

**Regular Meeting #13 – 2022
And Round Table Meeting #14 – 2022
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office
April 5, 2022**

Review Meeting

The Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room of the Historic Courthouse on 210 E Main St., Lancaster, OH. Commissioner Fix called the meeting to order with the following Commissioners present: Steve Davis, Dave Levacy, and Jeff Fix. Also present: Aunie Cordle, Jeff Porter, Bennett Niceswanger, Rochelle Menningen, Tony Vogel, James Mako, Raz Sabaiduc, Chris Schmelzer, Dr. Carri Brown, Amy Brown-Thompson, Corey Clark, Joe Ebel, Audrey Stoffel, Judy Stemen, Bart Hampson, Dan Neeley, Adam Sedlako, Ray Stemen, Lisa McKenzie, Jon Kochis, Alex Lape, Dennis Keller, Rick Szabrak, Brian Williams, Jonathan Ferbrache, Ken Culver, Mary Smith, and Stephanie Taylor.

Attending virtually: James Bahnsen, Rachel Elsea, Jonett Haberfield, Ashley Arter, Jeff Barron, Jessica Murphy, LH, Lynette Barnhart, Michael Kaper, Park, Stacy Hicks, Tony Howard, Marcy Fields, Britney Lee, and Nikki Drake.

Welcome

Commissioner Fix opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance and introducing the gentlemen from Fairfield Growing.

Listen and Learn

Fairfield Growing Update

Director of Regional Planning, James Mako, state that the day, April 5, 2022, was the unveiling of the Fairfield County Growing Update and that the real catalyst for revisiting and updating the plan was the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Mako added that they were tasked by Commissioner Fix to hire an outside consultant and to get this plan up and running. He also stated that he has learned a lot about agriculture in Fairfield County.

Brian Williams stated that the plan has five major points, including a food plan and economic development; and that the five categories have a combined list of twenty-nine recommendations. He also recommended re-institutionalizing the food council; and spoke about the importance of the Fairfield 33 Development Alliance, funding for a market study, and architecture feasibility study, and publicity for doing outreach.

Commissioner Fix thanked Mr. Williams for all his work and asked what should happen next.

Mr. Williams stated the local food council is the entity that will create public awareness and motivation.

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Commissioner Levacy stated there is a new focus on food and that Americans tend to take food for granted. He also added that the events in Eastern Europe could potentially cause a food shortage.

Mr. Williams stated that America will not be totally self-sufficient with food, but that we will be in a better position if we become more independent in food production.

Public Comments

Chris Schmelzer from Bremen spoke about going outside to eat grass because that is what the country's elites want him to do. He added that solar panels in Fairfield County are not a good idea, and we should not have them.

Ray Stemen from Lancaster spoke about renewable energy taking away usable farmland.

Judy Stemen from Lancaster spoke about comments from public health officials on natural immunities to the virus and provided a handout (contained later in the minutes).

Stephanie Taylor from Habitat for Humanity spoke about the organization donating homes and playhouses for the community. They have developed great relationships with the community and are excited for the next year. Ms. Taylor also spoke about the first house in Fairfield County (Pleasantville) since 2016, and seven playhouses that had been built for lower income families. Ms. Taylor provided a handout that is contained later in these minutes.

County Administrator, Aundrea Cordle, enthusiastically added that she would like to assemble a team to assist Habitat for Humanity in building a home in Fairfield County.

Legal Update

No update

County Administration Update

County Administrator Cordle reviewed the Week in Review, Highlights of Resolutions, the Budget Review, Recognitions, and the Jail Population, as follows.

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Week in Review

COVID-19 Update

Fairfield County reported COVID-19 cases have increased by 24% over the past week. From 3/25/2022 through 3/31/2022, however, the case rate remains very low. There have been fifty-two new COVID-19 cases reported, for a rate of 33.0 cases per week per 100,000 population (Low Community Levels).

Seven new hospitalizations were reported in the past week and one additional COVID-19 related death was reported for March, for a total of two COVID-19 related deaths reported so far for the month of March.

