BERRIEN COUNTY
FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION
BERRIEN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Call to Order: 0836-0949 **Date: October 21, 2026**

Old minutes: Old minutes emailed out. Motion to accept old minutes by: Chief Weich. Seconded by: Chief Steinke. Motion passed. None opposed.
Agenda Changes: None
Presentation: None
Treasurer's Report: Starting Balance: $8489.64. Payment to Gaggle: $100.00. ending Balance: $8389.64. Motion to accept treasurers report by: Chief Weich. Seconded by: DD Phelps. Motion passed. None opposed.
Bills: SMR $990.00 for Tune/Align cache radios.
Communications: None
General Communications: None
New Chief/Visitor: None
EMS: (Great Lakes Drone: Medic-1: S.M.C.A.S.: Med Control:) None
Dispatch/911: It is fire education month. Caitlin thanked all fire departments for the service they provide to the communities. Dispatch has 2 in training.
Communications Committee: See attached.
HAZMAT: Chief Weich stated he has had very limited response from fire departments. Need 3-4 fire departments throughout county to house equipment. Need firefighters for personnel on the team. Need at least 15 for the team. BCSD is not going to continue the team. Sheriff stated no hard deadline yet but it will be coming. Questions that were posed: Who will lead the team? Who will perform the training? Is the information getting to the municipal leaders? Is this information getting to the firefighters?
BCFA: Next meeting at Berrien Springs November 04, 2026. December meeting at Royalton on December 02, 2026. It will be the Christmas meeting. Website has been updated. Vehicles have been updated with new apparatus designators. Please check your page. Gerry would like to compile a list of firefighters in the county to facilitate information sharing. Gerry is asking for names and emails of firefighters. They will not be shared. When he sends emails all emails are BCC so they are not able to be seen. Request for Gerry to create an email request the chiefs can share with department members.
Training: BHDPS academy starts in November. BC Dispatch to host a scouting academy November 16-18. It is a recruiting program aimed at public safety, PD, FD, EMS. See attached for additional classes.
Emergency Management: Side room at EOC to be renovated soon.
Sheriff: Budget time of the year.
MABAS:
Other Comments: Chief Harper asked for department to be considerate of other jurisdictions. Had a south county department come up to a big box store in Benton township for a pub Ed event without asking or talking to Benton Township fire. If your department is asked to do pub ed or other event in another jurisdiction, make sure you reach out to the AHJ department.
Buchanan Township fish fry on Saturday. Niles Twp pancake breakfast on November 01 from 0800-1100. Bertrand Chile supper on November 01.

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Old Business: Boxcard Availability: Dispatch has sent Gerry all of the boxcards. Gerry has put them on the BCFA website, and they are login and password protected. Dispatch will send updated boxcards to Gerry as needed. DD Kazmierzak requested that BHDPS boxcards be removed. BHDPS is not a member of BCFA, (Berrien County Firefighters Association), and BHDPS does not want their box cards available to others. DD Kazmierzak felt boxcards were not protected enough. Discussion on the fact that there is now a two-step process to access the boxcards: Now need a username and a password. DD Kazmierzak is ok with the two-step process. If you need the log in information, contact Gerry.

Discussion on smoke alarm program. Chief Myers stated letter was sent to representative Brad Paquette. Unfortunately funding for 2027 is gone. Chief Myers suggested if a chief has a chance to speak to representatives to please discuss funding of the smoke alarm program. The State Fire Chiefs Association is pushing to get the funding back in 2028. Discussion on working with your local building officials to require smoke alarm before granting occupancy permits.
New Business: Discussion on unified incident command. Chief Myers stated fire does incident command better than PD. That being said we are working with police association to improve incident command at our larger incidents. The QA process has been helpful in this process, and we need to continue to work and train with our police partners to set up unified incident command at these larger incidents. Captain Albers reminded all of the county mobile command/communications vehicle that would be perfect for unified incident command.

There will be a CAD upgrade on November 1y7, 2026. CAD servers will be down for about 4 hours. We will be going to the newest version of CAD, so we will see changes in our CADs. Question: can we us the cad button push for minor calls. Caitlin advised we decided that we will continue to clear calls, first unit go enroute, and on scene over the radio. After that agency decision on how additional units go enroute, by CAD or over the radio.
Caitlin advised they are working with the NCC on pages going out without keying up. Some agencies advise they have received pages with no voice. Captain DeLaTorre asked are they department pages or county all call. Captain DeLaTorre advised there have been instances of county all call page going out with no voice following. Chief Myers asked how to tell the difference. If you do not have different tones for county all call and department page talkgroups, you can tell by going to pager mailbox and looking at the recorded page. County ALL CALL is 11PG911. Department page talkgroup will be 11PGXXXX with the XXXX being your department's initials and number. Example North Berrien paging talkgroup is: 11PGNB41.
Next Meeting: November 18, 2026, at the Berrin County Conference room.
Adjourn: Motion to adjourn by: Chief Weich. Seconded by: DD Phelps. None opposed.
Meeting adjourn: 0949hrs.

