

**Regular Meeting #43 - 2021  
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office  
September 28, 2021**

**Review**

The Commissioners met at 9:00 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, Jon Kochis, Jeff Porter, Aunie Cordle, Joshua Horacek, Amy Brown-Thompson, Corey Clark, Dennis Keller, Tony Vogel, Chris Wagner, Chris Schmelzer, Deputy Norris, and Jon Slater.

Attending virtually were: Jim Bahnsen, Jason Dolin, Michael Kaer, Nikki Drake, Thomas Lininger, Tony Howard, Dave Burgei, Mark Conrad, Lisa McKenzie, Jeff Barron, David Miller, Rick Szabrak, Jessica Murphy, Ashely Arter, Bennett Niceswanger, and Stacy Hicks.

- Welcome

Commissioner Levacy welcomed everyone.

- COVID-19 Update

Jon Kochis, EMA Director, updated everyone on the county experience with the pandemic, particularly with the Delta variant. The county is experiencing some positive trends. We are aware that Governor DeWine received a letter from the Ohio Hospital Association outlining the dire conditions facing hospitals on the front lines of treating patients with COVID. While hospitals are doing all they can to help these patients, they are facing a severe nursing and staffing shortage.

Dr. Brown reviewed examples of postcards that the state has sent to residents to encourage checking in with your doctor about the COVID vaccination and about a fresh start with employment training, such as with training to be a nurse.

- Fairfield Forward

*CCAO/NACo Award of Excellence for High-Performance Leadership*

Fairfield County, Ohio was one of three Ohio counties recognized by the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) for its commitment to strengthening the leadership skills of elected officials and the county workforce. The inaugural Award of Excellence for High-Performance Leadership was presented to county leaders from Fairfield, Franklin and Hamilton Counties at an awards ceremony in Columbus on September 24.

We reviewed some pictures from the event.

*Celebrating the Workforce Center*

More than 125 people came to the Workforce Center on November 22 to dedicate the building to the community!

We shared a few pictures globally of the Commissioners, Rick Szabrak, and others. The Workforce Center is a partnership between Fairfield County, Ohio University Lancaster, and Hocking College and was created to offer training to upskill local workers and build a skilled workforce for local employers. Areas of focus include carpentry, electrical, HVAC, advanced manufacturing, and nursing.

The Lt. Governor will visit the Workforce Center on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

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Planning for the County Fair

We continue to meet administratively with the Fair Board. We are planning for October 11 and October 15 fair days. For October 11 and October 15, employees will be able to show their employee access badges to enter the fair with no charge to them.

We are starting to receive some communication from 4-H participants, and we will gather those letters in a group for the Commission.

The Agricultural Society is reaching out to area leaders to announce the grand re-opening.

Main Uses of the ARP Fiscal Recovery Funds

We will continue using the Fairfield Forward theme for strategic planning. There are two main uses for us:

1. Responding to the public health emergency with respect to the COVID19 or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality.
2. Making necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

As we think about the first purpose, we will need to:

- Identify a need or negative impact of the public health emergency,
- Identify how the county investment would specifically address that need, and
- Readily explain how the investment helps the county respond to the disease or the harmful economic consequences of the economic disruption.

The review packet contained a report of approved uses, expenditures, and encumbrances thus far for ARP fiscal recovery funds.

\$1,343,867.02 of expenditures have been made from the \$15,303,451.00 received as the first tranche of fiscal recovery funds.

\$3,039,172.65 has been encumbered or obligated.

The Board of Commissioners has authorized uses, noted as appropriations for \$ 8,032,512.74.

Aunie Cordle updated the group on the efforts conducted by RAMA for strategic planning. She sent out a reminder for the stakeholder groups about the September 30 and October 7 meetings.

We continue to connect partners and stakeholders to research homelessness, affordable housing, and various factors connected to these topics as antecedents. Dr. Brown is meeting with Marcy Fields, ADAMH Director, about this topic.

- Legal Update
- Administration and Budget Update/Carri's List
  - a. Announcements & Dates of Interest

Announcements

Anyone can email or text a question anytime:

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[Carri.Brown@FairfieldCountyOhio.gov](mailto:Carri.Brown@FairfieldCountyOhio.gov) or (740) 777-8552

The State of the County Address will be live-streamed today. Rachel Elsea shared the link by email.

