

# **BENZIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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448 COURT PLACE – BEULAH, MI 49617 – (231) 882-9671

[www.benzieco.net](http://www.benzieco.net)

## **SPECIAL MEETING BENZIE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AGENDA**

**February 10, 2021**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Frank F. Walterhouse Board Room, Government Center, Beulah, Michigan**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7493555921>**

**Meeting ID: 749 355 5921**

**One tap mobile**

**+13126266799,,7493555921# US (Chicago)**

**+19292056099,,7493555921# US (New York)**

9:00 a.m.      Call to Order

Roll call

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Agenda

Public Input

Strategic Planning

Public Input

Adjournment

### **Times Subject to Change**

The County of Benzie will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services for individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon five (5) working days' notice to the County. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the County in writing or by calling the following:

**BENZIE COUNTY CLERK  
448 COURT PLACE  
BEULAH MI 49617  
(231) 882-9671**

This notice was posted by Dawn Olney, Benzie County Clerk, on the bulletin board in the main entrance of the Benzie County Governmental Center, Beulah, Michigan, at least 18 hours prior to the start of the meeting. This notice is to comply with Sections 4 and 5 of the Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976).

## PUBLIC INPUT

**Purpose:** The Benzie County Board of Commissioners is a public policy setting body and subject to the Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976). The Board also operates under a set of “Benzie County Board Rules (section 7.3)” which provides for public input during their meetings. It continually strives to receive input from the residents of the county and reserves two opportunities during the monthly scheduled meeting for you the public to voice opinions, concerns and sharing of any other items of common interest. There are however, in concert with meeting conduct certain rules to follow.

**Speaking Time:** Agenda items may be added or removed by the board but initially at least two times are devoted to Public Input. Generally, however, attendees wishing to speak will be informed how long they may speak by the chairman. All speakers are asked to give their name, residence and topic they wish to address. This and the statements/comments will be entered into the public record (minutes of the meeting). Should there be a number of speakers wishing to voice similar opinions, an option for a longer presentation may be more appropriate for the group and one or more speakers may talk within that time frame.

Group Presentations – 15 minutes  
Individual Presentations – 3 minutes

**Board Response:** Generally, as this is an “Input” option, the board will not comment or respond to presenters. Silence or non-response from the board should not be interpreted as disinterest or disagreement by the board. However, should the board individually or collectively wish to address the comments of the speaker(s) at the approval of the Chair and within a time frame previously established, responses may be made by the board. Additionally, the presenter may be in need of a lengthier understanding of an issue or topic and may be referred to a committee appropriate to address those issues.

Public Input is very important in public policy settings and is only one means for an interchange of information or dialogue. Each commissioner represents a district within the county and he/she may be individually contacted should greater depth or understanding of an issue be sought. Personal contact is encouraged and helpful to both residents and the board.

### Commissioner Contacts:

District	I – Bob Roelofs (Almira East of Reynolds Road).....	231-645-1187
District	II - Art Jeannot (Almira Twp West of Reynolds Road, Platte and Lake Townships) .....	231-920-5028
District	III – Andy Miller (Crystal Lake, Frankfort) .....	231-920-8300
District	IV – Rhonda Nye (Benzonia).....	231-510-8804
District	V – Tim Markey (Homestead) .....	231-871-1399
District	VI - Evan Warsecke (Colfax, Inland) .....	231-275-3375
District	VII - Gary Sauer (Blaine, Gilmore, Joyfield, Weldon) .....	231-651-0647



## **Benzie County Board of Commissioners**

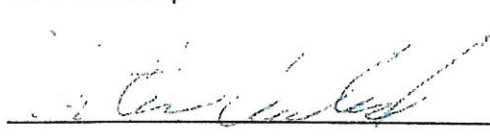
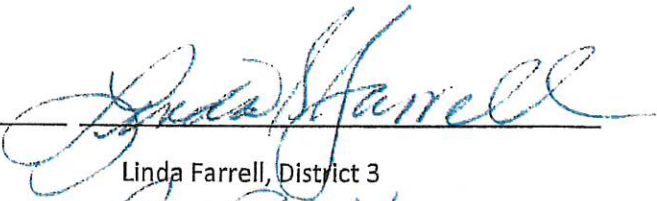