Joe Ebel stated the county is seeing about sixteen new cases a day and that numbers are continuing to stay low, but that the Omicron variant that is in Europe is posing a potential concern.

ARP Update

There are multiple projects under review.

From the \$15,303,451.00 received as the first tranche of fiscal recovery funds, \$9.3M has been appropriated, \$2.8M expended, and \$4.2M encumbered or obligated.

Deputy County Administrator, Jeff Porter, stated they had a productive meeting with the Village of Pleasantville about some potential future projects.

Dr. Brown mentioned the potential for Tyler ERP SAAS as an ARP project.

New Regional Education Partnership Grant

The Fairfield 33 Alliance received a \$150k grant from the Ohio Department of Education for its Career Readiness program. The grant is meant to fund organizations that manage partnerships between early learning, primary, and post-secondary education, social services, business, nonprofit and community organizations. Under this proposal the Career Readiness program will expand with two specific focus areas:

- To enable additional participation from students in earlier grades at Lancaster (and potentially Pickerington); and

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- To establish continual presence of supportive services at the Workforce Center by adding a fully on-site Career Navigator, which also allows the current Career Navigators to spend more time in the schools.

Ohio Department of Transportation Director, Jack Marchbanks, Discusses What Federal Infrastructure Law Means for Ohio, Seeks Law Changes to Use Funds

Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Director Jack Marchbanks appeared before the House Transportation and Public Safety Committee Tuesday to update the members on the federal infrastructure law, request a couple of law changes to make Ohio's use of those funds possible, and to discuss the impact should Sen. Steve Huffman's (R-Lima) SB277 -- the gas tax rollback -- pass. More information is found in the review packet.

Commissioners' Roundtable

Please join us this afternoon from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Fairfield County Agricultural Center for the first roundtable of the year. This is a time to provide an update from each office. The expanded time frame will allow everyone plenty of time to share department highlights.

Highlights of Resolutions

Administrative Approvals

The review packet contains a list of administrative approvals.

Resolution Review

There are 12 resolutions for the voting meeting.

Resolutions of note:

- Proclamation for Pickerington Central Boys Basketball team as State Champs.
- Proclamation for National Public Health Week April 4-10.
- A resolution to approve Participation in the OneOhio Region 18 Governance Structure Under the OneOhio Memorandum of Understanding.

Recognition

- Congratulations to Rick Szabrak for a great presentation at the State of the Schools Address.

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- Thank you to Bennett Niceswanger for serving in the Clerk capacity last week while Rochelle Menningen was out. Bennett did a great job and kept everything running smoothly.
- Dr. Brown thanked Josh Harper, Noel Soddors, Greg Forquer, and Robin Balthaser for conducting a presentation along with Auditor Brown for local appraisers. The appraisers really appreciated the new information about services.
- Dr. Brown thanked the County Auditor staff for improving their response time for public records requests. The median and mode response time is 1 day, while the average response time is 1.8 days. This week, David Miller and Crystal Walker received notes of thanks for their immediate responses to members of the public for financial and Board of Revision requests, respectively.
- Dr. Brown received thanks from ADAMH and DD for updating a pay-in process for certain tax levies to help with efficiency.
- Dr. Brown complimented the County! The State Auditor conducted an examination of Fairfield County's Ohio Public Employee Retirement System activity, and no report comments were noted.

Calendar Review/Invitations Received

- Roundtable Meeting, Tuesday, April 5, 2022, at 1:00 p.m., at the Fairfield County Agriculture Center, 831 College Ave., Lancaster, OH (Fix, Davis, Levacy)
- Regional Planning Commission meeting, Tuesday, April 5, 2022, at 5:30 p.m., at the Records Center, 138 W. Chestnut St., Lancaster, OH (Fix, Levacy)
- Ohio Council of County Officials Legislative Reception, Wednesday, April 6, 2022, at 5:00 p.m., at Ohio Statehouse Atrium, 1 Capitol Square, Columbus, OH (Fix, Levacy)
- Invitation from OSU Extension Fairfield County to the 2022 Fairfield County 4-H Achievement Award Program, Thursday, April 7, 2022, at 6:45 p.m., at the Ohio University-Lancaster Auditorium, 1570 Granville Pike, Lancaster, OH (Davis)
- Invitation from Hocking College President, Betty Young, for the State of the College Address, Thursday, April 14, 2022, at 4:30 p.m., at The Lodge at Hocking College, 15770 SR-691, Nelsonville, OH

Commissioner Fix stated that he would like to attend the State of the College event.

