

BERRIEN COUNTY FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION BERRIEN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Call to Order: President Myers @ 0835hrs

Date: March 18th, 2026

Approval of Minutes: Bertrand and Niles Twp

Departments Present: 

- Baroda
- Benton Twp
- Bertrand Twp
- Berrien County Sheriff's Office
- Berrien Spring-Oronoko Twp
- Bridgman
- Buchanan Twp
- Chikaming
- Galien
- Niles City
- Niles Twp
- North Berrien
- Sodus Twp
- SJTWP #1
- Three Oaks Twp

Departments Absent:

Buchanan City
Eau Claire
DC Cook
Lake Twp
Lincoln Twp
SJDPS
SJTWP #2
Watervliet

Presentation: N/A

Treasures report:

- No bills
- One deposit of \$3,000.00 for the sale of Scene Watcher
 - Treasures report approved by Knisley and seconded by Mattix

Communications:

- Approved Blake Urtman as the LEPC Representative. Blake is replacing Mike Mattix.
- When dispatched to a utilities call (powerline, hit gas line), please remember to call the utilities direct. Everyone in your department should have access to these numbers.
 - AEP Emergency #888-237-2221
 - SEMCO Emergency #810-987-6699
 - Michigan Gas Utilities #800-401-6451
- Bertrand has a pancake breakfast on April 11th
- Sodus and Berrien Springs have a pancake breakfast on April 12th

New Chief's:

- Jeremy Connell was named the new Chief for Niles City FD

Dispatch/911:

- Reminder Advanced SEND goes into effect April 1st. Please have your department watch the video that was sent out. The video is also on the Berrien County Firefighters Association website.
- Minor issues with GIS, working with IT to get everything corrected.

Communication Committee:

- It was discussed about having a zone with everyone's propriety talk channel programmed into a zone. A county-wide MOU will be coming around to make those changes if a department wants.
- Please update your Active911 users for the chiefs
- It was discussed to look at changing our apparatus numbers to be in line with CAD. This does not mean you have to re-number your apparatus.

CAD Update:

- No official timeline for the project, however, Tyler Technologies said maybe July/August for a start.

Policy Committee:

- Working on another update to the bylaws to fill vacancies on the board

HazMat:

- Still looking into forming a County wide Authority for the hazmat
- Looking at the best locations are to store/house equipment. Would like to have locations close to the interstate, and waterway.
 - Benton Harbor said they could possibly house one of the trailers
 - Niles City said they might have room
- Chief Connell brought up looking into working and incorporating hazmat with the TRT5 team. No discussion about that.

BCFA:

- April's meeting will be held at Michiana Shores FD
- The car show is going well, ahead of last year's donations
 - If a department brings an apparatus, you will get 2 free tee shirts.

Emergency Management/Sheriff's office:

- LT Higgs was promoted to EOC to assist Captain Albers

Old-Business:

- Updated By-laws were approved as presented
 - Jesswein and Mattix
- Filling the Treasure/Secretary position
 - Opened for nomination and Frank DeLaTorre was nominated. No other nominations were brought forward. Motion by Mattix and Second by Steinke
 - Unanimous vote to approve Frank as Treasure/Secretary.

- RTF discussion
 - A good meeting was held on March 11th at the Health Department; both fire and police representatives were present to discuss moving forward with training and a new SOG to better the county.

New Business:

- Potential for having Zoom/Teams meetings was brought up and the possibility of needing to purchase an OWL with microphone to monitor if chiefs want to attend in person.
 - This discussion was tabled
- Meeting location:
 - Our meeting location will be at the County Health Department meeting room until further notice.
 - 2149 E. Napier Ave Benton Harbor
- Dispatch appreciation April 12th- 18th
 - We were reminded that there are two dispatch centers, and both will be taken care of.
 - It was decided to approve **up to \$300.00** for food or snacks to dispatch
 - Motioned by Jesswein and seconded by Knisely
 - Caitlyn will get a point person on how to coordinate and what days' work best
- MOU for Proprietary Channels
 - A motion was made by Jesswein and seconded by Knisely to move forward with a Fire only MOU to add each department's proprietary channel in a separate zone.

Adjournment:

Motion by Mattix and seconded by Knisley

NEXT MEETING APRIL 15TH 0830hrs AT THE BERRIEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT.