

Regular Meeting #3 - 2026
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office
January 20, 2026

Review Meeting

The Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners Hearing Room located at 210 E. Main St., Lancaster, OH. Commissioner Davis called the meeting to order, and the following Commissioners were present: Steve Davis, David Levacy and Jeff Fix. Also present: County Administrator, Aundrea Cordle; Clerk, Rochelle, Mennington; Communications and Information Coordinator, Bennett Niceswanger; Budget Director, Bart Hampson; JFS Director, Corey Clark; IT Director, Dan Neeley; EMA & Facilities Director, Jon Kochis; Rick Szabrek, Economic & Workforce Development Director; Tony Vogel, Utilities Director; Amy Brown-Thompson, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney; Dr. Carri Brown, Auditor; Lisa McKenzie, Recorder; Michael Kaper, Land Bank Director; Alex Lape, Sheriff; Taylor Forquer, Financial Analyst; Nikki Drake, Soil and Water Manager; Heather O'Keefe, Deputy JFS Director; and Deputy, Kevin Romine. Also in attendance: Garrett Davis, Chris Snider, Stephanie Taylor, and Brandy Marshall.

Virtual attendees: Tony Vogel, David Uhl, Lori Lovas, Josh Horacek, Jessica Murphy, Steven Darnell, Holly Lybrook, Meredith B, Deborah, Bayley Fields, Ashley Arter, Lori Hawk, Lisa Rector, Fred, Jeff Barron, Stacy Hicks, Shelby Hunt, Britney Lee, Andy Robberts, Jason Grubb, and Leighann Adams.

Welcome

Commissioner Davis opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance. Commissioner Davis offered his appreciation for the relationship between the county and Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Ohio (Habitat) and introduced Ms. Taylor, who provided an update.

Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Ohio, ARP Update

Stepanie Taylor, Director of Development & Communications for Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Ohio, spoke about 2022 ARP funding. Habitat was awarded \$610,000 to build 7 homes. Partner families are selected by Habitat to help with the building of the home and purchase the home with a mortgage held by Habitat. The program requires sweat equity from the partner family of 250 hours from a one adult household and 500 from a two-adult household. A downpayment of \$1000 is also required and the mortgage is provided at a zero percent interest rate.

Commissioner Davis asked about the success of repayment from the partner families.

Taylor replied that less than 2% are foreclosed upon. A home costs Habitat \$140,000 to \$160,000 to build and the \$610,000 from the county's ARP funding provides partial funding for each home. The ARP funding increased Habitat's ability from building one home a year to two per year, and Habitat hopes to build four homes in 2026. Five homes have been built in Lancaster and one in Pleasantville. A home will soon go up in Fairfield beach. These homes impacted seven single moms and 13 children ranging from 1-18 years of age. The social return on the investment is estimated to be over \$32,000,000 over the next 20 years. She added that Habitat has a partnership with the Eastland Fairfield Career Center. That program builds the home to 80% completion and then it is moved to its permanent location. The Fairfield Career Center worked on two of the seven homes in Lancaster, Pleasantville, and Fairfield Beach.

Commissioner Levacy asked if there was a downside to building prefabricated homes.

Taylor replied that she does not see a downside to prefabricated homes as they are cost effective and quick to build. The home built in 2023 had walls built at the Workforce Center before they were set on the property.

County Administrator Aundrea Cordle asked about the incident of the stolen tools.

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Taylor replied that the tools were stolen during the building of the 150th home. She thanked Fairfield County for finding the culprit, as the tools resulted in a \$15,000 loss. The Fairfield Beach home is close to moving from the Fairfield Career Center to the homesite. The first of the four homes for 2026 will begin in April.

Commissioner Davis thanked Ms. Taylor for her partnership and for the update.

Commissioner Fix stated that Ms. Taylor's energy and positivity help keep the dream alive for permanent housing for many in the community.

Commissioner Levacy spoke about seeing the hard work of Habitat come to fruition. He added that there is a misconception of a Habitat home.

Public Comments

None.

Legal Update

None.

County Administration Update

- *The County Administration Update was provided by County Administrator, Aundrea Cordle, unless otherwise indicated.*

Highlights of Resolutions

Administrative Approvals

The review packet contains a list of administrative approvals.

Resolution Review

There are 21 resolutions on the agenda for the Regular voting meeting.

Resolutions of note:

- Twelve of the resolutions on the agenda for appropriations or other financial obligations.
- A resolution from Economic and Workforce Development to extend the contract with Hicks Partners for grant writing and technical assistance for Fairfield County cities, villages, townships, and county agencies.

