

Roundtable Meeting 28 - 2026
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office
July 21, 2026

Review Meeting

The Commissioners met at 1:00 p.m. in the Sheriff's SWAT building, 3365 Old Columbus Rd., Carroll, OH. Commissioner Jeff Fix called the meeting to order, and Commissioner David Levacy was also in attendance. 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, EMA & Facilities Director Jon Kochis, IT Director Dan Neeley, OSU Extension Area Manager Shannon Carter, Soil & Water Manager Nikki Drake, Recorder Lisa McKenzie, Chief Deputy Clerk Michelle Carper, Court Administrator Lori Lovas, Engineer's Administrator Cheryl Downour, Deputy Health Commissioner Baylie Blevins, Health Commissioner Joe Ebel, JFS Director Corey Clark, Communications Officer Rachel Elsea, Deputy HR Director Abby Watson, Deputy Facilities Director Jason Grubb, Real Estate Assessment Director Dave Burgei, Veterans Services Director Justin Messinger, Park District Director Marcy Shaffer, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Amy Brown-Thompson, Treasurer Jim Bahnsen, Sheriff Alex Lape, Chief Deputy Sheriff Scott Ervin, Coroner's Assistant Kelly Frank, Chief Investigator Michael Hardway, Deputy Director of Communications, Public Relations, and Human Resources CJ Robberts, Deputy EMA Director Garrett Blevins.

Welcome

Commissioner Fix opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance.

County Administration Updates

Human Resources/Risk Management

Deputy County Administrator Jeff Porter provided the following updates:

Centralized Purchasing

Reported the MOM contract has been finalized, and departments have begun utilizing the service. He encouraged offices to report any issues encountered.

Temporary Staffing/Uniforms

Shared that additional centralized purchasing contracts are being developed, including agreements for temporary staffing services and employee uniforms.

Personnel Policy Manual

Reported that revisions to the Personnel Policy Manual are nearing completion and are expected to be presented for formal adoption in August. He reviewed several of the proposed updates and explained the rationale behind the recommended changes.

Public Service Recognition

Announced that the County's annual Public Service Recognition event will be held on August 25th at the Levacy Center. He encouraged elected officials and department leaders to participate in recognizing and celebrating their employees' service.

Roundtable Meeting 28 - 2026
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HR Table Talk Meetings

Announced the launch of quarterly HR Table Talk meetings to provide guidance and collaboration on human resources topics. The inaugural session will focus on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

Noble Reach Fellowship

Reported that Fairfield County will host a Noble Reach Fellow who will work with county departments to identify practical opportunities to leverage artificial intelligence to improve government operations and service delivery.

Insurance Update

Reported that the County recently held its annual pre-renewal insurance meeting, where discussions focused on the continued rise in pharmacy costs driven by increasing prescription drug prices. He emphasized the importance of maintaining employee access to necessary medications while responsibly managing long-term healthcare costs for the County.

Budget Update

Budget Director Bart Hampson reminded departments that the deadline for budget entry access is approaching, with 27 working days remaining before the closing of third-level budget submissions. He urged departments to submit all budget changes by the established deadline to ensure timely completion of the budget process.

Hampson also noted that the budget projection for health insurance will be increased from 8% to 10% to account for anticipated cost increases. In addition, he requested that each department submit an updated Table of Organization along with its third-level budget submission to support the review process.

Department Updates

Treasurer Jim Bahnsen reported that second-half property tax payments continue to be received as scheduled.

Assistant Coroner Kelly Frank reported that the Coroner's Office has handled just under 300 cases thus far in 2026.

Deputy Facilities Director Jason Grubb announced the completion of the Liberty Center parking lot project and reported that work continues on the Workforce Center cafeteria and the new nursing center at the Health Department.

Real Estate Assessment Director Dave Burgei distributed a property tax fact sheet and provided an overview of House Bill 186. He also highlighted enhancements to the county's property search website designed to improve the user experience and encouraged attendance at the *Making Numbers Count* educational event scheduled for September 17th at the Developmental Disabilities Center in Pickerington.

Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Amy Brown-Thompson reported a successful conviction in a criminal case involving unlawful sexual conduct with a minor. She noted that the Juvenile Division is currently understaffed and shared that a legal intern has been assisting with evidence preparation for criminal cases.

Roundtable Meeting 28 - 2026
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office
July 21, 2026

IT Director Dan Neeley reported the successful completion of two major technology initiatives, including implementation of a new authentication system that will strengthen phishing awareness testing and continued installation of electronic facility access controls. He expressed appreciation for the County's continued investment in cybersecurity and noted that staff recently responded quickly to mitigate the proposed threat.

Recorder Lisa McKenzie announced that recorded document images dating back to 1980 are now available online. She reported positive feedback from title companies and law offices and explained that online images include watermarks to help deter fraudulent use, while certified unmarked copies remain available through the Recorder's Office. She also reminded attendees that the vendor continues to offer free training sessions.

Manager Nikki Drake announced an upcoming local work group public meeting with agricultural stakeholders participating in Farm Bill programs to gather input on local conservation priorities.

Health Commissioner Joe Ebel thanked the Facilities teams for their support of ongoing capital improvements. He reported that construction of the new storage building and parking lot is nearing completion and that public entrances are being consolidated to create a more convenient, customer-friendly experience.

OSU Extension Area Manager Shannon Carter announced that a new educator will join the office. She also highlighted staff training opportunities on mindful wellness and time management, along with continued success of summer camps and 4-H educational programming.

Budget Director Bart Hampson reported continued progress on automating Drainage Maintenance District processes. He noted that county mail services have been centralized through the Commissioners' Office and encouraged departments to communicate any concerns regarding the transition. He reported that the final American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) payment is being processed and shared that his team continues work on several county financial reporting initiatives.