Dates/Events of Interest

September 29 – Lt. Governor to visit the Workforce Center  
September 30 – RAMA event  
October 5 – Foster the Future Mural Dedication  
October 7 – RAMA event  
October 11- County Fair Grand Opening  
October 12 – Common Pleas Court Lunch n Learn (and Wear Purple for Domestic Violence Awareness)  
October 15 – Fair Day  
October 19 – Viewing and Hearing Day with the County Engineer  
October 21 – Budget Hearings begin  
October 26 – Commission Connection videotaping – Commissioner Davis  
October 28 – Budget Hearings continue

b. Highlights of Resolutions

Dr. Brown highlighted the 14 resolutions for the voting meeting.

We had a resolution authorizing a “go-forward” plan for Fairfield County administration to proceed with the steps to enter into a purchase agreement for the purchase of property owned by Ohio University with the goal of establishing the Government Services Center NW in the Pickerington. We had a press release about this topic.

We had a resolution to approve proclamations for the County Fair, Manufacturing Month, Domestic Violence Awareness, and Dog Shelter Awareness.

JFS proposed a resolution regarding network placement with Youth Advocate Services.

RPC proposed a resolution to approve a development agreement for the Spring Creek Section 3 Phase 3 Subdivision. RPC also proposed a resolution to approve final acceptance of the Storage One/Springcreek Business Complex.

The Sheriff proposed a resolution authorizing the approval of a contract with Tyler Tech and the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office; this is for the dispatching and public safety system improvements required to respond better during the pandemic. Aunie Cordle and Joe Morris worked on the IT template and justification together. The resolution for appropriations was included in the notes with the Commissioners Resolution Management System for narrative purposes.

JFS proposed the approval of the county Prevention, Retention, and Contingency plan.

There were 7 *financial and grant related resolutions* to approve:

- Interest allocations for August;
- Repayment of an advance by MCU;
- Appropriations from unappropriated funds for Developmental Disabilities and FCFACF;

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- A resolution to approve an authorized use of American Rescue Plan fiscal recovery funding and appropriate from unappropriated funds for the County ARP fiscal recovery fund, #2876, for public sector payroll support to address needs arising from the pandemic for protective services based on cases involving substance abuse;
- A resolution approval of a revenue and expenditure budget for Supervised Visitation by appropriating from unappropriated into a major expense object category; and the approval of a cash advance to be repaid from grant funds at the end of the grant period; and
- A resolution to authorize the establishment of new capital project fund for the purchase and renovation of the new Fairfield County Government Service Center Northwest location.

In queue, there were multiple contracting and financial resolutions. The Engineer will propose a resolution to approve the purchase of a CAT excavator. The resolution for the Rushcreek DMD will be addressed within a reasonable timeframe.

Mr. Davis looks favorably on the DMD and is ready for a vote when everyone else is.

Mr. Horacek has answers to the questions posed by the Commissioners and will bring that information forth next week.

c. Administrative, Program, & Budget Update

Administrative & Program Updates

*Administrative Approvals*

The review packet contained a list of administrative approvals. There were no questions.

*Energy Aggregation – Completed*

Dynegy was the selected vendor for the government energy aggregation. The contract was signed through December 2024. Most of the customers with the aggregation are residential.

There will be about \$11 savings annually for the residential household or about \$28,000 saved for the aggregate - during a time with prices are increasing. The electric market has increased materially since original pricing was provided. As of September 21, 2021, there was an ability to provide budget security for aggregation participants and participants are able to leave the program at any time without penalty.

We will work with Palmer Energy to develop communications.

*September Idea Box Update*

**Idea 64:** An employee suggested the County acquire some rapid Covid tests for employees to use.

**Response:** While there are some free rapid tests at a variety of locations, for employees, using the clinic is the preferred option because testing there would be

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more accurate and in accordance with medical guidance. Medical experts indicate that self-administered rapid tests might not provide the same level of accuracy.

Thank you for thinking about this, though, as there are several sites that provide free tests otherwise: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/resources/general-resources/rapid-covid-19-test>

**Idea 65:** An employee had an idea to create a resource guide on Fairfield.gofmx.com. The suggestion was to include building addresses & photos (now at fairfieldcountyohio.gov), conference room sizes with capacity, a description of technology, and parking recommendations.

**Response:** Facilities Management will include more information within the Fmx system to support employees seeking to reserve building space. They will also send out email to alert everyone to the new features. Thanks for the idea!

**Idea 66:** An employee suggested adding awnings outside of the Hall of Justice and potentially other county buildings where customers may wait in the rain, snow, or bright sun. Having some protection from the elements may help at least a little to reduce the anxiety they may be feeling about being there in the first place.

**Response:** Facilities Management will evaluate awnings for placement and will begin that evaluation with the Hall of Justice. Thanks for the idea.