- Invitation from Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission for an update on the first planned infrastructure improvements for the Intel site, Thursday, April 7, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., at MORPC, Town Hall, 111 Liberty St. suite #100, Columbus, OH

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- Invitation from the Ohio Chamber of Commerce for the 2022 State of the Business Summit, Tuesday, May 17, 2022, at 5:00 p.m., at the Ohio Statehouse Rotunda, 1 Capitol Square, Columbus, OH
- Invitation for the 2022 Elder Abuse Awareness Day Webinar, Wednesday, June 22, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. virtually.
- Invitation from the Lancaster Festival Board of Directors to the Maestro's Mixer, Friday, May 6, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., at Coughlin KIA of Lancaster, 2784 North Columbus St.

Correspondence

Informational Items

- All Things Amateur Radio Association & The Off the Grid Radio team to support Afterschool Programs of Lancaster and Meals on Wheels "Food 4 Paws", at Olivedale & Hunter Park.
- ADAMH 2021 Annual Report newsletter.
- Fairfield County Growing, An Agricultural Economic Development Plan.
- Notice of upcoming closures for the SR 37/256 Intersection project from ODOT. Project is scheduled to begin April 18, 2022, through October of 2022
- Testimony from Director of ODOT, Dr. Jack Marchbanks, on the dangers of suspending the gas tax.
- A news article from WOSU News regarding the planned restoration of three dams near Lancaster that prevent catastrophic flooding.
- Ohio Gas Association questionnaire for public awareness programs designed to provide safety information.
- Open House for Summer Programming at the Fairfield County Workforce Center, Wednesday, May 4, 2022, at 5:00 p.m., 4465 Coonpath Rd. NW, Carroll, OH

Jail Population

- March 29 had 268 with 34 of those being contracted placements.
April 5 was 267 with 32 of those being contracted placements

Old Business

Jeff Porter stated the NACo achievement award applications have been extended. He noticed that the Auditor's Office had added two additional applications. If anyone else is interested in submitting an application, please reach out to Jeff Porter.

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County Auditor, Dr. Carri Brown, stated that if one additional department applies each year, the county can continue to win more awards.

Commissioner Fix had attended The Farm Bureau Breakfast on the agriculture industry and some of the issues farmers face.

Dr. Brown added that the discussion touched on mental health of farmers and that Marcy Fields from ADAMH is looking into the matter with the Farm Bureau.

New Business

Dennis Keller spoke about advertising for bid the Fairfield Center project. He added that bids are due April 22nd, and completion is set for October of this year unless they hear from bidders that it is not possible due to supply chain issues.

Dr. Brown mentioned that more than 10% of homes in the county have sold since 2019 and that the average selling price of real estate is more than \$250,000.

Dr. Brown also spoke about the retracing of Zane Trace, its significance, and how it has resulted in maps being upgraded. She added that schools are using the information in their educational process.

Jeff Porter spoke about the historical significance of Zane Trace and its journal and thanked the Ferbrache family for their work on this project.

Regular (Voting) Meeting

Present: Steve Davis, Dave Levacy, and Jeff Fix. Also present: Aunie Cordle, Jeff Porter, Bennett Niceswanger, Rochelle Menningen, Tony Vogel, James Mako, Raz Sabaiduc, Chris Schmelzer, Dr. Carri Brown, Amy Brown-Thompson, Corey Clark, Joe Ebel, Audrey Stoffel, Judy Stemen, Bart Hampson, Dan Neeley, Adam Sedlako, Ray Stemen, Lisa McKenzie, Jon Kochis, Alex Lape, Dennis Keller, Rick Szabrak, Brian Williams, Jonathan Ferbrache, Ken Culver, Mary Smith, and Stephanie Taylor.

