

Regular Meeting #5 - 2026
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office
February 3, 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; Deputy County Administrator, Jeff Porter; Clerk to the Board of Commissioners, Rochelle, Mennington; Communications and Information Coordinator, Bennett Niceswanger; Budget Director, Bart Hampson; Public Information Officer, Rachel Elsea; Utilities Director, Tony Vogel; Economic & Workforce Development Director, Rick Szabrak; EMA & Facilities Director, Jon Kochis; IT Director, Dan Neeley; JFS Director, Corey Clark; Treasurer, Jim Bahnsen; JFS Eligibility Referral Specialist, Heather Kochis; and Deputy, Andy Robberts. Also in attendance: Jerry Starner and Liz Moe.

Welcome

Commissioner Davis opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance and stated that the Commissioners have evening meetings to provide a time for residents who work during the day to attend.

Public Comments

None.

County Administration Update

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

Week in Review

Housing Study Presentation

The results from a recent housing study were shared at the Workforce Center. The study revealed several key pieces including that more senior housing is needed and that increasing multi-family units does not burden the schools with a drastic increase in students.

Rick Szabrak spoke about the Housing Study Presentation and added that there were about sixty in attendance. The study indicated what types of housing are needed. The study also revealed that the largest percentage of lowest priced homes are owned by the oldest residents and that affordable senior living options are needed. The study also showed how zoning could improve housing issues and that 5% of single-family homes in the county are rental properties.

Commissioner Fix stated that single-family rental properties drive up housing prices. He added that we need to build more houses and that another challenge is that there are 6000 homes in disrepair in the county due to owners who are often unable to afford the upkeep.

Tony Vogel stated part of the issue is that people with higher incomes are buying up the middle income homes, and those with middle incomes are buying up the lower income homes due to availability.

Commissioner Fix added that we need the villages and townships to help. There are only two school districts in the county, Pickerington and Bloom Carroll, that have shown student population growth. All other school districts have remained flat or decreased in numbers.

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Treasurer Bahnsen stated he would be curious to see if there is a correlation between the homes in disrepair and those that are tax delinquent.

Rachel Elsea spoke about possible resources for low-income seniors so that they may repair their homes.

Commissioner Fix stated that most homes in the City of Lancaster were built prior to 1960.

Szabrak added that home values increased more in a two-year period than they did in the seventeen years prior.

Aundrea Cordle added that permitting was a part of the discussion. RPC is in talks with an AI company out of California to help residents fill out permits to fix errors on permit applications before they are submitted.

Cooperative Agreement

Canal Winchester passed a cooperative agreement with the Transportation Improvement District (TID) and the county for bonds.

Szabrak stated the Port Authority will have the agreement on their agenda. DHL was the first development on Basil-Western Road and they are contributing 1.6M, which will allow the county to be reimbursed.

Treasurer Bahnsen stated the Investment Advisory Committee has a tentative meeting scheduled to discuss the agreement.

Highlights of Resolutions

Administrative Approvals

The review packet contains a list of administrative approvals.

Resolution Review

There are 10 resolutions on the agenda for the Regular voting meeting.

Resolutions of note:

- The Commissioners made two motions at their January 27th meeting and asked that two resolutions be drafted for the next meeting. The first resolution designates two Commissioners to serve on the Investment Advisory Committee. The second resolution extends the deadline for dog license renewals from January 31st to February 14th. This extension is due to weather events that may have prohibited residents from purchasing their licenses.
- The Engineer's Office has three resolutions, two are for the approval of drawings and for advertising, for a resurfacing project. Their third resolution is to approve the purchase of three pick-up trucks from Tim Lally Chevrolet under the State Purchasing Program.

Budget Review

None.

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Calendar Review/Invitations Received

- MORPC Executive Committee Meeting, February 5, 2026, 1:30 p.m., MORPC, 111 Liberty St., Boardroom – Room 101, Columbus
- Juvenile Court's Wheel of Fortune, February 5, 2026, 4:30 p.m., Connexion West, 625 Garfield Ave., Lancaster
- MCJDC Board of Trustees Meeting, February 6, 2026, 9:00 a.m., MCJDC, 923 Liberty Dr., Lancaster
- MCJDC Joint Board of Commissioners Meeting, February 6, 2026, 10:30 a.m., MCJDC, 923 Liberty Dr., Lancaster
- Transportation Improvement District Special Meeting, February 6, 2026, 2:00 p.m., Fairfield County Records Center, 138 W. Chestnut St., Lancaster

Correspondence

- Letter, All Things Amateur Radio Association, January 2026, Subject: Map Packs
- 2025 Annual Report, Fairfield County Emergency Management Agency
- 2025 Law Enforcement Trust Fund Report, Sheriff Alex Lape
- 2025 City of Lancaster Annual Report, Law Director & City Prosecutor, Stephanie L. Hall

Updates from Elected Officials and Department Heads

Rachel Elsea thanked the Commissioners for extending the dog license renewal deadline. The Auditor's Office is sending out a press release on the Homestead Exemption, and the map of the month was created by a well-known cartographer. The map is of past presidents born in Ohio.

Rick Szabrek stated he is part of a new initiative under Lt. Governor Jim Tressel to connect individuals seeking job training.

Jon Kochis stated his team is caught up on snow clearing. Pending a final inspection, the drive thru on Chestnut and the Levacy Center will receive their fire permits, and the drive-thru will then be open for business.

Dan Neeley stated his team participated in a cybersecurity webinar. He also spoke about a technology project at the Utilities Office.

Corey Clark stated the SNAP error rate through fiscal year 25 for the county is just below 3% and the state is down from 9% and is at 6.75%. The metro counties drive the error rate up and often have rates in double digits. The one error Fairfield County had was due to a customer error.

Jeff Porter stated there are 23 dogs in the care of the Dog Shelter which is the lowest it has been in months. He also spoke about attending the OHPELRA (Ohio Public Employees Labor Relations Association) annual training conference and announced that Ms. Cordle will be the president of the NPELRA, the national association in April 2026.

Old Business

Commissioner Levacy stated that Winterfest was a success for Buckeye Lake and attracts more people each year.

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Commissioner Davis stated he attended the Polar Plunge and was happy to support United Way.

New Business

Commissioner Levacy stated he attended the housing study meeting and enjoyed seeing the new labs at the Workforce Center.

Commissioner Fix stated he filed a petition to place his name on the ballot to run for reelection.

Commissioner Davis spoke about temporary protected status and added that a judge in DC ended the status for the Haitian community which has a large population in Columbus. The Haitians were invited to the United States as refugees after a devastating earthquake hit Haiti in 2010. to escape the issues in their country. Commissioner Davis is hopeful that leaders will represent people under a temporary protected status in an empathetic way.

Regular (Voting) Meeting

The Commissioners continued to the Regular/Voting portion of the meeting, and the following Commissioners were present: Steve Davis, David Levacy and Jeff Fix. Also present: County Administrator, Aundrea Cordle; Deputy County Administrator, Jeff Porter; Clerk to the Board of Commissioners, Rochelle, Menningen; Communications and Information Coordinator, Bennett Niceswanger; Budget Director, Bart Hampson; Public Information Officer, Rachel Elsea; Utilities Director, Tony Vogel; Economic & Workforce Development Director, Rick Szabruk; EMA & Facilities Director, Jon Kochis; IT Director, Dan Neeley; JFS Director, Corey Clark; Treasurer, Jim Bahnsen; JFS Eligibility Referral Specialist, Heather Kochis; and Deputy, Andy Robberts. Also in attendance: Jerry Starner and Liz Moe.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Announcements

None.

Approval of Minutes for January 27, 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 27, 2026, meeting.

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:

2026-02.03.a A resolution to designate two members of the Board of Fairfield County Commissioners to serve on the Fairfield County Investment Advisory Committee

2026-02.03.b A Resolution to Extend the Deadline for Dog License Renewal for 2026

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Commissioner Davis stated that Commissioner Fix had been serving on the Investment Advisory Committee and that given his historical interest in that board, he and Commissioner Fix thought switching was appropriate.

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 Auditor – Payroll

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 Auditor – Payroll:

2026-02.03.c A resolution authorizing a memo expense memo receipt for the General Fund 2% administration fee for managing the county self-insurance program, Fund# 5376 TO GENERAL #1001

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 Developmental Disabilities

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 Developmental Disabilities:

2026-02.03.d A resolution to approve additional appropriations by appropriating from unappropriated into a major expense object category – Fund 2060

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:

2026-02.03.e A Resolution to Approve the Construction Drawings for the FAI-CR7-3.390 Resurfacing Project

2026-02.03.f A Resolution to Approve Advertising for the FAI-CR7-3.390 Resurfacing Project

2026-02.03.g A resolution to approve the purchase of three pick-up trucks for the Fairfield County Engineer's Office

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 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 resolution from Fairfield County Job and Family Services:

2026-02.03.h A resolution to approve a memo exp./ memo receipt for the costs of Birth Certificates paid to Fairfield County Health Departments as a memo expenditure for fund# 2072 Public Children's Services

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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 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:

2026-02.03.i A Resolution to Appropriation from Unappropriated in a Major Expenditure Object Category for Major Crimes Unit; Fund 7829 Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)

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:

2026-01.27.s A resolution authorizing the approval of payment of invoices for departments that need the Board of Commissioners' approval.

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

Adjournment

With no further business, on the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to adjourn at 6:49 p.m.

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

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, in the Commissioners' Hearing Room located at 210 E. Main St., Lancaster, OH.

*Approved on February 10, 2026

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Steve Davis
Commissioner

David Levy
Commissioner

Jeff Fix
Commissioner

Rochelle Menning
Rochelle Menning, Clerk