

**Regular Meeting #36 - 2021
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office
August 19, 2021**

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Roundtable

The Commissioners met at 8:30 a.m. to review legal issues and pending or future action items and correspondence. Commissioner Levacy called the meeting to order with the following Commissioners present: Steve Davis, Jeff Fix and Dave Levacy. Also present were Carri Brown, Rachel Elsea, Joshua Horacek, John Park, Nikki drake, Raz S., Donna Fox-Moore, Park Russell, Randy Carter, Dan Neeley, Jon Slater, Jeff Porter, Aunie Cordle, Jon Kochis, Corey Clark, Dennis Keller, Branden Meyer, Tony Vogel, Kyle Witt, Magistrate Jill Boone.

Attending virtually were: Amy Brown-Thompson, Jim Bahnsen, Bart Hampson, Cheryl Reeves, Chief Collins, Dave Burgei, David Miller, Joe Ebel, Kelly Turben, Krista Humphries, Luann Davidson, Lynette Barnhart, Marcy Fields, Michael Kaper, Cassie Strickler, Catherine Warner, Shannon Carter, James Mako, Logan Weaver, Jeremiah Upp, Ashely Arter, and Thomas Lininger.

- Welcome

Commissioner Levacy welcomed everyone.

Commissioner Levacy asked everyone to keep Staci Knisley in their prayers as her mother passed away.

He also announced the annual cookout on September 7th.

Dr. Brown reported county employees will be able to use their access badges to enter the County Fair on October 11 (for the grand opening) and October 15 (for the county holiday). She has worked out a way to manage this with the County Auditor's Office.

Dr. Brown thanked everyone for their attendance at the dedication of the Amstutz patriotic mural.

Mr. Fix thanked everyone for attending. He finds the roundtables very useful.

Mr. Davis spoke about the housing crisis and the increase in homelessness.

- Department Updates

- a. Emergency Management Agency

Mr. Kochis encouraged individuals to respond to the emergency operations plan requests.

- b. Health Department- Joe Ebel

Mr. Ebel reported they continue to see a surge in case numbers averaging over 30 new cases a day (similar to April and May). It may not be growing quickly, but it has not gone down at all. He is hopeful they are close to the peak as it isn't flu season yet. They are working a lot with schools. They are already getting kids in school testing positive and others needing to quarantine as a result of not requiring masks.

The county is seeing high vaccination rates with over 1,000 new vaccinations each week. This morning they have started discussions about what the third dose of the vaccine will require. He thanked the Commission for their support.

Mr. Levacy asked if they were seeing an increase in hospitalizations and when a peak was expected as he had heard late August would be a peak.

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Mr. Ebel replied they were seeing an increase in where they were in June/July but not earlier in the year. It has helped that the older age groups have a relatively high vaccination rate. As for the projected peak, there are models that show they are at the top as well as it continues to grow. His hope is that they are at a plateau.

Mr. Fix asked about daily testing and if they were tracking who was vaccinated versus those who were not.

Mr. Ebel reported they do not have that data at the state level. The state tracks vaccinations in hospitalizations and deaths. The information that goes to the lab would not have noted if they are vaccinated. He added that you would assume an older individual testing positive could be assumed to be vaccinated. In the past month 1/3 of the positive tests were individuals under 18.

c. Sheriff's Office – Chief Collins

The Sheriff's Office general operations have been busy as expected at the end of summer. They are completing an entire policy review and overhaul. They continue to hire and fill positions and are doing better than surrounding counties. They are also working on looking at the jail COVID protocols and are putting together a training schedule for all deputies.

d. JFS – Corey Clark

Mr. Clark announced the upcoming Job Fair on October 21st from 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. at the Workforce Center. The job fair is open to all employers. There will be a virtual option as well.

e. Economic and Workforce Development

Ms. Cordle provided the update for Mr. Szabrak. The Career signing day was a success. There were five different companies including the Sheriff's Office. There will be a dedication and open house for the Workforce Center on September 22nd at 4:00 p.m.

f. Utilities – Tony Vogel

There are nine subdivisions with projects in the county. This is probably the busiest housing market ever. He provided an update on the Grant Hampton public meeting held on August 18th. This project is funded in part by ARP dollars.

g. Treasurer/Land Bank – Jim Bahnsen

The office will be moving to the first floor soon. There is not much update since the Lunch & Learn last week. Mr. Kaper provided an update on the Land Bank. They are looking at what they can do to help with affordable housing.

h. Auditor – Jon Slater

Finance has moved from the mezzanine to the first floor. He thanked Dennis and the Commissioners for their help. Real estate is finishing up a conveyance project. There will be an open house on September 21st for 108 N High. The RFP for conference room AV should be closed and selected in September.