Attending virtually: James Bahnsen, Rachel Elsea, Jonett Haberfield, Ashley Arter, Jeff Barron, Jessica Murphy, LH, Lynette Barnhart, Michael Kaper, Park, Stacy Hicks, Tony Howard, Marcy Fields, Britney Lee, and Nikki Drake.

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Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Fix asked everyone who was able to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Approval of Minutes for Tuesday, March 29, 2022

On the motion of Steve Davis and the second of Dave Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the minutes for the Tuesday, March 29, 2022, Regular Meeting.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

Approval of Resolutions from the Board of Commissioners

On the motion of Steve Davis and the second of Dave Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution from the Board of Commissioners:

2022-04.05.a A resolution authorizing the approval of proclamations
[Commissioners]. [Commissioners]

Commissioner Fix stated he will be attending a celebration rally at Pickerington Central High School. He further added that a state championship is something special and deserves recognition.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

On the motion of Steve Davis and the second of Dave Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolutions from the Board of Commissioners:

2022-04.05.b A resolution to approve Participation in the OneOhio Region 18
Governance Structure Under The OneOhio Memorandum of
Understanding. [Commissioners] [Commissioners]

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- 2022-04.05.c A resolution to approve a memo expense for W. Buckeye Lake/Ballard Lane expenses [Commissioners]
- 2022-04.05.d A resolution authorizing a fund to fund transfer to the Fairfield County Family Adult Children First Council for Multi-Youth Committee – 2nd payment for the 2022 Allocation - Fairfield County Commissioners [Commissioners]
- 2022-04.05.e A resolution authorizing a fund to fund transfer for Fairfield County Job and Family Services (JFS) –2nd Quarter 2022 Allocation - Fairfield County Commissioners [Commissioners]
- 2022-04.05.f A resolution authorizing a fund to fund transfer for the 2nd Quarter 2022 Allocation for the Multi County Juvenile Detention Center (MCJDC) - Fairfield County Commissioners [Commissioners]
- 2022-04.05.g A resolution to appropriate from unappropriated in a major expenditure object category for contractual services for the 911 Wireless Fund# 2683 - Fairfield County Commissioners [Commissioners]

Commissioner Fix spoke about how Fairfield County, as well as villages and townships in the county, will vote to accept the Region 18 resolution.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

Approval of a resolution from the Fairfield County Auditor - Finance

On the motion of Steve Davis and the second of Dave Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution from the Fairfield County Auditor - Finance

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2022-04.05.h A resolution approving an account-to-account transfer; Auditor’s Office – Financial Systems [Auditor- Finance]

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

Approval of a resolution from the Fairfield County Domestic Relations Court

On the motion of Steve Davis and the second of Dave Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution from the Fairfield County Domestic Relations Court:

2022-04.05.i A resolution authorizing an account to account transfer for the adjustment of Materials and Supplies to purchase a Judicial Robe. [Domestic Relations Court]

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

Approval of Resolutions from the Fairfield County Engineer

On the motion of Steve Davis and the second of Dave Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolutions from the Fairfield County Engineer:

2022-04.05.j A resolution to Approve Lifting Weight Reductions on County and Township Roads [Engineer]

2022-04.05.k A resolution to request for appropriations for additional unanticipated receipts of memo receipts and memo expenses for fund 3445 LIB-26 bridge replacement [Engineer]

Commissioner Davis mentioned that to most of us, lifting weights isn’t something we notice, but to a lot of truckers and construction companies this is a big deal because they can move more product efficiently.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

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Approval of the Payment of Bills

On the motion of Steve Davis and the second of Dave Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution for the Payment of Bills:

2022-04.05.1 A resolution authorizing the approval of payment of invoices for departments that need Board of Commissioners’ approval
[Commissioners]

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

Recruitment and Retention Discussion

Director of Job and Family Services, Corey Clark, commented on the employment retention graphs he presented. He noted that a difference of one less person leaving a month makes a big difference over time and that the agency struggled with employment during the COVID-19 pandemic. He especially wanted to touch on the fact that since the Fairfield County Compensation Plan adjustments took effect, there have been fifteen individuals hired for Child Protective Services, and fourteen remain with the county.

