

**Regular Meeting #10-08**  
**Fairfield County Commissioners' Office**  
**February 16, 2010**

**9:00 a.m. Meeting with Ed Laramee**

The Board of Commissioners met with Deputy Auditor Ed Laramee to discuss pending Department of Health merger issues. Commissioners present were Jon Myers and Mike Kiger. Absent was Commissioner Judith Shupe. Also present were Jason Dolin and Scott Zody.

Mr. Zody stated that he asked Mr. Laramee to meet with the Board to provide some background relative to the merger contract between the City of Lancaster and the District Advisory Council (DAC).

Mr. Laramee stated the original contract was negotiated between the city and the DAC, and at that time, there was approximately a \$600,000 shortfall between the Health Department's revenue and expenditures, and the city agreed to cover \$250,000 of that amount, and the DAC would cover the remainder.

Commissioner Myers stated that Lancaster claims they have been paying more than that recently, and Mr. Laramee stated that is correct. Since the merger contract was initiated 10 years ago, the deficit has increased, and any amount in excess of \$600,000 is allocated to all parties, including the city, based upon valuation of real property within each jurisdiction, and the city now contributes approximately \$290,000 per year. Mr. Laramee stated that is still a very favorable financial arrangement for the city.

Mr. Laramee noted that when Pickerington was a member of the DAC and held a merger contract, they also were assessed based upon valuation, which is required by the Revised Code. Commissioner Myers stated that if the formula is based upon valuation, he would think that Pickerington would pay a greater proportion, due to their higher values, and Mr. Laramee stated that is correct, but the service contract Pickerington signed with Franklin County is based on a per capita charge, and is only about \$8,000 less than what they were paying to the Health Department.

Commissioner Myers asked why under one scenario a valuation based formula is required, but under a service contract a per capita charge is permitted, and Mr. Laramee explained that under a merger contract with the DAC (Combined Health District) the valuation formula must be used, but under a contract for services with the Health Board, other methods such as a fee-for-service or a per capita charge are permitted.

Commissioner Myers stated the bottom line is that Lancaster wants the County to contribute some sort of funding to the mix, as the County has not been responsible for any costs of the Health Department since the merger. Mr. Laramee stated that there is no obligation for the County to participate, and if Lancaster chooses to de-merge, they must either form their own health district or contract with the Board of Health for services, and the city got a very good deal under the merger contract.

Commissioner Myers asked what the city was paying to run its own Health Department, and Mr. Laramee stated it was significantly more. Commissioner Myers stated that prior to the Combined Health District, the Commissioners paid for housing the Health Department, but provided the Department with the current building once the Combined District was formed – what happens if the Health Department divests the building?

Mr. Laramee stated that under a General Health District, the county is responsible for providing housing unless the Health Department owns its own facility, which in this case they do. Mr. Laramee stated the whole idea behind the General and Combined Health Districts was to encourage cities to take a larger role in Combined Districts and for the County to be more of a lead in General Districts.

Commissioner Myers stated Mayor Smith has asked to meet with him to discuss issues, but is not sure exactly what he desires. Mr. Laramee stated that he would believe that the city would want to remain in the Combined District and maintain representation on Health Board – right now, the city appoints 5 of the 10 members, and are only paying a share of the costs, so they really don't stand to gain anything by leaving the District.

Commissioner Kiger stated that the city does not appear to have much of a bargaining chip, and Mr. Laramee stated a lot of that depends upon who would negotiate on behalf of the Health Board. Commissioner Myers stated that he would think it would be a conflict for Paul Martin to participate in negotiations, since he is both a member of the Health Board and an employee of the city. Mr. Laramee stated that he would agree if Lancaster drops out of the Health District and attempts to negotiate a service contract.

Mr. Laramee stated that regardless of housing, the building is expensive to maintain and there is excessive space and it is not efficient. No one wants to spend money fixing it up, as it would be very expensive, but the challenge becomes one of relocating the Department into more affordable housing and who pays for it.

Commissioner Myers noted the Department has downsized as well since they conducted their housing needs study a few years back. Mr. Laramee stated that is a question that needs to be answered – exactly how much space is needed?

Commissioner Kiger asked if there might be suitable and affordable housing near the hospital, and Mr. Laramee stated he did not believe there were any facilities with adequate facilities or space available. Commissioner Myers asked if the Commissioners should be expected to purchase space, and Commissioner Kiger stated he did not believe they should.

Commissioner Myers stated that it would appear to him that the city needs to make a decision soon on whether or not it intends to stay in the District. Mr. Laramee stated the Health Department has to submit budget numbers in order to have them worked out for the DAC Meeting March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Commissioner Kiger stated the County really doesn't have anything to offer and they need the city to put something on the table for consideration. Mr. Zody noted that the Board of Health could potentially refuse to enter into a service contract with the city and force them to re-establish their own Health Department.