Mr. Slater reported there would be an October season of BOR for COVID impacts. A second edition of the BOR handbook will be released and sent within and outside of the county.

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Mr. Carter stated he sent out a county wide email regarding imaging projects. There are several large projects under review - some of which will be contracted out. Several departments expressed interest in personnel files being imaged. That may be able to be done with current programs and would need to engage HR. Other than these projects, email Randy if you want to participate in imaging projects.

i. Recorder

Ms. McKenzie sent the following update. "The Recorder's office remains very busy. A shout out to her team for pushing through, they are the best! They are currently working with the Auditor and our vendors to hopefully be e-filing deeds in the coming month. This is quite a process to lay the groundwork, but e-filing will streamline the transfer & recording process for all involved. The Recorder's office has been E-filing for several years, so they are excited for the opportunity to include deed filings to the process.

Future plans include adding credit cards as a payment option. Thank you to maintenance group for the recent work in the office."

j. Common Pleas Court – Magistrate Boone

Magistrate Boone reported they have partnered with the state Ohio Highway Patrol that allows for the donation of older vehicles to local courts. They were able to get a like-new SUV for the probation department. There are a lot of things going on with reentry and substance abuse. She highlighted a few of the programs, including the SOAR program. The Lunch & Learn coming up will have a lot of information on their programs.

Magistrate Boone concurred with Commissioner Davis regarding the housing issues he discussed at the beginning of the meeting.

k. ADAMH

Ms. Fields thanked Magistrate Boone for highlighting their SOAR program in the jail. She agrees that homelessness has escalated in the community.

ADAMH will be hosting an overdose awareness event on August 31st at 6:30 p.m. at the Gazebo. They are also in the process of having free training for loved ones working with substance abuse disorders. ADAMH will be part of a stigma survey that will be sent to a large region. They hope to get good information about the stigma of substance abuse disorders.

l. Juvenile/Probate Court (highlighted by Dr. Brown)

Efforts continue to partner with all Fairfield County school districts to better serve youth and families struggling with truancy or failure to send issues. Planning is under way to implement a structurally consistent school attendance protocol in Fairfield County. Court and school district team members have met regularly since spring to discuss challenges and brainstorm solutions. The countywide school attendance protocol will prioritize supporting youth and their families by utilizing trauma-informed processes and procedures in a collaborative community framework that is consistent with House Bill 410, while empowering individual strategies within Fairfield County school districts.

Thanks to the support of community partners, the Guardianship Service Board of Fairfield County will welcome a third case manager to the team later this month. As of the end the second quarter of this year, the GSB was actively serving 99 individuals—ranging in age from 18 to 87—with an average of 3.57 contact hours

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per ward per month. Fifty-eight percent of GSB cases involve allegations of abuse/neglect/exploitation, and 84% have a mental illness.

m. Domestic Relations Court

Dr. Brown mentioned that Ms. Corlde and Ms. Lovas will be meeting to evaluate the use of ARP funding to address the court backlog. Other courts should report if they have a backlog to address.

n. Engineer's Office – Jeremiah Upp

They are finishing the 2021 paving project by adding berms and striping. Chip and seal should be completed soon. Three bridges are under construction, including the Bader Road bridge which is one of the larger bridges. The state has released funding for water and sewer districts so they are working with them to see if they can get some projects submitted for funding. Township trustees also have some funding opportunities so Mr. Upp is working to see what jobs could fit into those categories. They are looking at the next round of township jobs including a large project in Clearcreek Township.

Mr. Davis asked how many full-time employees they had.

Mr. Upp guessed around 58.

Dr. Brown asked about the state ARP water and wastewater projects - what is the internal deadline?

Mr. Upp replied it was August 21st. If that deadline is an issue, he has until August 27th to submit his priority list. He is happy to work with anyone in the county to get projects submitted.

Mr. Vogel has not heard from any villages in need of that deadline being extended.

o. Prosecutor's Office – Kyle Witt

The office remains busy. When they close out one significant case, another one comes in. They are coordinating closely with the Sheriff's Office on a recent shooting in Pleasantville.

He is working with Dr. Varney on being more consistent and thorough with the prosecutions of overdose deaths in Fairfield County. Between the Prosecutor's Office, Sheriff's Office, MCU, and Coroner's Office, they hope to have a solution to prosecute more drug providers. Thank you to Dr. Varney for bringing up the subject and for Commander Lowe for running with the idea.

COVID has raised some challenges with truancy issues at the beginning of this school year. Truancy is a tip of the iceberg issue and can show underlying issues within a family.

p. Coroner's Office – Luann Davidson

Ms. Davidson thanked Mr. Witt for the support. As an aspect of trying to prosecute more cases they will be doing more autopsies. They will also keep this in mind for budgeting in the coming years. Overdose deaths continue to be problematic.

