

Barry County Conviction Integrity Meeting Prep

A free printable for residents preparing to speak with Commissioner Jon Smelker, their own commissioner, or the Barry County Board of Commissioners.

Your elected officials work for you.

If you do not feel safe in your community because plea deals, disclosure practices, court records, or law-enforcement credibility problems feel unreliable, that is something county leaders should listen to and address.

COMMISSIONER SMELKER

Jon Smelker, District 4
Email: jsmelker@barrycounty.org
Phone: 616-765-8481
County-listed assignments include Community Corrections Advisory Board and Judicial/Security Committee.

MEETING BASICS

Check the official agenda and 2026 schedule before you go.
Unless otherwise posted: Barry County Courthouse, Commissioners Chambers, 220 W. State St., Hastings, MI 49058.
Meeting questions: County Administrator Eric Zuzga, 269-945-1284.

THE CORE ASK

Please place conviction integrity, Brady/Giglio disclosure concerns, Santobello plea-promise concerns, Fuller/SWET-related case review, records preservation, and citizen seats on a Judicial Accountability and Law Enforcement Committee on a public agenda.

WHAT TO BRING

- Your completed three-minute speech.
- A one-page family impact letter, if you are comfortable sharing it.
- Redacted copies of records, docket entries, emails, FOIA responses, plea paperwork, or transcripts.
- A specific ask: public agenda item, independent review, records preservation, citizen seats.
- A support person, if this topic is emotionally heavy or safety-related.

Tip: Do not hand over your only copy of anything. Bring copies. Redact sensitive information such as Social Security numbers, private addresses, medical details, juvenile information, or unrelated family information.

1. My Meeting Snapshot

Use this page to organize who you are, why you are there, and what action you want.

NAME

CITY/TOWNSHIP

PHONE/EMAIL

MEETING DATE

COMMISSIONER

I AM SPEAKING AS

Directly impacted person

Family member

Crime victim/survivor

Community member

Records/FOIA advocate

Other:

WHAT HAPPENED IN ONE PLAIN SENTENCE

WHAT I WANT COMMISSIONER SMELKER TO UNDERSTAND

WHAT I AM ASKING COUNTY OFFICIALS TO DO

MY ONE-SENTENCE ASK

2. Family Impact Letter Planner

For impacted people and families: write what broken plea deals, Brady/Giglio issues, or Santobello violations have done to your household.

LETTER GOAL

Tell the human truth in a disciplined way: who was affected, what process failed, how it changed your family, and what public action you want. You do not have to share trauma details you are not ready to share.

DEAR COMMISSIONER SMELKER / DEAR COMMISSIONERS

WHO MY FAMILY IS AND WHY WE ARE WRITING

WHAT BROKEN PROMISE, WITHHELD EVIDENCE, OR DISCLOSURE PROBLEM AFFECTED US

WHAT THIS HAS DONE TO OUR FAMILY

IMPACT AREAS TO CONSIDER

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Children | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finances | <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Trust in courts | <input type="checkbox"/> Community trust |

WHAT WE ARE ASKING FOR NOW

Practical advice: keep the letter to one page if possible. Attach records separately. Mark attachments clearly.

3. Due Process Issue Checklist

Use this to separate legal rights, records, and facts from emotion before the meeting.

PLAIN-LANGUAGE DEFINITIONS

Brady: favorable evidence that matters to guilt or punishment should be disclosed.

Giglio: credibility or impeachment information about government witnesses should be disclosed.

Santobello: plea promises made by the government must be honored.

POSSIBLE ISSUES

- Helpful evidence was not disclosed.
- Officer credibility information was not disclosed.
- Body camera, dash camera, or recordings were missing.
- Evidence was destroyed, lost, or unavailable.
- Witness deal, benefit, or informant issue was hidden.
- Plea promise changed, disappeared, or was not honored.
- Off-the-record promise or pressure affected the plea.
- Disclosure came after plea, sentencing, or deadline.
- Court/prosecutor record does not match what happened.

CASE FACTS

CASE NAME/NO. _____

COURT _____

JUDGE _____

PROSECUTOR _____

OFFICER/AGENCY _____

IMPORTANT DATES _____

STATUS NOW _____

RECORDS I ALREADY HAVE

RECORDS I STILL NEED TO REQUEST

This page is not legal advice. If your case is active, appeal deadlines matter, or you have counsel, talk with a licensed attorney before making public legal statements.