Commissioner Myers noted that the DAC seems to be part of the problem, and Mr. Laramee stated it very much is part of the problem, and was the primary reason the City of Pickerington left. Mr. Zody stated one challenge for the Commissioners is how to ensure the Board of Health is engaged in negotiating with the city. Mr. Laramee stated the city is not in a strong bargaining position.

Mr. Dolin stated the whole issue basically revolves around \$40,000, and Mr. Laramee stated that is correct – the \$40,000 represents the city's share of the approximately \$170,000 overage.

Commissioner Kiger suggested the Commissioners ask the city what they are willing to do, and Commissioner Myers stated the city wants the County to pay. Commissioner Kiger stated the County is not obligated to pay, and the city needs to pay their fair share as well.

Mr. Laramee noted that the County has been on the short side of other agreements with the city, such as the prisoner housing contract, and Mr. Zody noted the City Prosecutor's contract was increased substantially in the recent past as well. Mr. Laramee stated the County also gives the city an additional 2% of Local Government Fund share.

Commissioner Kiger stated the city needs to put something on the table, and they really only have two choices. Mr. Laramee concurred and stated either way the city would be paying considerably less than if they re-established their own health department.

**9:30 a.m. Meeting with Greg Eyerman**

The Board of Commissioners met Visitor & Convention Bureau Director Greg Eyerman for a quarterly update. Commissioners present were Mike Kiger and Jon Myers. Absent was Commissioner Judith Shupe. Also present were Ed Laramee, Jason Dolin and Scott Zody.

Mr. Eyerman stated he wanted to update the Board on recent activities of the VCB, stating the lodging tax collections were down about 15% in 2009, but 2008 was a record year, and they expected some decrease. One positive sign was that the 2009 collections exceeded the 2007 collection, so in a way they are still up. In addition, the average lodging tax collection decreased 22% around Ohio last year, so Fairfield County did well comparatively speaking.

Mr. Eyerman stated he is hoping to see a slight increase in 2010, and Mr. Zody noted that state park visitation and overnight stays had increased substantially in 2009, possibly signaling that folks were staying closer to home and opting for cheaper vacation alternatives. Mr. Eyerman agreed, stating the VCB has been actively marketing Fairfield County as a "one-tank trip" around the state, particularly in the Cleveland-Akron area.

Commissioner Myers suggested offering visitors a free tank of gas if they show proof of an overnight stay or spend a certain level while visiting the area, and Mr. Eyerman stated that may be something worth considering.

Mr. Eyerman stated the VCB is very excited about the American Legion State Baseball tournament relocating to Lancaster from Athens in 2010. The tournament will utilize Beaver Field, OUL's field, and the Lancaster High School field for the tournament, which runs for 5 days and the Legion is committed to Lancaster for at least 5 years. Mr. Eyerman stated the event will bring in several hundred athletes, parents, and fans, and should fill area hotels and provide restaurants with a lot of business.

Commissioner Myers asked how much impact the Gus Macker basketball tournament had, and Mr. Eyerman stated it was somewhat of a boon to the downtown restaurants, except Shaw's, but not much of an impact for the hotels, because most of the players were from the region and drove home following their games. However, Lancaster's tournament was the best inaugural event ever for Gus Macker, and as a result, the Gus Macker corporate folks recently held their national convention in Lancaster.

Commissioner Myers asked why the streets downtown had to be used instead of someplace like the old Big Bear on the East side, and Mr. Eyerman stated the Main Street Lancaster, which was instrumental in attracting the event, wanted the event downtown, and the businesses would receive more benefit there than out East.

Commissioner Myers asked if there were any new developments with the Elks Club, and Mr. Eyerman stated he had not heard anything recently, but the National Elks actually own the building so they may be trying to re-establish the club under new leadership.

Mr. Eyerman reported the Tiki Bowling Lanes has a large tournament that is ongoing over the next three months during weekends, and they are hoping to see some positive impacts from that. The VCB is partnering with Experience Columbus on some regional marketing efforts, and is now tied in with the Experience Columbus web site. Mr. Eyerman is working with Helen Maley on some Pickerington events such as the Violet Festival and the Motorcycle Museum.

Commissioner Myers asked Mr. Eyerman for his thoughts on the Historical Parks Levy, and Mr. Eyerman stated the he obviously hopes that it passes, as the Parks are an integral part of the travel and tourism for Fairfield County, and the levy would only cost the average homeowner about \$20 per year. Mr. Laramée stated that the aspect of “Historical” hurts the appeal of the levy, as it does not connect with the public the same way traditional recreational parks would.

