

Roundtable Meeting #9 - 2026
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office
February 24, 2026

Roundtable

The Commissioners met at 1:00 p.m. at the Levacy Center located at 1550 Sheridan Drive, Lancaster, OH. Commissioner Fix called the meeting to order, and the following Commissioners were present: Jeff Fix, Steve Davis and David Levacy. Also present: Deputy County Administrator, Jeff Porter; Clerk, Rochelle Menningen; Information & Communications Coordinator, Bennett Niceswanger; IT Director, Dan Neeley; Budget Director, Bart Hampson; EMA & Facilities Director, Jon Kochis; Deputy Facilities Director, Jason Grubb; Dog Warden, Leighann Adams; Assistant DD Superintendent, Cindy Hillberry; Real Estate & GIS Director, Dave Burgei; Deputy Recorder, Devin Brown; Recorder, Lisa McKenzie; Treasurer, Jim Bahnsen; Land Bank Director, Michael Kaper; Health Commissioner, Joe Ebel; Director of Health Promotions, Baylie Blevins; MCU Commander, Scott Duff; Coroner's Administrator, Kelly Frank; Park District Director, Marcy Shafer; Soil & Water Manager, Nikki Drake; 4-H Educator's, Aubry Fowler and Leslie Cooksie; Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Amy Brown-Thompson; Veteran Services Director, Justin Messinger; Senior Election Official, Deanna Cypryla; Transit Director, Aaron Kennedy; Utilities Director, Tony Vogel; Deputy HR Director, Abby Watson; JFS Director, Corey Clark; Economic & Workforce Development Director, Rick Szabrak; Court IT Specialist, Eugene McCollough; Clerk of Courts, Branden Meyer; Domestic Court Administrator, Lori Lovas; Chief Deputy Clerk of Courts, Michelle Carper; Sheriff, Alex Lape; Fiscal Manager, Britney Lee; and Juvenile & Probate Judge, Terre Vandervoort.

Welcome

Commissioner Davis opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance.

County Administration Updates

Levacy Center Rentals

Deputy County Administrator, Jeff Porter, explained the pricing structure for reserving the Levacy Center.

Commissioner Davis stated that the pricing structure is for non-county agencies and serves to recoup the overtime costs required for staff from Facilities and IT who assist with events held at the Levacy Center.

Centralized Purchasing

Deputy County Administrator, Jeff Porter, introduced the team from Modern Office Methods who would be working closely with county offices as they purchase and lease print management equipment.

Lauren Scott with Modern Office Methods stated that she and her team would be visiting with each of the county offices to conduct an inventory of their copiers and printers and facilitating with the purchasing and leasing of the equipment.

Cybersecurity Update

IT Director, Dan Neeley, stated the county is undergoing technology infrastructure upgrades and replacements in response to the guidance issued by the State of Ohio regarding cybersecurity for local governments.

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Recredentialing

IT Director, Dan Neeley, provided an update on the badge recredentialing process, stating that the badges initially did not function properly, but the issue has since been resolved and employee badges should now work as intended.

Credit Card

Budget Director, Bart Hampson, announced that the legal aspect of the credit card process has concluded and he and his team are now in the application process. His team must review the financials, but they anticipate starting the credit card onboarding process in the near future.

Transit Update

Economic & Workforce Development Director, Rick Szabrak, provided an update on Fairfield County Transit. The changes include new bus stop signs, new vehicles and updated branding, and a new scheduling and dispatching software that will improve the efficiency of Transit.

Transit Director, Aaron Kennedy, reported that there have been some staffing changes at Transit, chiefly the hiring of an Operations Manager and increasing the number of full-time operators. He added that each vehicle will also be equipped with a tablet that provides real-time updates to the drivers, which allows Transit to better serve riders.

Departmental Updates

Health Commissioner Joe Ebel reported that the Health Department is initiating its community health planning process to establish priorities and develop an action plan. He also noted preparation of the District Advisory Council agenda, an upcoming board vacancy, construction of on-site storage to reduce rental expenses, and the development of a succession plan in anticipation of his retirement.

Soil & Water Manager Nikki Drake reported that the annual tree sale is in progress. She stated that the agency's soil drill has been placed for auction and that a stormwater pollution survey has been published on the website.

Economic & Workforce Development Director Rick Szabrak reported strong enrollment at the Workforce Center, with more than 100 students participating in the pre-apprenticeship program representing all county school districts. Due to high demand, the phlebotomy program was expanded to two sessions. He announced an upcoming ribbon cutting for new lab and office space and provided an update on the Vantage Data Center project, including planned water system improvements in Millersport. He also noted completion of a county housing study.

Transit Director Aaron Kennedy expressed appreciation for the continued support of Transit services.

Clerk of Courts Branden Meyer reported that the Legal Help Center continues to provide meaningful assistance to both the public and court staff. He also noted ongoing efforts to ensure ADA compliance.