JFS Human Resources Deputy Director Abby Watson stated COVID-19 has skewed a lot of numbers but the agency has been very pleased with the data so far.

Corey Clark made note of a Facebook post from an employee about how grateful they are for their job and the fulfillment they feel for their line of work.

Commissioner Davis asked for clarification on what the term “resignation” and whether retirements were included as resignations.

Abby Watson replied that certain people were excluded from the data, like those that transfer to another agency in the county, but people who retire are included as resignations.

Aunie Cordle asked Abby to speak to the quality she mentioned.

Abby stated that they are receiving fewer applications, but the quality of applicants is noticeably higher.

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Commissioner Fix stated this data is a great testament to Fairfield County being a great place to work.

Fairfield County Sheriff, Alex Lape, stated they have been seeing positive results in their retention numbers. He further elaborated that it is hard to compete with law enforcement agencies that offer higher salaries, and that the agency was in a position where they needed quality applicants and the department is not willing to lower standards to meet quantity requirements. He also added that there is an extensive application process that Fairfield County law enforcement is not the only one struggling to hire officers, and Law enforcement agencies around the country are experiencing the same issues. Sheriff Lape reported that thirty-one people were hired in 2021, compared to just 3 this year.

Deputy County Administrator, Jeff Porter, stated that the county's Human Resources Department values their relationship with the Sheriff's Office and the departments are working on a NeoGov contract to get the Sheriff's Office application process up to speed.

Sheriff Lape stated he is excited to get that process underway for a more modernized applicant process.

Commissioner Davis asked if the Sheriff could project retirement numbers in the future.

Sheriff Lape stated they analyze years of service to predict when employees may be eligible for retirement.

Commissioner Davis congratulated Commissioner Levacy and Commissioner Fix for their involvement in the Compensation Plan process and the resulting outcomes. He also added that the Commissioners' Office is in full support of the Sheriff's Office.

Commissioner Levacy asked the Sheriff to extend his appreciation to the staff at the Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff Lape added that his staff sees the appreciation from the Commissioners and the county.

Commissioner Fix stated he feels this is the start of a big win for the community because a better staffed law enforcement agency is better equipped to serve the community.

Sheriff Lape stated he sees this as a positive investment because of the cost savings on training new hires and the entire hiring process.

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Adjournment

With no further business, on the motion of Steve Davis and a second of Dave Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to adjourn at 10:33 a.m.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday April 12, 2022, at 9:00 a.m.

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Roundtable Discussion

The Commissioners met at 1:00 p.m. at the Agricultural Center for a Roundtable Discussion. Commissioner Fix called the meeting to order with the following Commissioners present: Steve Davis, Dave Levacy, and Jeff Fix. Also present: Aunie Cordle, Jeff Porter, Bennett Niceswanger, Rochelle Menningen, Park Russell, Bart Hampson, Dennis Keller, Staci Knisley, James Mako, Michael Kaper, Cheryl Reeves, Jon Kochis, Dan Neeley, Raz Sabaiduc, James Bahnsen, Rachel Elsea, Dr. Carri Brown, Lisa McKenzie, Nikki Drake, Lori Hawk, Audrey Stoffel, Abby Watson, Corey Clark, Jeremiah Upp, Cathie Warner, John Pekar, Terre Vandorvoort, Shannon Carter, Jill Boone, Kyle Witt, Alex Lape, Marcy Shaffer, Amy Brown Thompson, Marcy Fields, Josh Horacek, Tony Vogel, and Luann Davidson.

Commissioner Fix asked everyone who was able to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Fix stated that the Round Table Meetings were important in the sharing of information and that there are lots of good things happening in Fairfield County to discuss.