BERRIEN COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION
ATTENDANCE SHEET

October 21, 2026

NAME	SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT
Frank DeLaTorre		North Berrien/Niles
Doug MYERS		BSOFD
EVERETT STEINKE	Everett Steinke	STFD
JAMIE FLICK		NBT FD
Jim Robinson		SJCTFD1
ROB HARPER	R. Harper	BCTFD
Dave FLICK		TOFD
Tim JESSWEIN		Buchanan Twp / Niles Twp
JIM JANES		BRIDGMAN
David Albers		BCSO
Mike Phelps		SSDP
Gerry Kabelman		S.J.C.T.F.D. #1
CHUCK HEIT		Sheriff
ZAC BERNARD		RTFD
Caitlin Sampsell	Caitlin Sampsell	BC911
Allen Welch		Chikaming
Bryan Miller		Galien
Brian Kazmierczak	Virtual	BHDPS
Tyler Knisely	Virtual	Bertrand
Ted Nitz	Virtual	Weesaw
Brandon Chiarello	Virtual	Lincoln Hills
Bill WHITNEY	Virtual	Watervliet
Norm Carl	Virtual	Eau Claire

Communications Committee

Discussion Topics

DATE: October 20, 2026

Still working on updating call types.

Discussion on the new radio designators. Most of us are doing well. We still have a few hiccups we need to work on…..

REMINDER to please use plain language and full designator name….
Example Assistant Chief-XX
NOT AC-XX. On the radio:
AC sounds like 18
E sounds like B and vice versa.
T sounds like P etc…..

Remember if you are an officer on the department to use your officer designation, if you are a firefighter use your firefighter designation. Please make sure firefighters use the station designator when using individual numbers…Example: saying 11, or 32, or 207 does not tell dispatch who you are, please use station designator with firefighter number. EX- My position number is 32, so I would say 6732 on radio.
Remember we do not need to say department name…example North Berrien station-41 is clear on the call. The department number covers that. Station-41 is clear on the call…. designates North Berrien.

Discussion on topics for CAD training.

Reviewed a structure fire call where there was some very confusing and unnecessary radio traffic in early stages of the call. Followed up with that department's chief to help correct issues.

MABAS REPORT

October 21, 2026:

Barry County 3506 became a member in September, the next day contacted MABAS regarding a ricin incident.

Lake County & Mecosta should be ready to become a Division in November. Huron and Sanilac working on becoming their own Division.
Region 8 - Active in MABAS October 1, 2026.

Continued work with UP Fire Depts and EMS. MABAS meeting with Baraga and NW UP counties later in October. Gogebic went live with MABAS on October 1, 2026. They are working on box cards currently.

MABAS presented at the MEMA Conference in Shanty Creek. Great reaction from the EMHSD District Coordinators

Anyone interested in developing a Stillwater/Flood Type III Mission Ready
Package deployable through MABAS, please contact Chris Martin

Anyone interested in, or have any questions regarding the validation of
Special Operations Resources that can then be deployable through MABAS, please contact Chris Martin.

Discussion on training with boxcards. Do officers/firefighters know their box cards and when to call for the next alarm? What happens when an assigned agency/resource is unavailable? The goal should be to build confidence at the company-officer/firefighter level so the incident can progress even when the chief isn't available.

HB 4301 and 4302, recognize the vehicles used by Michigan Mutual Aid Box Alarm System as emergency vehicles, allowing them to be equipped with flashing lights and getting rid of the requirement for the driver to have a commercial driver's license for firefighters who have already met the MFFTC Emergency Driving certification. These bills finally passed with a unanimous vote in the Senate and then were signed into law by the Governor on Oct 2.

There have been some discussions in both chambers regarding a funding bill of some type, but have received nothing in writing or concrete as to details. MABAS leadership is continuing to work with the MAFC and SFM in educating legislators on what the need is and the impact across the state for our fire service and the communities they serve.