Commissioner Kiger noted that he has heard complaints from people in Pickerington that they already pay a tax for the city parks, and are not very supportive of a county parks tax. Mr. Laramée noted it is nice to have options such as city, township or county parks to be able to acquire greenspace and lands for future use as growth occurs in the county.

Mr. Eyerman stated he works closely with Mr. Fey and has linked Mr. Fey with tour groups, especially seniors, to conduct tours of the covered bridges and parks.

Mr. Laramée stated he would like to work with Mr. Eyerman on ways to audit the hotels and motels to ensure compliance with the lodging tax.

#### **10:00 a.m. Commissioners’ Regular Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Fairfield County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, February 16, 2010 beginning at 10:00 a.m., with the following Commissioners present: Jon Myers and Mike Kiger. Absent was Judith Shupe. Also present were Carl Burnett, Shane Farnsworth, Ed Laramée, Jason Dolin and Scott Zody.

#### **Announcements**

Mr. Zody stated that resolutions 10-02.16.a and 10-02.16.g would need to be tabled, as the necessary paperwork is not ready for those resolutions.

#### **Public Comment**

William Schooley, 6188 Clearport Road, expressed concern to the Commissioners relative to the County Health Department. Mr. Schooley stated he is in the process of obtaining lot split approval for several lots on Lifer Lane and has been waiting for quite some time on the Health Department to approve – now he has been told that his lot lines will need to be moved to accommodate the septic system changes the Department says he has to make. Mr. Schooley stated that he believes he has proper drainage and the Health Department is being excessive. Mr. Schooley stated he has been building homes in Fairfield County for 16 years, and now it appears the Health Department is changing the rules and causing unnecessary delays.

Commissioner Kiger asked Mr. Schooley if he has taken this matter before the Board of Health, and Mr. Schooley stated he has not. Commissioner Kiger explained to Mr. Schooley that the Board of Commissioners has no authority over the Health Department, and he should express his concerns to the Board of Health, which is independently appointed.

Mr. Schooley stated that he understands where the Commissioners are coming from, but believes they should be aware of what is occurring with the Health Department. One additional concern he has is with the Health Department plumbing inspector, which he believes is an unnecessary position, especially when the sanitarians can’t timely complete their work. Mr. Schooley stated the Health Department is supposed to be for the people, not the other way around. It has taken over a month and one-half to receive his permit, and it still is not completed.

#### **Approval of minutes of Tuesday, February 9, 2010**

On motion of Jon Myers and second of Mike Kiger, the Board of Commissioners

voted to approve the minutes for Tuesday, February 9, 2010.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:  
Voting aye thereon: Jon Myers and Mike Kiger

**Approval of a signature and authorization needed to submit the FY2010 Grant Application for the Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP) to the Ohio Department of Development, Office of Housing and Community Partnerships**

On motion of Jon Myers and second of Mike Kiger, the Board of Commissioners voted to table the approval of a signature and authorization needed to submit the FY2010 Grant Application for the Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP) to the Ohio Department of Development, Office of Housing and Community Partnerships, see resolution 10-02.16.a

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:  
Voting aye thereon: Jon Myers and Mike Kiger

**Approval of a Change Order with Robertson Construction – CDBG FY2008 Fairfield County, Village of Pleasantville – Pool Rehabilitation Project – Extension Date of Project**

On motion of Jon Myers and second of Mike Kiger, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve a Change Order with Robertson Construction – CDBG FY2008 Fairfield County, Village of Pleasantville – Pool Rehabilitation Project – Extension Date of Project, see resolution 10-02.16.b

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:  
Voting aye thereon: Jon Myers and Mike Kiger

**Approval of Amendment to Lease with Option to Purchase – Fairfield County Juvenile/Probate Court**

On motion of Jon Myers and second of Mike Kiger, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve an Amendment to Lease with Option to Purchase – Fairfield County Juvenile/Probate Court, see resolution 10-02.16.c

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:  
Voting aye thereon: Jon Myers and Mike Kiger

**Approval of appointment of Melissa Tremblay to the Fairfield County District Library Board**

On the motion of Jon Myers and second of Mike Kiger, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the appointment of Melissa Tremblay to the Fairfield County District Library Board, see resolution 10-02.16.d

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:  
Voting aye thereon: Judith Shupe, Jon Myers and Mike Kiger

**Approval of Request for Payment and status of funds report – FY2009 CDBG Formula Program – Drawdown #209**

On the motion of Jon Myers and second of Judith Shupe, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve a Request for Payment and status of funds report – FY2009 CDBG Formula Program – Drawdown #209, see resolution 10-02.16.e

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:  
Voting aye thereon: Jon Myers and Mike Kiger