Aunie Cordle stated the first item on the agenda was Fairfield Forward. She said the Commissioners conduct Commission Connection Videos and she wants to extend the opportunity to county departments and agencies to share information through ninety second videos. She added that the theme will be "Fairfield Forward", and that videos can be graphics or topical in nature. Ms. Cordle added that the second item is the social media outreach campaign the county is planning to begin. This initiative is in response to feedback in the Strategic Plan regarding the county offering education opportunities to the public on what the county does.

The Leadership Conference will begin May 10th, and that the county is looking for engaging topics that differ from previous years.

Bart Hampson spoke about the 2023 Budget Update and welcomed back Staci Knisley from her leave. He added that the Fairfield County Finance Committee will discuss end of year fiscal activities, MUNIS, trainings, contracts, payroll issues, and credit cards. He informed the group that the start of the 2023 Budget Cycle began that day, and that the schedule, communications, and parameters will remain essentially the same with one exception being the waiving of the tax budget. He further added that some of the notable budget items for the year are the 2% increase for health insurance budget lines, and flat lining of expenditures. He continued by stating that his goal is to meet with everyone and discuss their fiscal goals. Mr. Hampson also stated that he is very close to completing the five-year projection tool and that he would like to create a Sharepoint site for people to see that information.

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Dr. Brown suggested that there are tools available on the county intranet site, that should be included with Sharepoint.

Human Resources Update

Jeff Porter announced news regarding the benefit plan. He stated that all employees on the plan will receive a \$500.00 Health Reimbursement Account and that the county will be implementing a new health initiative called Virgin Pulse. He elaborated that Virgin Pulse is an app which enables people to obtain points for healthy activity and that those points can be used in conjunction with the health reimbursement account. Mr. Porter also announced that health benefit fees for the months of July and December will be waived and thanked everyone for their participation in the wellness initiatives.

Commissioner Fix thanked Jeff Porter for the robust health programs and added that there are many reasons to be an employee in Fairfield County.

Jeff Porter added that there is now a travel protection plan and a beneficiary policy to assist people in the event of a loss of a beneficiary.

Jeff Porter stated there has been a lot of comments over the years for request for an onboarding program and that beginning in June there will be onboarding sessions where new employees will receive information on their benefits and payroll, and will receive mandated training.

Information Technology Update

Dan Neeley gave an update on IT projects. He stated that Juvenile Court is spearheading their new case management project, the Fairfield Center building will have connectivity to Lancaster, Dennis Keller has been heading construction projects, and that they are working with the Engineer's office to have tablets for use in the field. He further stated that there are server and computer upgrades in the works. Mr. Neeley added that there is a healthy fear for cyber security, and that employees are becoming more aware of the threats we all face. He also stated that there is an IT Strategies Committee and encouraged interested staff to participate and closed by identifying new hires in IT and those that have moved to other departments and are planning to retire.

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Department Updates

Sheriff Alex Lape stated his office is looking at some changes due to changes in CCW laws and the use of revenue from CCW requirements to purchase many of their equipment needs and to pay the salary of the person making the purchases. Sheriff Lape spoke about additional trainings, the FTO process for the jail, the new special victim's detective, and the new unit which will help provide additional services to the community.

Commissioner Levacy asked what score the jail received on its inspection.

Sheriff Lape stated the jail received 100% on the inspection, and that there are several robust programs within the jail.

Judge Terre Vandervoort from Juvenile Court thanked the Commissioner's for the employee programs they authorize and approve. She mentioned there has been a case that has received a lot of media attention and that her office as well as the Prosecutor's Office was conflicted and therefor were not involved in that case and visiting officials were utilized. She also stated there is a need for mental health assistance for the youth in the schools involving truancy issues.

Commissioner Fix added that the Diversion Programs the Judge has put forward have had a significant impact on the county, and that Fairfield County has been a leader in initiatives for Ohio's youth.

County Auditor, Dr. Carri Brown, stated the Auditor's Office will be focusing largely on employee and technology engagement. She stated that Fairfield County has the lowest tax rates in central Ohio and that her office will be doing additional testing for new programs. Dr. Brown shared a video clip on the role of an appraiser.