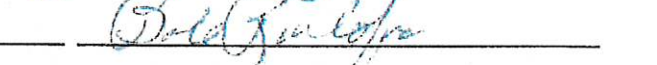

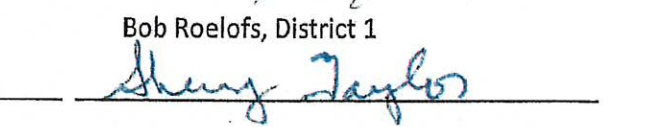
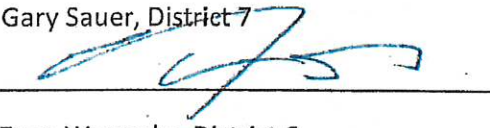
# **Strategic Plan Update**

**January 2019**

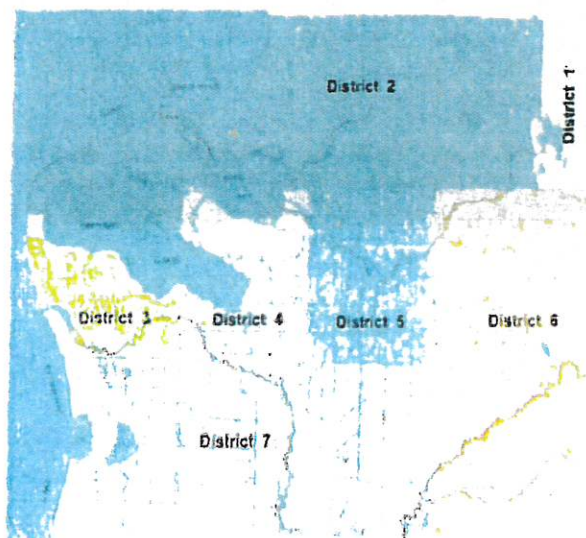
This is the first update of the Benzie County Board of Commissioners Strategic Plan that was initially developed in 2017. The following pages:

- Define our mission, vision and values
- Recognizes progress and accomplishments
- Identifies challenges and opportunities
- Identifies key stakeholders and how this plan will be used
- Establishes areas of focus and goals for each

We welcome input and participation from all interests in working together to achieve goals for Benzie County.

 _____ Coury Carland, District 4	 _____ Linda Farrell, District 3
 _____ Art Jeannot, District 2	 _____ Bob Roelofs, District 1
 _____ Gary Sauer, District 7	 _____ Sherry Taylor, District 5
 _____ Evan Warsecke, District 6	

**Benzie County Commission Districts**



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## Why a Strategic Plan?

The Benzie County Board of Commissioners work as partners to develop and use this Strategic Plan identify priorities that are the focus of our agenda and track our progress. Annually, the Board reviews the Strategy to ensure it is up to date.

The purposes of this Strategic Plan are to:

- o Develop a unifying plan for Benzie County involving key issues and opportunities.
- o Ensure efficient use of financial and human resources.
- o Establish areas of focus and strategic goals that are measures for progress and accountability.

We welcome ideas, input and participation in our Strategic Plan. Input can be provided by:

- o Contacting a Commissioner.
- o Providing input at Commission meetings.
- o Mailing to: Board of Commissioners, Benzie County Building, 448 Court Place, Beulah, Michigan 49617 or emailing to County Administrator Mitch Deisch at [mdeisch@benzieco.net](mailto:mdeisch@benzieco.net).



## Mission

The mission of the County Board of Commissioners is:

**As a service provider, convenor, advocate and steward, the Benzie County Board of Commissioners fulfills its constitutional obligations and the needs of the community through decisive, responsible leadership and maintaining a commitment to creating an inclusive, prosperous community where opportunity and quality of life are paramount.**

## Vision

The Vision of the County Board reflects the "ideal" state of the County from the perspective of the Commission:

Benzie County's vision is **"prosperity and opportunity for all residents and visitors."**

Progress toward the vision will be achieved through our mission and by achieving strategic goals in partnership with others.

The vision assumes that we will strive to attract families, create employment opportunities, provide mandated and desired services, and develop housing, recreational and other assets to support and enhance our quality of life.