Rick Szabrak stated that he had received positive feedback from the villages and townships on the partnership with Hicks Partners, which has helped many of them secure grant funding.

- Two resolutions from the Engineer's Office to approve the drawing and advertisement for the Hamburg Road Bridge Replacement Project, a resolution for a revised bridge load rating for the Kumler Road Bridge, and a resolution to allow 2026 weight reductions on county and township roads.
- Three resolutions from Job and Family Services to approve service agreements.

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- A resolution from the Treasurer's Office to approve an online payment solution service agreement with Autoagent Data Solutions, LLC. This agreement will provide online and in-person electronic payment options, including debit cards, credit cards, and electronic checks.

Budget Review

None.

Calendar Review/Invitations Received

Informational Items

- Millersport Business Group Meeting, January 21, 2026, 8:30 a.m., American Legion, 2557 Canal St., Millersport
- Lancaster-Fairfield Community Action Agency Board Meeting, January 22, 2026, 11:30 a.m., Recycling Center, 1761 E. Main St., Lancaster
- Canal Winchester Chamber Annual Awards Night: Denim & Diamonds, February 27, 2026, 6:00 p.m., BrewDog Tap House, 96 Gender Rd., Canal Winchester
- Fairfield County Board of Developmental Disabilities' Celebration of Possibilities, March 25, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Crossroads Event Center, 2095 W. Fair Ave., Lancaster
- 45th Annual Governor's Holocaust Commemoration, April 13, 2026, 11:00 a.m., Statehouse Atrium, 1 Capitol Sq., Columbus

Updates from Elected Officials and Department Heads

Michael Kaper spoke on the resolution for credit card services, stating that the credit card system would come online in the Recorder and Sheriff's Offices first. The Treasurer's Office would then follow.

Commissioner Davis asked if the Treasurer's Office had received questions regarding the property tax bills, and if escrow agents were made aware of property tax increases.

Mr. Kaper replied that some property owners that have their property taxes escrowed received a bill, and that in this case, the bills are for informational purposes only as the escrow agents received the bill.

Commissioner Davis asked about the amounts that will be due for the second half tax bills.

Mr. Kaper stated that the county has not received the tax credits from the state and if there is a credit amount, that will be reflected in the second half tax bills. If a property owner pays the full amount on the first half tax bill, they can receive a refund or can apply the credit to next year.

Lisa McKenzie stated that she had a review with one of her vendors and that her office is looking forward to offering the option of using credit cards for payment.

Dr. Brown thanked the Records Commission for their approval of the two Joint Economic Development Districts' RC-2s. She spoke about the fact summary related to the property tax reform and added that HB 186 is where the revenue growth will be capped to inflation. HB 335 will cap inflation with the next sexennial update. HB 335 will keep future reappraisals from spiking.

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Commissioner Fix spoke about the misconceptions regarding property taxes. He thanked Dr. Brown for breaking down the information and for lobbying at the statehouse.

Dr. Brown added that with respect to senior citizens, the homestead exemption threshold is too low, and that legislative action needs to take place to raise that threshold. There is also talk of possible legislation that would prohibit foreclosure under certain circumstances. These are both conversations that require legislation. Property tax collections are not delegated completely to the county for expenditures. Across Fairfield County, an average of 56 % of property taxes goes to schools and 5% goes to the county for its services. Her office is also accepting CAUV renewal applications, and 62% of acreage in Fairfield County is in the CAUV. Dr. Brown thanked Mesina Clark for her financial reporting.

Tony Vogel stated that he and Ms. Cordle met with MORPC regarding EPA and the 208 plans. Many 208 plans involve overlapping jurisdictions. MORPC would like to oversee some of the utility service areas in Central Ohio. Counties that surround Fairfield County all have some services, but not all have a wastewater utility.

Commissioner Davis asked Mr. Vogel to keep the Board of Commissioners updated to the many aspects of the 208 plans, and the EPA and MORPC's involvement.

Mr. Vogel stated that the 208 plan overlaps parts of Columbus, Canal Winchester, and Pickerington in the northwest corner of the county. When the EPA looks at a 208 plan, it does not look at the overlapping entities.

Commissioner Fix stated that he is on the MORPC board of directors and there are issues with the 208 plans. It becomes very problematic if a utility company wants to claim an area.

Commissioner Davis asked if lobbying would need to transpire to change the law for MORPC.

Mr. Vogel stated that MORPC could get authority from the governor to take authority from the EPA.

Rick Szabrak stated he attended a meeting in Millersport, and the Vantage Data Center has been very transparent with the community. The dialogue around the data center has been great.

