and was supposed to be. Gerald presented the board with the current mileage on each vehicle. He provided the quotes received when the project was placed out for bid. Frazer can build a new full-size ambulance for us for \$380,391.01 with a turnaround time completed by December 2024. We feel that the urgency with the mileage and maintenance on our current fleet to be able to get an ambulance in this turn around time warrants the ability to purchase outside of normal procurement. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to reject the Type III Ambulance from Custom Truck & Body Work, seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner. The motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Jimmy Parker made a motion to go outside of the normal bid process due to lack of availability and urgency and go with Frazer on a Dodge Ambulance for \$380,391.01, seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner. The motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to purchase stretchers, etc. to go with it, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

**U. RATIFICATION ITEMS** – Administration is requesting ratification on the following items:

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Tire Store – Road                           | \$1,682.06  |
| 5-Star – Road                               | \$2,047.04  |
| Cherokee Culvert – Road                     | \$11,748.80 |
| Custom Trucks & Body Works – EMS            | \$2,050.51  |
| Sutton – Road                               | \$4,462.50  |
| Winsupply – Road                            | \$8,375.40  |
| Winsupply – Road                            | \$5,740.57  |
| Advantage – Sheriff                         | \$1,221.01  |
| REV Technical Center – RCFD                 | \$7,392.52  |
| Change Order – HVAC Removal and Replacement |             |

Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to ratify the items as presented, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

**REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND DEPARTMENTS:**

Lisa Smart – Economic Development/Chamber

- We are seeing some positive growth throughout Berrien County
- We were recognized by the State for the Berrien Ready Program.
- We received a grant of \$50,000.00 for the high school. This will help train students to be ready for the workforce and purchase a plasma cutting machine.

Greg Nimmo –

- Asked if we were making any headway with a solar ordinance. Jennifer Herzog said an associate in her office is working on it and she will follow up with them and let us know where they are on that. Greg Nimmo said that we are getting a lot of interest in it.

**COMMISSIONERS' ITEMS:**

Jimmy Parker –

- The Steer Show is coming up and would like to continue the donations from the

commissioners. This is a personal donation and not county funds.

Robert Griner –

- Stated that Roger Brown will be turning in a bid for the shop roof. The county administrator has one bid already. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to authorize the Chairman to approve the bid as necessary, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

Ronnie Gaskins –

- The SGRC is doing a training on February 24<sup>th</sup> and encouraged those that could attend.
- He has a tour of Holy Land Farm set for the Commissioners for Thursday at 1:00.
- He asked if you have something that needs to be on the agenda to please make sure the County Administrator receives it well before the meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Michael Boggs – Coffee Rd. had complaints about the Public Works Department clipping the roadside and pulling ditches and blading over the driveway. Ben Warren, Public Works Director, stated he met with Mr. Boggs earlier in the day and they are not completed with the work out there and plans were to get a sweeper and go back in the morning.

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS:**

Brenda Ferrell –

- Internet at the Airport FBO will cost \$37.99 per month. This is not a budgeted it. Commissioner Robert Griner made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Pixie Harrod. The motion carried unanimously.
- The Chamber Awards Banquet is February 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:-- at Flat Creek Church. We need to RSVP.
- The ACCG Annual Conference is April 25<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup>.
- The postage machine contract is up with Quadiant/Ashleys. It is a state contract and will increase by \$68.21 a month. Commissioner Jimmy Parker made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner. The motion carried unanimously.
- Red Bud Supply post and anchor request from the Road Dept. for \$2,813.12. Commissioner Pixie Harrod made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Robert Griner. The motion carried unanimously.

**ADJOURN**

With no other business to come before the Board, Commissioner Jimmy Parker made the motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Pixie Harrod. The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m..

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Chairman, Ronnie Gaskins

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Commissioner, Robert Griner

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Commissioner, Pixie Harrod

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Commissioner, Jimmy Parker

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Commissioner, John Nugent

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
County Clerk