Rachel Elsea from the Auditor's Office mentioned that any person needing a document notarized can be sent to the Auditor's Office.

Director of Emergency Management, Jon Kochis, spoke about the mitigation plan which is on a four-year cycle and helps reduce hazards in the county. He added that they are looking to help Hunters Run with their flooding issues and that City of Lancaster first responders will have the same radio platform and will no longer be in zones where they are unsupported. He closed by stating that the airport is also looking at some big additions that will take the airport through the next 20 years.

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Facilities Manager, Dennis Keller, stated that he oversees the Maintenance department and that anyone needing maintenance can submit requests on FMX. He also manages construction projects around the county. He continued talking about the shooting range in Amanda and of the impending airport construction. Mr. Keller stated there will be electric vehicle chargers going in at the workforce center which were purchased with grant funds and that the Fairfield Center in Pickerington will begin to receive bids to get construction underway. He also spoke about water quality issues at the jail and the hiring of a new building manager for the Workforce Center.

Nikki Drake with the Soil and Water Conservancy District stated there is a guide for invasive species that farmers and others can use to help prevent invasive species on county land. She highlighted the Seeds of Change Earth Day Event and Pheasants for Youth upcoming events and that there are three dams in the Hunters Run Conservancy District in Fairfield County that will receive maintenance to increase their lifespan.

Shannon Carter from OSU Extension stated she works to extend information from OSU to the people of Fairfield County. She spoke about upcoming interesting programs, such as the Master Gardner's Program and programs to learn how to properly can and store food, and the addition of five additional camps.

Park Russell from the Veterans Services Office stated they transport veterans to VA facilities all around Ohio and West Virginia and help veterans file claims with the VA. He also spoke of the possible closing of the hospital in Chillicothe.

Jill Boone from Common Pleas Court spoke about what teachers and school administrators they are dealing with in the schools, many which are due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She also spoke about the reentry program and the development of pocket-sized information sheets used to give people in need which contain information on emergency services, child support, legal advice, and other services. Ms. Boone also touched on exposure to implicit biases and encouraged everyone to sit in on the Recovery Court

County Engineer, Jeremiah Upp, spoke on how his office is gearing up for construction. He stated his office plans to take out some of the curve on the bridge at Horns Mill Road over the Hocking River and that he has spent a lot of time with the county Engineer's Association regarding the possible devastating suspension of the gas tax.

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Marcy Shaffer from the Parks District spoke about the master plans that were started under her predecessor and how they are in the process of moving their Main Street office in Lancaster to Pickerington Road. She added that the move will help spread the department's staff around to other areas of the county. Ms. Shaffer also spoke about numbers of attendees at the parks during COVID and now, and about the erosion issues at Rockmill. She closed by talking about a potential controlled burn at Wagner Preserve in Baltimore to help eliminate invasive species.

Luann Davidson, Coroner's Office Administrator, extended Dr. Varney's appreciation to the Sheriff's Office and the Prosecutor's Office for their cooperation and assistance in several recent, and quite complicated cases. She added that Dr. Varney stated the assistance is vital to assuring that they can continue to address prevention in dealing with the overdose deaths in the community. Dr. Varney also detailed that his office has added the services of Dr. Mark Darnell and Dr. Michael Schilb as Deputy Coroners along with another investigator to fill their 24/7/365 call schedule. Finally, Ms. Davidson indicated that although Dr. Varney was not in attendance due to office hours, he is readily available by cell phone if anyone in the room has any questions regarding the report.

County Prosecutor, Kyle Witt, stated they are seeing lots of drug overdose deaths and are using these deaths to try to track down dealers and that they attribute this largely to fatal doses of fentanyl laced in other drugs. He also spoke about recent law changes include the changes to the firearms laws in Ohio. He said the state is considered a constitutional carry state and anybody who is not precluded from possessing a firearm is able to open carry firearms. He also stated that he believes law enforcement will have their hands full with open carry, especially with traffic stops.