Thank you for the parking lot improvements as this will help families who come to meet with Dr. Varney.

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Mr. Levacy asked Ms. Davidson to pass his thanks to Dr. Varney for his work.

q. Clerk of Courts – Branden Meyer

Mr. Meyer provided an update on the case management system. Title numbers are beginning to increase.

r. Facilities – Dennis Keller

Facilities has new staff members who are working out well. They are tackling several in-house projects. The Government Service Center on Main has new flooring for the first time since the building was acquired by the county. The Phase II energy conservation project will begin soon. The Government Services Center Northwest is in the planning stages. They will also be remodeling the Juvenile Court Room.

s. Human Resources – Jeff Porter

HR has several new staff members including Cheryl Reeves and Rochelle Meningen. The office is in the middle of insurance renewal. They are working to get the best deal possible. They have renewed the clinic contract for another two years without an additional cost increase. Identity theft insurance will be provided to all employees beginning in September. Wellness offerings continue to expand. Free weights will be at the wellness center gym, and yoga classes will be held through November. Thank you to the civil division of the Prosecutor's Office for all the contract reviews they have done for them.

COVID guidance was sent yesterday. Everyone is encouraged to review it. It appears that over 500 employees have been vaccinated. If employees are not vaccinated and do not follow masking and social distancing guidelines, they will experience disruption to their work schedules if exposed.

Mr. Fix commented on the insurance program and how strong the coverage as well as how well Mr. Porter and his team work to keep the rates low. He commented that he has experience in the private sector, and the county coverage is very good.

t. Dog Shelter – Jeff Porter

Adoptions are up. The shelter is working on an appointment basis to allow for social distancing and spending more time with the animals. They are going to allow for employees to have a shelter dog visit them in the workplace with the hope of adoption. The current population is averaging below 10.

u. Regional Planning Commission – James Mako

Mr. Mako shared the new census numbers. Fairfield County's population is about 158,900. This makes the county the fifth fastest growing in the state.

This is the busiest RPC has been since Mr. Mako has been with them. They are looking at two new preliminary plans. CDBG projects granted last year are under construction and should be completed on time.

v. Developmental Disabilities – John Pekar

Teachers came back to Forest Rose School on Monday. They look forward to a productive, successful, and hopefully uneventful school year.

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They will be starting the school year by requiring everyone to wear masks. Classes will be split into smaller groups to minimize contact.

Dr. Brown thanked DD for participating in various county workgroups.

w. Soil and Water Conservation District – Nikki Drake

Ms. Drake reported on the rain event in Reynoldsburg that would equate to a thousand-year storm event. This has triggered calls regarding drainage. The Annual banquet will be September 15th and the Auditor/GIS team will be receiving the award that night.

SWCD will have a booth at the Fair. October 23rd will be the drug take back day.

x. OSU Extension

The OSU Extension program update was included in the roundtable packet. They are beginning to prepare for the Fair. Carrie Brown, new education coordinator, introduced herself.

y. Veterans Services – Park Russell

Mr. Russell asked everyone to spread the word that veterans can get into the fair for free on Monday of the Fair.

z. Strategic Planning

Ms. Cordle provided an update on the strategic planning. She connected with RAMA yesterday. They will set the dates to meet with the community and get the surveys started as well. Mr. Davis stated he was under the impression RAMA would be getting started soon after their presentation. Ms. Cordle stated they went on vacation and would be in touch soon.

aa. FACFC

Ms. Fox-Moore will be retiring at the end of the month. (Congratulations!)

Mr. Raz Sabaiduc is excited to work with the FACFC programs.

- Policy Update/Workgroup Opportunity

Jeff Porter announced an opportunity for a work group with employee participation for respect in the workplace. With supervisor approval, employees can participate. HR will be sending out more details. Jeff Porter also previewed some policy manual adjustments which will be made a bit earlier than our usual timeframe of updates (February) in order to document expectations for merit-based increases and other policy changes, such as language for cell phone reimbursements, general reimbursements, remote work, and the Juneteenth holiday (which was already approved by resolution).

- Budget Update & Rapid Fire News

Dr. Brown updated the group on multiple topics of interest. She commented on recent accomplishments of the county, including the Aa2 bond rating and work group activities.

She also provided an update about communications and other topics for Fairfield Forward:

The Leadership Conference and State of the County Address are September 23 and 28, respectively. Both events are at the WigWam.