MCU Commander Scott Duff reported that four grant applications are pending. He also shared that the office recently acquired a mobile identification device and upgraded surveillance equipment.

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Sheriff Alex Lape announced that the Sheriff's Office received accreditation from the State of Ohio. He also reported completion of a corrections academy that included participation from other agencies and noted that several staff members are enrolled in leadership training.

EMA & Facilities Director Jon Kochis reported that initial planning has begun for the new command vehicle, which is expected to be an 18-month process. He also confirmed that the payment center drive-thru project has been completed and reopened.

Utilities Director Tony Vogel reported that Utilities continues to fund infrastructure improvements through tap fees. He stated that his office is assisting with water system upgrades in Millersport related to the Data Center project and indicated that the facility's anticipated water usage will be minimal.

Juvenile & Probate Judge Terre Vandervoort reported that her office is consolidating operations at the Hall of Justice and Connexions West. She also shared that the court is pursuing national certification to serve as a centralized hub for families and partner agencies.

OSU Extension 4-H Educators Aubry Fowler and Leslie Cooksie reported that they are conducting a countywide agriculture needs assessment. They also expressed appreciation for the use of county facilities for programming.

Budget Director Bart Hampson announced the commencement of the annual budget process and stated that budget hearings have been scheduled. He reported that three ARP projects remain in their final stages and that a drainage maintenance district reporting initiative is underway.

Recorder Lisa McKenzie introduced Deputy Recorder Devin Brown who is participating in the NACo Leadership Academy. She also reported that staff training for credit card processing is underway and that new equipment has been obtained to replace older systems.

Veteran Services Director Justin Messinger reported that expanded access to the VA system now allows his office to provide additional field services to veterans.

Treasurer Jim Bahnsen reported completion of first-half tax collections and announced a transition to a new online payment provider.

JFS Director Corey Clark reported that the Safe Opportunity Foster Alliance received a State of Ohio grant to expand wellness center services. The funding will support facility expansion and significantly increase service capacity.

Deputy HR Director Abby Watson provided updates on upcoming training and reported that 1095 forms will be distributed electronically this year. She also noted strong participation in employee wellness initiatives and preparations for open enrollment.

Domestic Court Administrator Lori Lovas reported an increase in filings from individuals citing lack of representation and stated that the Legal Help Center has helped address this need.

Coroner's Administrator Kelly Frank reported that she is preparing to transition to a new vital statistics system following completion of leadership training.

Land Bank Director Michael Kaper reported that the current round of demolition grants is nearing completion.

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Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Amy Brown-Thompson reported staffing adjustments within the Prosecutor's Office, including a transition within the felony division.

Park District Director Marcy Shafer provided staffing updates and reported plans to issue a comprehensive RFP. She also noted continued leadership development, efforts to sell unused Park property, and completion of the H2Ohio project.

Dog Warden Leighann Adams reported plans for HVAC improvements within the kennels and noted upcoming statutory changes.

Assistant DD Superintendent Cindy Hillberry announced upcoming Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month events and highlighted significant usage of the agency's website translation services.

IT Director Dan Neeley expressed appreciation to departments for proactive coordination on technology-related projects.

Senior Election Official Deanna Cypryla reported certification of the May primary ballots and stated that recruitment of ballot workers is ongoing.

Real Estate & GIS Director Dave Burgei reported on the collection of property taxes. He noted continued participation in the CAUV program and coordination with the Department of Taxation. He also stated that a significant property sale has impacted conveyance data.

ADJOURNMENT

Deputy County Administrator, Jeff Porter, stated that the annual Leadership Conference would be held April 7, 2026, at the Levacy Center.

Commissioner Levacy urged those in attendance to begin considering initiatives that the county could participate in for America 250.

With no further business, On the motion of Jeff Fix and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to adjourn at 2:45 p.m.

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

The next Roundtable is scheduled for July 21, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Fairfield Center in Pickerington.

Motion by: Jeff Fix

Seconded by: David Levacy

that the February 24, 2026, Roundtable minutes were approved by the following vote:

YEAS: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix

NAYS: None

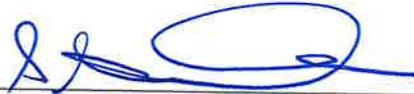
ABSTENTIONS:

*Approved on March 3, 2026

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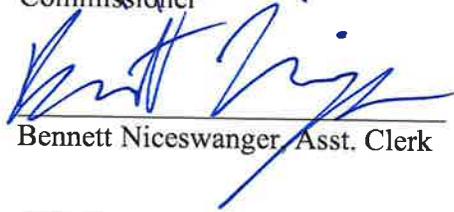
Jeff Fix
Commissioner



Steve Davis
Commissioner



David Levacy
Commissioner



Bennett Niceswanger, Asst. Clerk

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