4. Build a Three-Minute Public Comment

A focused three-minute speech is easier for officials to hear, quote, and act on.

0:00-0:20 - WHO YOU ARE AND WHY YOU ARE THERE

0:20-1:10 - THE DUE-PROCESS PROBLEM IN PLAIN LANGUAGE

1:10-2:00 - WHAT IT DID TO YOUR FAMILY OR COMMUNITY SAFETY

2:00-2:40 - THE POLICY ACTION YOU WANT

2:40-3:00 - CLOSE WITH ONE CLEAR ASK

SPEECH STARTER

My name is _____. I live in _____. I am here because _____. I am asking this Board to place conviction integrity, Brady/Giglio disclosure, Santobello plea-promise concerns, independent case review, records preservation, and citizen oversight seats on a public agenda.

Practice once out loud. If it runs longer than three minutes, cut details before cutting the ask.

5. Meeting Plan and Safety Notes

You can be firm, prepared, and protected. The goal is public action, not emotional exhaustion.

BEFORE THE MEETING

- Check agenda, schedule, and public comment rules.
- Print your speech and impact letter.
- Redact sensitive information.
- Bring copies, not originals.
- Ask a trusted person to attend.

DURING THE MEETING

- Stay within the time limit.
- Speak to the Board, not the audience.
- State one clear ask.
- Do not argue from the microphone.
- Submit written copies if allowed.

AFTER THE MEETING

- Email your statement to commissioners.
- Ask when the issue will be placed on an agenda.
- Save all responses.
- Follow up in writing.
- Attend the next meeting if needed.

QUESTIONS TO ASK OFFICIALS

- Will you support placing conviction integrity on a public agenda?
- Will you support citizen seats on a Judicial Accountability and Law Enforcement Committee?
- Will you support a records-preservation directive?
- Will you request a written Brady/Giglio and plea-promise review policy?
- Will you ask for public reporting on county legal costs tied to misconduct complaints?

PUBLIC SAFETY FRAME

If you do not feel safe because convictions, plea deals, disclosure practices, court records, or law-enforcement credibility issues feel unreliable, say that plainly. Public safety includes trust that the justice system tells the truth and keeps its word.

You may also submit a written statement instead of speaking publicly, especially if safety, trauma, or an active case makes public comment risky.

6. Agenda Request and Follow-Up Log

Use this page to make the ask in writing and track whether officials respond.

EMAIL OR LETTER TEMPLATE

Commissioner _____,

I am a Barry County resident asking you to help place conviction integrity on a public Board of Commissioners agenda.

My concern involves: _____.

I am asking the Board to discuss independent review of affected cases, Brady/Giglio disclosure concerns, Santobello plea-promise concerns, records preservation, and citizen seats on any Judicial Accountability and Law Enforcement Committee.

Please let me know whether you will support placing this issue on a public agenda.

Name: _____ Phone/Email: _____

FOLLOW-UP LOG

Date	Who I contacted	Method	Response / next step

Save emails, envelopes, agenda screenshots, written responses, and meeting notes. Records matter.

7. One-Page Leave-Behind Summary

Fill this out and bring copies for Commissioner Smelker, your own commissioner, or the public record.

TOP-LINE REQUEST

I am asking Barry County to place conviction integrity, Brady/Giglio disclosure concerns, Santobello plea-promise concerns, independent case review, records preservation, and citizen seats on a public agenda.

NAME _____

PHONE/EMAIL _____

CITY/TOWNSHIP _____

THE ISSUE IN ONE PARAGRAPH

THE RECORDS OR FACTS THAT SUPPORT THIS CONCERN

THE PUBLIC ACTION I AM REQUESTING

PLEASE RESPOND

I respectfully request a written response explaining whether you support placing this issue on a public agenda, creating an independent conviction-review process, preserving records, and including citizens in any Judicial Accountability and Law Enforcement Committee.

Sources for meeting basics and commissioner details: Barry County Board of Commissioners and Barry County Meeting Schedule pages, checked July 3, 2026.