John Pekar from the Board of Developmental Disabilities stated this is a transition year for Fairfield DD and that they have had lots of internal promotions within the organization. He added that this is also the first year of their Strategic Plan and that after three years their Celebration of Possibility will be back.

Director of Job and Family Services, Corey Clark, passed out an invitation to the Child Abuse Prevention breakfast and stated that the Family Fun Fest is also coming up and is an event they offer for kids and families in the community. He also added that in May, the Summer Youth Employment Program will offer youth the opportunity to get work experience, and in July, his agency will have to redetermine eligibility for the people on Medicaid, which entails over 32,000 people in Fairfield County. They will also be doing a redetermination for food assistance recipients.

**Regular Meeting #13 – 2022
And Round Table Meeting #14 – 2022
Fairfield County Commissioners’ Office
April 5, 2022**

Director of Economic Development, Rick Szabrak, stated his department is working with RAMA consulting to offer recruitment and retention evaluation to seven employers because businesses are having a difficult time hiring people. He spoke about the Workforce Center, the fact that 270 students who use the center, and that the center will continue to focus on the trades, but there are many other programs available. He added that they are hoping to add HVAC and CDL training, and just received a \$150,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Education.

Director of the Family Adult and Children First Council, Raz Sabaiduc, touched on some programs in the community and highlighted a new program that focuses on children with developmental disabilities. He added that his office is a hub for providing car seats, cribs, baby bottles, and more to families and pregnant mothers.

County Recorder, Lisa McKenzie, stated her office has been working on better searchability for records. She added that the office is also working with the Clerk of Courts office to assist people in identifying their real estate deeds as “transfer upon death”.

County Treasurer, Jim Bahnsen, stated his office has completed their first half tax collection, and collected over \$132 million. Michael Kaper from the Treasurer’s Office and Land Bank stated they have submitted an application for approval of 18 demolition projects, which would touch every township in the county, and that the Parks District, has two houses that need torn down. He said all projects would have to be completed by the end of this year. The Land Bank Board agreed is working with Habitat for Humanity to get more houses built due to the immediate need for more housing.

Director of the Regional Planning Commission, James Mako, stated his office recently moved down to the Records Center, and spoke about the continued growth in the county. He added that his office had 103 commercial building permits, exceeding anything they had done in the past. He further stated there are about eleven subdivisions under review, mostly in Violet township. He said development is strong and people want to live in this community. He closed by adding that some of the other things they are working on is a competitive grant process with the village of Pleasantville and the Neighborhood Revitalization Program.

Department of Health Commissioner, Joe Ebel, announced they are seeing about six new cases of COVID-19 a day compared to the 300-400 cases per day in January. He added that the department has been struggling with training nurses that have only been trained on COVID related issues.

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Director of the ADAMH Board, Marcy Fields, spoke about construction of the Starlight Center and how her staff has been able to get out into the community to provide Mental Health First trainings. She said they continue to work daily with their taskforce to get Narcan out to the community and they have Narcan boxes around the county to provide additional doses for those in need. Ms. Fields spoke about the increasing issue of homelessness in the county.

Cathie Warner from the Clerk of Courts office spoke about the work being done on the Fairfield Center in Pickerington. She thanked IT for their help in addressing some computer issues with the clerk's staff.

Director of Utilities, Tony Vogel, spoke about the sewage project at the Airport and fixing the arsenic issues in the water.

Commissioner Davis thanked everyone for the information and stated there is a bubble of federal money that is flowing through. He added that there is a lot of food for thought for leaders in the county and that everyone should keep their eyes on the spending and the outcomes from the pandemic.

Commissioner Levacy thanked everyone in the county for their hard work.

Commissioner Fix mentioned he will be attending a meeting at the Statehouse on April 6th with other elected officials. He stated other counties tend to complain about relationships within their counties, yet Fairfield County tends to get along very well with other departments and are working with one another on various projects.

With no further business, on the motion of Steve Davis and a second of Dave Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to adjourn at 4:01 p.m.

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

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