**Idea 67:** An employee suggested a student loan forgiveness program for the county. The employee also referenced Section 2206 of the CARES Act **which allows a portion of student loan payments to be excluded from income.**

**Response:** The county does have a plan for tuition reimbursement for multiple departments. It is outlined in Section 4:12 of the County Personnel Policy Manual. In addition, continuing education is offered in multiple departments with supervisor approval.

There is a Public Service Loan Forgiveness program that offers certain loan forgiveness to anyone who works full-time in a public service job. You'll be eligible after 120 consecutive payments. To apply for this program, which is not through the county, you'll fill out and submit an Employment Certification Form. You'll have to resubmit this form each year and anytime you change jobs.

We will continue to evaluate all recruitment and retention ideas.

**Idea 68: An employee suggested that vacation accruals be permitted to accrue for four years instead of three based on the pandemic.**

**Response:** Thanks for your idea box suggestion to allow for four years of vacation accrual instead of three years of accrual based on pandemic needs. The three-year limit for accruals is legislated within the ORC, so we are not able to alter that on our own.

However, appointing authorities are permitted to grant administrative leave in certain circumstances. If vacation was denied, for example in 2020, and there was a need to replace a certain number of hours of vacation leave with administrative leave, an appointing authority would be able to do that.

There is also the option to have a vacation leave payout. That option is outlined on page 59 of the personnel manual. The recruitment and retention committee will be reviewing that policy for potential changes to allow for payout beyond 80 hours. For now, the 80 hours is permitted.

**Idea 69:** An employee recommended the Intranet Directory be updated.

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**Response:** We will reach out to be sure the directory is updated. Employees will need to update their records, and IT has some steps, too.

**Idea 70:** An employee had an idea to change the time a generator ran at the Hall of Justice so that early arriving employees would experience less noise.

**Response:** Thanks for your idea! The time has been adjusted to be earlier in the day, beginning at 5 am and concluding by 5:30 am.

*Debriefing Leadership Conference*

Fairfield County held a leadership conference on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. There was a lot of positive feedback about the presentations for their organization, energy, enthusiasm, and relevance.

Topics discussed included leadership, cybersecurity, sexual harassment, discrimination, performance assessments, and ethics. The leadership conference fulfilled the county required training. (There is opportunity to fulfill the required training otherwise for those unable to attend the leadership conference.)

Attendees commented on how much they enjoyed the leadership conference.

*Soil and Water Conservation District Discussion Group re: Solar Farm Projects*

Jonathan Ferbrache is beginning a solar farm discussion group included the County Administrator, Economic Development Director, SWCD, RPC, County Auditor, and others to review topics as more information is known about solar farms in the area. There is no action required at this time per SWCD.

A discussion group will meet on October 22 about this topic.

Budget Update

*Ongoing Sales Tax Review & Budget Review*

The sales tax estimate for 2021 in Fairfield County is \$23.6 M, or 3% above the sales tax revenues of 2020. We are tracking ahead of that estimate.

Overall, the county receipts for multiple categories are tracking ahead of estimates.

Budget hearings begin October 21.

d. BRAVOS

Thank you to all employees who have taken the High-Performance Leadership Academy Training. Thank you to the Commission for supporting the training.

Great Job to Rick Szabrak, Economic and Workforce Development Director, and his team, for leadership in building partnerships to support the Workforce Center.

Thanks to Amy Brown-Thompson for her speedy work in approving the Dynegy contract to form for the governmental energy aggregation.

The Tire Collection event at the Lancaster Transfer Station funded by the Ohio EPA for Fairfield County was a hit! Thanks to Community Action for their leadership. A total of 1,269 passenger tires was collected.

The Lancaster Transfer Station was the perfect location. Jennifer Valentine from the Health Department assisted with the flow of traffic, and the Fairfield County

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Municipal Court Community Services provided people to help unload tires from vehicles. We have had lots of positive feedback about this!

Congratulations to Brian Wolfe in the Commission Office for being appointed to the OU Lancaster Coordinating Council.

Thanks to maintenance for delivering the lunches at the WigWam today after the vendor ran into a problem in delivering them.