Commissioner Levacy thanked Mr. Szabrak for attending the meeting and spoke about Mr. Vogel's involvement with the \$50,000,000 water system in Millersport. There will be 500,000 to 600,000 gallons of water a day returned to the lake and this water needs to be treated appropriately.

Mr. Vogel replied that the data center will have staging areas that will cool the water down before it is treated.

Mr. Szabrak stated that on the Workforce Board side, he will attend a meeting with Lt. Governor Tressel and added that the Central Ohio Manufacturing Group will be touring the Workforce Center again in the upcoming week.

Jon Kochis stated that collections for JFS and the Treasurer's Office will start again at the drive-thru on Chestnut Street in February.

Corey Clark thanked the Facilities team for the many projects they have completed and are working on and how they minimize the impact on staff and customers.

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Garrett Davis from United Way stated that United Way's campaign surpassed \$900,000. United Way's free tax program is available for seniors that make under \$69,000 per year.

Commissioner Davis spoke about the Polar Plunge event that helps raise funds for the United Way.

Nikki Drake from Soil and Water stated that the annual tree sale is being advertised on the web at swcd.org.

Old Business

Commissioner Fix stated that continuing to provide property tax information will help residents understand.

Commissioner Levacy stated he attended the Governor's Workforce Board meeting, and the emphasis is training and incorporating additional training in colleges.

New Business

Commissioner Levacy stated he is looking forward to touring the Diamond Power facility.

Commissioner Fix spoke about meetings with Greenfield Township and the City of Lancaster and moving forward on development.

Regular (Voting) Meeting

The Commissioners continued to the Regular/Voting portion of the meeting, and the following Commissioners were present: Jeff Fix and Steve Davis. Also present: County Administrator, Aundrea Cordle; Clerk, Rochelle, Menningen; Communications and Information Coordinator, Bennett Niceswanger; Budget Director, Bart Hampson; JFS Director, Corey Clark; IT Director, Dan Neeley; EMA & Facilities Director, Jon Kochis; Rick Szabrek, Economic & Workforce Development Director; Tony Vogel, Utilities Director; Amy Brown-Thompson, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney; Dr. Carri Brown, Auditor; Lisa McKenzie, Recorder; Michael Kaper, Land Bank Director; Alex Lape, Sheriff; Taylor Forquer, Financial Analyst; Nikki Drake, Soil and Water Manager; Heather O'Keefe, Deputy JFS Director; and Deputy, Kevin Romine. Also in attendance: Garrett Davis, Chris Snider, Stephanie Taylor, and Brandy Marshall.

Virtual attendees: Tony Vogel, Lori Lovas, Jessica Murphy, Steven Darnell, Holly Lybrook, Meredith B, Deborah, Ashley Arter, Lori Hawk, Lisa Rector, Fred, Jeff Barron, Stacy Hicks, Shelby Hunt, Britney Lee, Andy Roberts, Jason Grubb, and Leighann Adams.

Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Davis asked everyone to rise as able and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements

None.

Approval of Minutes for January 13, 2026

On the motion of Jeff Fix and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the Minutes for the Tuesday, January 13, 2026, meeting.

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Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:
Voting aye thereon: Jeff Fix, David Levacy and Steve Davis

Approval of Resolutions from the Fairfield County Board of Commissioners

On the motion of Jeff Fix and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolutions:

- 2026-01.20.a A resolution to appropriate from unappropriated in a major expenditure object category for HOME project income Fund# 2591
- 2026-01.20.b A resolution to approve to appropriate from unappropriated into a major expense category for Fund # 3910 Sheridan Building fund.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:
Voting aye thereon: Jeff Fix, David Levacy and Steve Davis

Approval of a Resolution from the Fairfield County Board of Elections

On the motion of Jeff Fix and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution from the Fairfield County Board of Elections:

- 2026-01.20.c A Resolution to Appropriate from Unappropriated in a Major Expenditure Object Category for Board of Elections; Fund 2861, Cyber Security

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:
Voting aye thereon: Jeff Fix, David Levacy and Steve Davis

Approval of Resolutions from the Fairfield County Court of Common Pleas

On the motion of Jeff Fix and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolutions from the Fairfield County Court of Common Pleas:

- 2026-01.20.d A Resolution to Appropriate from Unappropriated in a Major Expenditure Object Category for Common Pleas Court; Fund 2689, Adult Corrections Grant
- 2026-01.20.e A Resolution to Appropriate from Unappropriated in a Major Expenditure Object Category for Common Pleas Court; Fund #2852, Targeted Community Alternative to Prison