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Communications update – videos, newsletter, lunch n learn sessions

2022 Budget – Level 3 is in progress

- i. Nearly all departments are following compensation plan procedures
- ii. Up to 3.5% merit-based increases are afforded based on evaluations
- iii. One-on-one training for use of the performance assessment tool is available upon request

Additional Work Group Opportunities/Participation

- i. Environmental Stewardship
- ii. Recruitment and Retention
- iv. Strategic Visioning
- v. Cybersecurity

Required Training

- i. Leadership Conference
- ii. Cybersecurity
- iii. Ethics
- iv. Unlawful Harassment

Review of Packet – Checklist/Dates/Proclamations

What have we done to accomplish the mission...

- i. Protecting Citizens
 - 1. Support of Law Enforcement
 - 2. Support of Protective Services
- ii. Improving business opportunities
 - 1. Technical assistance
 - 2. Grant opportunities
- iii. Preparing for the future
 - 1. Technology improvements
 - 2. Strategic visioning
- iv. Customer Service
 - 1. GEMS
 - 2. Other County feedback has been positive about our mid-year resolution and journal for customer service.

Dr. Brown highlighted the three resolutions for the voting meeting.

Commissioners' Regular Meeting

A regular meeting of the Fairfield County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, August 19, 2021, beginning at 10:34 a.m. Commissioner Levacy called the meeting to order with the following Commissioners present: Steve Davis, Jeff Fix, and Dave Levacy. Also present were Carri Brown, Rachel Elsea, Aunie Cordle, Jon Kochis, Jeff Porter, Jon Slater, Dan Neeley, Nikki Drake, Donna Fox-Moore, Raz S., Michael Kaper, Tony Vogel, Dennis Keller, Branden Meyer.

Attending virtually were: Ashley Arter, Jim Bahnsen Cheryl Reeve, Dave Burgei, Jeremiah Upp, James Mako, Kelly Turben, Lynnette Barnhard, Marcy Fields, and Cassie Strickler.

Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Levacy asked everyone to rise as able, and he led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements

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Commissioner Levacy asked if there were any announcements.

There were no announcements.

Ms. Elsea stated the next item on the agenda was a time for public comments. As a reminder, public comments are to be limited to three minutes. Comments may or may not be about county business. While this is a time for the public to offer comments, this is not a time for questions and answers. Comments represent the view of the person commenting.

Public Comment

Commissioner Levacy asked if anyone from the public who would like to speak or offer comments.

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes for Tuesday, August 17, 2021

On the motion of Jeff Fix and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the minutes for Tuesday, August 17, 2021 Regular Meetings.

Discussion: Dr. Brown applauded Ms. Elsea for her efficiency in preparing minutes for voting agendas.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

Approval of the Engineer's Office Resolution

On the motion Jeff Fix and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following Engineer's Office resolutions:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 2021-08.19.a | A resolution to approve a Change Order for the VIO-46, FAI-TR1438-0.376 Village Way Road over Sycamore Creek Bridge Replacement Project. [Engineer] |
| 2021-08.19.b | A resolution to appropriate from unappropriated in a major expenditure object category County Engineer 2362-Levy for contractual service fees [Engineer] |

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

Approval of the Utilities Resolution

On the motion Jeff Fix and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the Utilities resolution to appropriate from unappropriated in an expenditure object category Utilities Fund 5085; see resolution 2021-08.19.c.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

The Commission was in recess at 10:37 a.m.

Airport Update

The Commissioners met at 10:50 a.m. for an update from Airport Board members. Commissioner Levacy called the meeting to order with the following Commissioners present: Steve Davis, Jeff Fix, and Dave Levacy.

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Also present were Carri Brown, Rachel Elsea, Jon Kochis, Michael Kaper, Jeff Porter, Aunie Cordle, Rick Szabrak, Dennis Keller, and a member of the airport board. Attending virtually were: Jim Bahnsen, Cathy Warner, Cheryl Reeves, Kelly Turben, Lynette Barnhart, Marcy Fields, Michael Kaper, Cassie Strickler, and other callers.

Mr. Kochis presented the attached presentation.

The presentation included airport operations, hangar usage, runway lengths, capacity, updates, and planned development.

The commissioners asked some questions and indicated a follow up meeting in 2022 would be appreciated. There are some opportunities for new projects at the Airport. Dr. Brown reported she and Mr. Kochis talked previously about a potential need to add staff for the Airport to address growing demands for services. This will be under review. The commissioners thanked the group for their presentation. Mr. Davis noted this was the best presentation he had observed from the Airport Board.

Adjournment

With no further business, on the motion of Jeff Fix and a second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to adjourn at 11:50 a.m.

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

Motion by: _____ Seconded by: _____
that the August 19, 2021, minutes were approved by the following vote:

YEAS:
ABSTENTIONS: None
*Approved on August 24, 2021

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

*Approved on August 24, 2021


Steven A. Davis
Commissioner


Dave Levacy
Commissioner

Jeff Fix
Commissioner

Rachel A. Elsea, Clerk