- Old Business (none)
- New Business (none)
- General Correspondence
  - a. Liquor Permit Transfer for Valley View Clubs to Geronimo Golf Club
- Invitations
  - a. Sheriff's Annual Awards/Retirement Banquet – October 7<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 a.m. at Crossroads – RSVP required
- FYI
  - a. Jail Population – 280
  - b. Canal Winchester Council Public Hearing Notice

**Commissioners' Regular Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Fairfield County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, September 28, 2021, beginning at 9:22 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, Jon Kochis, Jeff Porter, Aunie Cordle, Joshua Horacek, Amy Brown-Thompson, Corey Clark, Dennis Keller, Tony Vogel, Chris Wagner, Chris Schmelzer, Deputy Norris, and Jon Slater.

Attending virtually were: Jim Bahnsen, Jason Dolin, Michael Kaper, Nikki Drake, Thomas Lininger, Dave Burgei, Lisa McKenzie, Jeff Barron, David Miller, Rick Szabrak, Jessica Murphy, Ashely Arter, and Bennett Niceswanger.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**Announcements**

Commissioner Levacy asked if there were any announcements.

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 comments provided.

**Approval of Minutes for September 21, 2021 and September 23, 2021**

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On the motion of Jeff Fix and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the minutes for the September 21, 2021 and September 23, 2021 Regular Meetings.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

**Approval of the Commissioners' Resolution**

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

- 2021-09.28.a      A resolution authorizing a "go-forward" plan for Fairfield County administration to proceed with the steps to enter into a purchase agreement for the purchase of property owned by Ohio University with the goal of establishing the Government Services Center NW in the Pickerington. [Commissioners]
- 2021-09.28.b      A resolution authorizing the approval of proclamations. [Commissioners]
- 2021-09.28.c      A resolution to authorize the establishment of new capital project fund for the purchase and renovation of the new Fairfield County Government Service Center Northwest location - Fairfield County Commissioners [Commissioners]
- 2021-09.28.d      A resolution authorizing use of American Rescue Plan fiscal recovery funding and approving appropriations from unappropriated funds for the County ARP fiscal recovery fund, #2876, to invest in additional Child Protective Services staff to work with parents affected by Substance Use Disorders to meet the increased demand as a result of the public health emergency. [Commissioners]
- 2021-09.28.e      A resolution to approve a memo expense for interest allocation reimbursements for Fairfield Department of Health, Fairfield County Parks, & Fairfield County Port Authority – Fund #7012, #7321, #7308, & #7865, – Fairfield County Commissioners [Commissioners]

Discussion: Mr. Fix thanked everyone for their efforts to establish a government services center in the northwest portion of the county. He thanked Mr. Meyer, Dr. Brown, and leaders of OUL. Mr. Levacy thanked, in advance, Mr. Keller for the work he would be doing to renovate the property. Mr. Davis thanked Mr. Fix, Mr. Meyer, and Dr. Brown for their work and appreciates this is one step closer to eliminating leased space.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

**Approval of the Board of Developmental Disabilities Resolution**

On the motion Jeff Fix and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the Board of Developmental Disabilities resolution to approval additional appropriations by appropriating from unappropriated into a major expense object category; see resolution 2021-09.28.f.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

**Approval of the Domestic Relations Court Resolutions**



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On the motion Jeff Fix and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the Domestic Relations Court resolution for the approval of a revenue and expenditure budget by appropriating from unappropriated into a major expense object category; and the approval of a cash advance to be repaid from the grant funds at the end of the grant period; see resolution 2021-09.28.g.

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

**Approval of the Family, Adult, and Children First Council Resolution**

On the motion Jeff Fix and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the Family, Adult, and Children First Council resolution to appropriate from unappropriated funds in a major category expense for the Fund #7521, subfund #8195; see resolution 2021-09.28.h.

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

**Approval of the Major Crimes Unit Resolution**

On the motion Jeff Fix and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the Major Crimes Unit resolution authorizing approval of repayment of an advance to DLEF Grant; see resolution 2021-09.28.i.

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

**Approval of the JFS Resolution**

On the motion Jeff Fix and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following JFS resolutions:

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 2021-09.28.j | A resolution regarding Network Placement and Related Services Agreement between Youth Advocate Services, and Child Protective Services Department [JFS]      |
| 2021-09.28.k | A resolution regarding approval of the Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) Plan for Fairfield County Job and Family Services. [JFS- Human Resources] |

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

**Approval of the Regional Planning Commission Resolutions**

On the motion Jeff Fix and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following Regional Planning Commission resolutions:

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 2021-09.28.l | A resolution to approve a Development Agreement for the Spring Creek Section 3 Phase 3 Subdivision [Regional Planning Commission] |
| 2021-09.28.m | A resolution to approve Final Acceptance of the Storage One/Springcreek Business Complex [Regional Planning Commission]           |

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

**Approval of the Sheriff's Office Resolutions**