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:
Voting aye thereon: Jeff Fix, David Levacy and Steve Davis

Approval of a Resolution from Fairfield County Economic & Workforce Development

On the motion of Jeff Fix and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution from Fairfield County Economic & Workforce Development:

- 2026-01.20.f A resolution to authorize an amendment to the agreement for grant writing services

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:
Voting aye thereon: Jeff Fix, David Levacy and Steve Davis

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Approval of Resolutions from the Fairfield County Emergency Management Agency

On the motion of Jeff Fix and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolutions from the Fairfield County Emergency Management Agency:

- 2026-01.20.g A resolution authorizing an EMA fund to fund transfer.
- 2026-01.20.h A resolution to appropriate from unappropriated in a major expenditure object category EMA Fund 2707/8369 and 2707/8357 EMPG Grant and Reduce Appropriations in 2707/8323 EMPG

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: Jeff Fix, David Levacy and Steve Davis

Approval of Resolutions from the Fairfield County Engineer

On the motion of Jeff Fix and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolutions from the Fairfield County Engineer:

- 2026-01.20.i A resolution to request for appropriations for additional unanticipated receipts of memo receipts and memo expenses for fund 2050 for annual inspections, repairs, and maintenance in various subdivisions as of 12/31/2025.
- 2026-01.20.j A Resolution to Approve the Construction Drawings for the FAI-CR55-3.319 Hamburg Road HOC-21 Bridge Replacement Project.
- 2026-01.20.k A Resolution to Approve Advertising for the FAI-CR55-3.319 Hamburg Road HOC-21 Bridge Replacement Project.
- 2026-01.20.l A resolution to revise a posted bridge load rating.
- 2026-01.20.m A Resolution to Allow Weight Reductions on County and Township Roads for 2026.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: Jeff Fix, David Levacy and Steve Davis

Approval of Resolutions from Fairfield County Job and Family Services

On the motion of Jeff Fix and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolutions from Fairfield County Job and Family Services:

- 2026-01.20.n A resolution to approve a memo exp./ memo receipt for the costs of Bus Passes paid to Lancaster-Fairfield Public Transit as a memo expenditure for fund# 2072 Public Children's Services
- 2026-01.20.o A resolution authorizing the approval of a service agreement by and between Fairfield County Job & Family Services, Child Protective Services Division and Turning Point Residential Services.
- 2026-01.20.p A resolution authorizing the approval of a service agreement by and between Fairfield County Job & Family Services, Child Protective Services Division and Ohio Mentor, Inc.

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- 2026-01.20.q A Resolution regarding an amendment for a previously approved Network Placement and Related Services Agreement between Kids Count Too, Inc. and Child Protective Services Department.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: Jeff Fix, David Levacy and Steve Davis

Approval of a Resolution from the Fairfield County Sheriff

On the motion of Jeff Fix and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution from the Fairfield County Sheriff:

- 2026-01.20.r A Resolution to Authorize the Establishment of a New Fund for the Fairfield County Sheriff

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: Jeff Fix, David Levacy and Steve Davis

Approval of a Resolution from the South Central Major Crimes Unit

On the motion of Jeff Fix and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution from the South Central Major Crimes Unit:

- 2026-01.20.s A Resolution to Appropriate from Unappropriated in a Major Expenditure Object Category for Major Crimes Unit; Fund # 7892 American Rescue Plan (ARPA)

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: Jeff Fix, David Levacy and Steve Davis

Approval of a Resolution from the Fairfield County Treasurer

On the motion of Jeff Fix and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution from the Fairfield County Treasurer:

- 2026-01.20.t A Resolution Authorizing the Approval of an Online Payment Portal Solution Service Agreement between Autoagent Data Solutions, LLC, the Fairfield County Treasurer, and the Board of Fairfield County Commissioners.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: Jeff Fix, David Levacy and Steve Davis

Approval of the Payment of Bills

On the motion of Jeff Fix and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution for the Payment of Bills:

- 2026-01.20.u A resolution authorizing the approval of payments of the vouchers without appropriate carry-over purchase orders and the cash disbursement for all departments that are approved by the Commissioners.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: Jeff Fix, David Levacy and Steve Davis

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Adjournment

With no further business, on the motion of Jeff Fix, and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to adjourn at 10:16 a.m.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: David Levacy, Jeff Fix and Steve Davis

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 27, 2026, in the Commissioners' Hearing Room located at 210 E. Main St., Lancaster, OH.

*Approved on January 27, 2026

Jeff Fix Steve Davis David Levacy
Commissioner Commissioner Commissioner

Rochelle Menning, Clerk