## Values

A set of values guide our goals, decisions and leadership for the betterment of Benzie County including:

- Fiscal responsibility
- Transparency
- Being accessible and available for all interests
- Open communication
- Inclusiveness
- Integrity and strong ethics
- Sustainability
- Forward thinking

## Stakeholders

The Benzie County Commission is unified around the importance of sharing and encouraging participation and input in this Strategic Plan. The County Board and County Administrator welcome opportunities to present the Plan, including to stakeholders such as:

- County employees and elected officials
- County Boards and Commissions
- All local units of government
- The business community
- Regional partners like Networks Northwest, Rotary Charities of Traverse City, the Grand Traverse Band, Grand Traverse Area Regional Community Foundation, and others



- State government, including the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Pure Michigan, the Michigan Dept. of Transportation, the Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources, Michigan Dept. of Environmental Quality, Michigan Dept. Agriculture — Rural Development, Michigan State Housing & Development Authority and others.
- Nonprofits, such as the Human Services Collaborative Body, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Grow Benzie and Conservation Resource Alliance
- Education, including the County's two school districts, Traverse Bay Intermediate School District, Northwestern Michigan College, Baker College, West Shore Community College
- Veterans and Veteran groups
- Betsie Valley Community Center
- Benzie Bus
- All Service Clubs, including local Rotaries and others
- Sportsman Organizations
- Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- Frankfort and County Chambers
- Paul Oliver/Munson Health Care System
- Watershed Groups
- Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore
- Venture North
- Economic Development Contractors (AES)
- Community Mental Health/Centra Wellness
- Citizen Groups
- Farming Community
- Neighboring Counties



**If you would like to know more or become involved in our Strategic Plan, just let us know!**

### **How Will the Strategic Plan be Used?**

The Commission will use this Strategic Plan to:

- Provide leadership
- Establish our agenda and priorities.
- Set long term goals.
- Provide direction for County Employees and guidance for Elected Officials.
- Assess goals to ensure they reflect evolving conditions.
- Clarify County Commission priorities and goals to foster collaboration and understanding with local units of government.

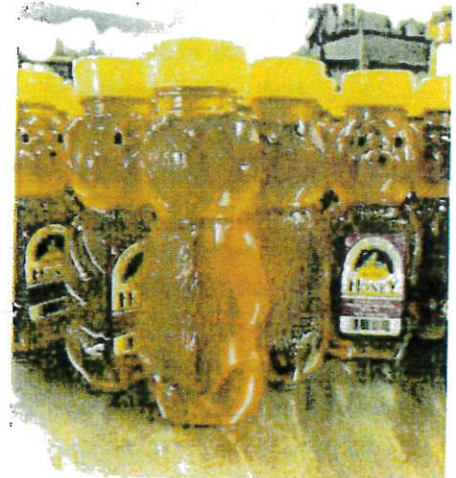


- Set priorities for training for units of government and locally elected officials.
- Build partnerships and collaboration.
- Promote the entire County (all local governments)
- Encourage participation by young people in the future of the County.
- Protect, enhance and wisely manage the County's valued natural resources.

## Progress

The Board recognizes that progress is being made in Benzie County. Examples include:

- **Workforce**
  - First skilled trades training program completed – Advocates for Benzie County
  - Benzie Central created liaison for skilled trades training
  - Creation of Local College Access Network with leadership of Mary Anne Behm and Valerie Gerhart
- **Health Care**
  - Progressive programming of Centra Wellness focused on rehabilitation and treatment as opposed to incarceration
  - Veterans Affairs Enhancements – Access to Benefits focus
- **Community/Economic Development**
  - County Airport achieved general utility license
  - Beulah – system upgraded so water quality compliance attained
  - Thompsonville – upgrading water supply system
  - Road Commission – ahead of schedule with road repair and county-wide road millage
  - Storm Cloud Brewery expansion
  - Xpert Fulfillment growth and development
  - Sleeping Bear Apiaries expansion
  - Crystal Mountain continued growth and success as four-season resort
  - Land Bank Progress/Success
    - Thompsonville Housing
    - Affordable Rentals
    - Developments – catalyst for natural gas
  - New Platte River Park Funding & Development
  - New Elberta Park Funding



## - Financial Wellness/Infrastructure

- County balanced budget without use of budgeted fund balance - FY 18/19
- Received \$660,000+ grant to upgrade emergency response communications
- Development of a 5 year capital improvement plan

## Trends and Opportunities

The County Commissioners recognized several trends and opportunities in the County that merit attention:

- Increased coordination and cooperation – efforts at County level and outside of County.
- We continue to plan for the future: finance staff; capital expenditure budget; cooperative inter-county functions; 3-year budgeting
- Interest and need for more cooperative infrastructure initiatives involving sewer, natural gas, water supply and broadband and need to keep infrastructure capacity parallel with growth
- Need to expand/implement Connect Michigan plan for Benzie Last Mile broadband, anticipating new federal incentives
- Need to address housing for seasonal workers
- Continued emphasis upon four season economy development, including opportunities for winter tourism and general business attraction
- Need to support local units with guidelines for short term rentals
- Development of rail/transloader concept
- Need for increased citizen participation and maximizing considerable talent of volunteers
- Need to make use of “best practices” in develop/modifying new programs
- Continued need for business attraction with continued need for employees/workforce and workforce housing.
- Review/use of county-owned assets – will be subject of County-assessment
- Need for county-wide communications/outreach tools – from governmental meetings to cultural events and more
- Need for community development leader to develop tools/approaches for marketing and growth
- Need for 24/7 child care and early childhood programming
- Need to continue work to manage invasive species, improve water quality and develop trails
- Need to continue/intensive efforts involving opioids and other drug accessibility and use
- Need for more systematic wage rate and benefits schedule at county level.



- Continued support for child abuse prevention and healthy family interventions
- Need to fully leverage DNR/Park Service programs for mutual benefit

## **Areas of Focus**

We have identified six areas of focus for this Strategic Plan. An “area of focus” is a broad area of high priority for the Board. For each area of focus the Board has developed Strategic Goals. The Board will work with the County Administrator to ensure that operating plans and budgets reflect our Strategic Goals. The Areas of Focus are:

1. Credibility of County Board & Building Trust
2. Collaboration & Partnerships to Achieve Priorities/ Create Efficiencies
3. Improved Institutional Capacity
4. The Financial Health of County Government
5. Creating an Environment to Support Business and Job Creation
6. Enhancing and Protection Natural Resources of the County

### **1. Credibility of County Board & Building Trust**

- **Goal:** To develop and implement a communications plan, including web site enhancements with an inclusive email list for sharing information that uses electronic communication to encourage collaboration, two-way communications and ideas and suggestions that support the betterment of the County.
- **Goal:** To convene with Benzie County Townships to understand their priorities and collaborate where possible to achieve them, achieving regional collaboration. Designate County Board members to attend City, Village and Township Association meetings.
- **Goal:** To encourage public participation in Commission meetings and other public meetings at all levels of government. To initiate action toward this goal, we will formally recognize and express our gratitude to those who offer input at the meetings we hold.
- **Goal:** To inform our County as well as partnering organizations, invite Congressional representatives, State and Federal Department heads, and others to explore common agendas for progress, including issues and opportunities including but not limited to affordable housing, high speed broadband, opioids control and others.



## 2. Collaboration & Partnerships to Achieve Shared Goals

- **Goal:** To develop partnerships to achieve goals of this Strategic Plan.

## 3. Improved Institutional Capacity

- **Goal:** To continue to implement a professional development plan for Commissioners to strengthen governance, leadership, productive and efficiency.

*All Commissioners should participate in training about the Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act. All new Commissioners will receive an orientation that includes completion of a professional development plan and an introduction to the programs and services of the County.*

- **Goal:** Leverage all reasonable resources and develop a county funding mechanism if needed to achieve last mile high speed Broadband in Benzie County.
- **Goal:** Implement the results of the space needs study to improve the working environment of Benzie County.

## 4. Financial Health of County Government

- **Goal:** To review the upcoming report on programs and financial health of the County and develop priorities and an implementation strategy for that report.
- **Goal:** To develop a long term strategy for managing the MERS liability.

## 5. Create an Environment to Support Business and Job Creation

- **Goal:** To leverage human, physical, business, education and other resources to support business development and job creation.
- **Goal:** To support local economic and community development strategies which include but are not limited to:
  - Infrastructure to support economic development, including last mile high speed broadband and natural gas expansion.
  - "One Stop" point of contact for businesses, including use of EDC representatives and Brownfield authority.
  - Port development, including development of the cruise industry.
  - The Transloader/Rail project.



- Optimize and support added resources to enable Venture North to continue and expand provision of capital to Benzie county businesses.
- Strategic use of the Land Bank and related partners to achieve economic and community development priorities.



## 6. Enhancing and Protecting Natural Resources of the County

- **Goal:** To support implementation of the Benzie County Recreation Plan
- **Goal:** To support access for people of all ages, needs and abilities to enjoy our abundant and diverse water resources, including Lake Michigan, rivers and streams, inland lakes, wetlands and more under an Explore the Shores Program for Benzie County.
- **Goal:** To sustain open space.
- **Goal:** Promote community education and awareness about the presence, impact and management & eradication of invasive species.
- **Goal:** Advocate for continued water quality protection and related assets including potential joint projects involving multiple municipal units of government.