BERRIEN COUNTY
Information Systems

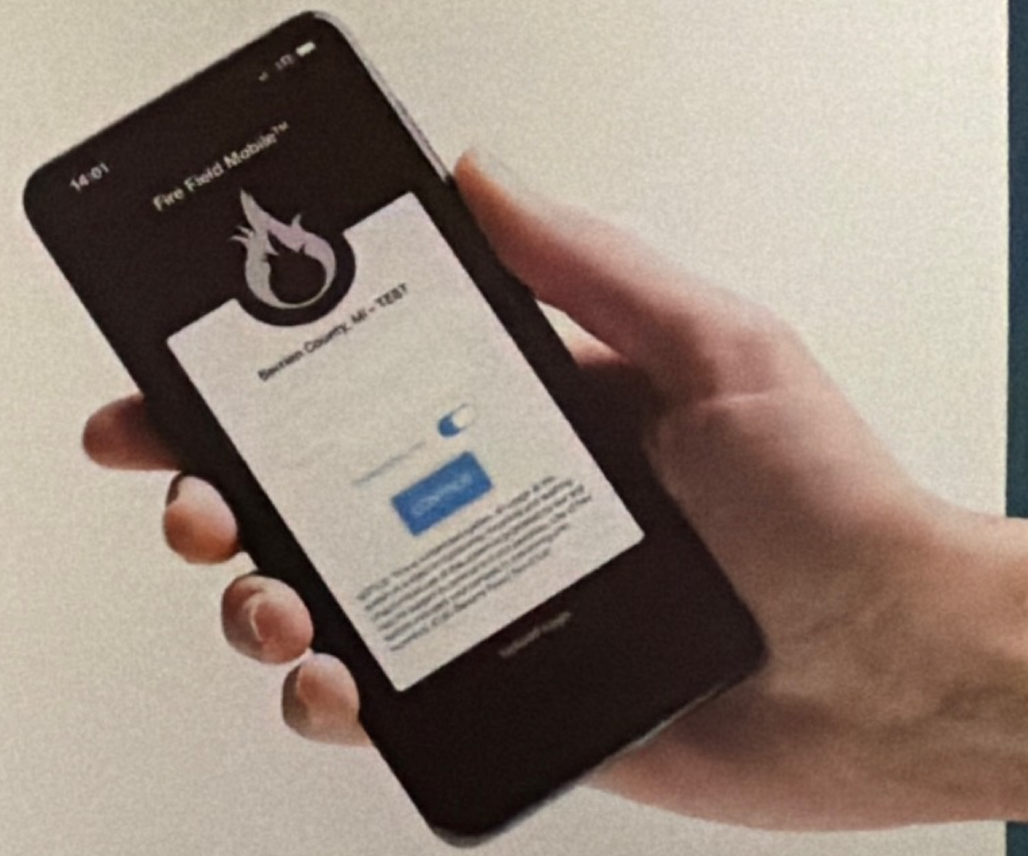
CREW MOBILE SUPPORT

USER TRAINING & TUTORIALS

- Reach out to your technical support specialist.
- **Tyler University** - Sign in at tylertech.com

DEVICE SPECIFIC & SYSTEM ERRORS

- Reach out to your technical support specialist.
- **Tyler Support**
  - Sign in at tylertech.com
  - 800.333.9673
  - Emergency after hours support: 877.269.0273



REGISTRATION & ACCESS

- **Berrien County Information Systems**
  - Mon-Fri 8:30am to 5pm
  - 269.983.3828
  - helpdesk@berriencounty.org

CREW MOBILE APP REGISTRATION

Scan the QR code and complete the Mobility Registration Form to gain access to CAD Mobility.

SCAN ME

Berrien County Fire Training Information

Proudly Serving Southwest Michigan

Training Committee meetings are held on the 4th Sunday every month at 14:00 (2:00 P.M.)
at the Berrien Springs/Oronoko Township Fire Department



BC Fire Training Trailer



Career Pathways

- - Berrien County Firefighter Communications Training - -

- - Radio Ettiquette Quick Drill - - Incident Command SOG - ICS Video

Berrien Springs-Oronoko Fire Department

CSX:Emergency Response To Railroad Incidents Training

Monday November 2nd, 2026 - - - 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

at Berrien Springs-Oronoko Fire Department

4411 E Snow Road Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103 - - - Details

Berrien Springs-Oronoko Fire Department

Rail Incident Involving Hazardous Materials

Monday November 2nd, 2026 - - - 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM

at Berrien Springs-Oronoko Fire Department

4411 E Snow Road Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103 - - - Details

The Berrien County Firefighter Training Committee & Benton Harbor Public Safety

Winter 2026 Fire Academy

November 3rd, 2026 to March 12th, 2027

Tuesday & Thursday Nights 1800-2200 and Saturdays 0830 to 1700

at Benton Harbor Firehouse - - - Details

Sponsored By Berrien County 911

Field Scouting Acacdemy

November 16th-18th 2026

Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday 0800 to 1650

at Fraternal Order of Police St. Joseph Lodge #96

2665 Niles RoadSt. Joseph, Michigan 49085 - - - Details

Berrien Springs-Oronoko Fire Department

East Jordan Plastics Fire

Monday November 30th 2026 - - - 6:30 AM to 11:00 AM

at Berrien Springs-Oronoko Fire Department

4411 E Snow Road Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103 - - - Details

Benton Harbor Department of Public Safety
Texas A&M Engineering & FEMA

Wide Area Search

Tuesday to Thursday December 8th-10th, 2026 0800-1600 each day

Corewell Health Upton Auditorium at Corewell Health St. Joseph Michigan

Registration - - - Details

Benton Harbor Department of Public Safety

Street-Smart Firefighting

Tuesdays January 5th, 2027 ro March 2nd, 20207

Online Strategy & Tactics Training Series - Details