Court Administrator Lori Lovas reported that the Court, in partnership with Hicks Partners, has applied for a three-year, \$800,000 Violence Against Women Act grant to enhance security at the Visitation Center. She also noted a vacancy for a Judicial Administrative Assistant.

Sheriff Alex Lape provided updates on recruitment and retention efforts, noting that more than half of Sheriff's Office employees have fewer than five years of service. He discussed ongoing strategies to support staffing, implementation of a redesigned website, continued state-required training, and recent investigative successes, including the arrest of an online sexual predator and progress on a hit-and-run investigation. He also highlighted efforts to educate residents about local scams, particularly cryptocurrency and bitcoin kiosk fraud, in coordination with the Ohio Attorney General's Office and financial institutions.

Chief Deputy Clerk Michelle Carper reported that Fairfield County may serve as a pilot county for new BMV signature pads in the Title Office. She also highlighted the continued success of the Legal Help Center, which provides free legal assistance to qualifying residents.

Deputy EMA Director Garrett Davis reflected on the one-year anniversary of the Lancaster flooding and reported completion of the State's full-scale hazardous materials exercise. He also announced updates to the County's Debris Management Plan in partnership with local jurisdictions, preparations for the Luke Bryan Farm Tour, and for the Lancaster Festival, and receipt of grant funding supporting the County's dive team, hazardous materials team, and portable light towers.

Roundtable Meeting 28 - 2026
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office
July 21, 2026

Veterans Services Director Justin Messinger reported on the launch of a redesigned, veteran-focused website intended to improve accessibility to services. He also noted that the office continues assisting veterans from neighboring counties with benefits claims.

Commissioner Fix asked whether Fairfield County is reimbursed from other counties for processing veterans' claims for residents in those counties. Mr. Messinger responded that the County currently absorbs those costs.

Engineer's Administrator Cheryl Downour provided updates on numerous summer infrastructure projects, including roadway resurfacing, bridge replacements, roundabout construction, township improvement projects, right-of-way acquisitions for the Basil-Western development, and continued roadway sign upgrades.

Director Rick Szabrak reported that new transit routing software has been implemented and that a state-funded consultant has been retained to conduct a workforce mobility study. He also noted that Transit employees have received new uniforms, thanked Facilities for completing the Workforce Center café, announced grant funding supporting respiratory and radiology education programs, recognized the graduation of 101 students, discussed financing related to the Shumaker Building, and provided updates on planning efforts associated with the proposed Millersport data center project.

During discussion, Commissioner Fix emphasized that Fairfield County is not actively recruiting data centers but evaluates proposals that meet the County's established standards, including whether the project will pay for improved infrastructure and power that will benefit residents and future development. He stated that qualified projects can provide long-term economic development opportunities that create jobs and strengthen the local economy.

Mr. Szabrak added that many proposed data center projects originate from companies contacting landowners and that each proposal must be evaluated based on available infrastructure and must contribute to improvements to water and wastewater systems, energy capacity, schools, and other community needs.

Deputy HR Director Abby Watson introduced ImpaxRx, a new prescription drug cost management program for the County's self-funded health plan. She encouraged employees to participate in upcoming training sessions to better understand the program and maximize available savings.

Recorder Lisa McKenzie asked whether the program would affect GoodRx usage. Deputy County Administrator Jeff Porter responded that it would not, explaining that ImpaxRx is intended to maximize savings for the County's health plan while helping control long-term prescription cost trends.

County Administrator Aundrea Cordle encouraged employees to enroll and take advantage of the program.

Director Corey Clark reported that Fairfield County remains below the state's SNAP payment error rate threshold, helping preserve eligibility under anticipated federal funding changes. He announced that all newly issued and replacement SNAP cards will soon include chip technology to reduce fraud, with all existing cards scheduled for replacement over the next 18 months. He also noted that additional fraud prevention measures, including location verification, are being implemented and announced that Fairfield County is one of only five recipients nationwide of a federal grant supporting opioid prevention efforts through Adult Protective Services.

Parks District Director Marcey Shafer reported staffing changes following the retirement of the Park District's media coordinator, with communications responsibilities transitioning to the

Regular Meeting #28 - 2026 – July 21, 2026 - 4 -

education team. She thanked the Information Technology Department for assisting with the transition to the County's email system, announced receipt of a \$75,000 grant for roof repairs at Rock Mill, reported completion of the H2Ohio project at Two Glaciers Park, and noted that a ribbon-cutting ceremony is being planned for that park.

During discussion regarding fraud prevention, Commissioner Levacy, Director Clark, and Sheriff Lape discussed pending legislation addressing cryptocurrency kiosks, noting that a significant percentage of reported scams involve bitcoin kiosks and emphasizing the need for stronger cooperation between financial institutions and scamming investigations.

Commissioner Fix concluded the meeting by recognizing several recent accomplishments across Fairfield County. He announced that the Ohio Auditor of State's Office had provided a letter recognizing the county for earning 21 national recognition awards, noting that the achievement reflects the exceptional work and dedication of county employees. On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, he expressed appreciation for their continued commitment to serving the residents of Fairfield County.

Commissioner Fix also recognized Aundrea Cordle for her appointment as President of the National Public Employer Labor Relations Association (NPELRA). He noted that the Ohio Auditor of State's Office had provided Ms. Cordle with a letter congratulating her on this distinguished professional achievement and commended her for bringing recognition to Fairfield County.

With no further business, On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Jeff Fix, the Board of Commissioners voted to adjourn at 2:39 p.m.

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

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 28, 2026, at the Event Center at Violet Woods located at 10190 Blacklick-Eastern Rd. NW, Pickerington, OH.

NAYS: None

*Approved on July 28, 2026

David Levacy
Commissioner

Rochelle Menningen, Clerk

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