

**Budget Hearing Meeting #46 - 2022**  
**Fairfield County Commissioners' Office**  
**October 25, 2022**

**Budget Hearing Meeting**

The Commissioners met at 11:15 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room of the Historic Courthouse at 210 E Main St., Lancaster, OH. Commissioner Fix called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone with the following Commissioners present: Steve Davis, Dave Levacy, Jeff Fix. Also present: Aundrea Cordle, Jeff Porter, Rochelle Menningen, Bennett Niceswanger, Bart Hampson, and Staci Knisley.

**Announcements**

Commissioner Fix opened the meeting.

**Fairfield County Facilities**

Facilities Director, Dennis Keller, and Deputy Director, Jon Kochis, provided an update on the proposed budget for the Facilities department. Mr. Keller spoke about past and future projects and touched on his upcoming retirement. Mr. Keller also stated the Mission Statement of the Facilities Department and spoke about the department's staff. Mr. Keller elaborated on buildings and contracted services for landscaping and janitorial services. Budget line highlights, including personnel, were covered by Mr. Keller.

Ms. Cordle addressed the comp plan and the compression of salary rates with tenured employees. She added that salary line in the budget was impacted by long time employees that were making \$15 per hour.

Commissioner Davis asked for clarification on the Director salary line and the amount of time Mr. Keller would be working in 2023 and if he would be a salaried employee. The Commissioner asked questions regarding the 2023 budget increase.

Commissioner Fix asked for clarification on budget appropriations for 2022.

Ms. Cordle stated Facilities is already working on improvements to the stairwell in the Hall of Justice in response to the request made the previous week by Judge Berens.

Mr. Kochis spoke about the Capital Improvement Plan and stated that some of the budget increase for 2023 is due to project cost increases. He also spoke about evaluating services received from the janitorial contract and the budget line that is designed to improve security measures.

Ms. Knisley spoke about open enrollment and the effect of changes in plan elections on the health insurance budget line.

Mr. Keller provided a PowerPoint presentation that is available in the minutes and highlighted projects such as the Courthouse Energy Project (Phase 2), and the SWAT building project.

Mr. Kochis spoke about strategic planning

**Fairfield County IT**

IT Director, Dan Neeley, provided an update on the IT budget. He believes there are some security technology improvements that are overdue. Dan also spoke about the telecom project and the budget requirements for it and stated he anticipates costs will level off in 2023.

**Budget Hearing Meeting #46 - 2022  
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office  
October 25, 2022**

**Fairfield County Clerk of Courts**

The hearing for the Clerk of Courts started at 12:45 p.m. with Commissioners Fix and Levacy in attendance. Commissioner Davis arrived at 12:48. Branden Meyer, Fairfield County Clerk of Courts, provided a PowerPoint and handout which is available in the minutes. Mr. Meyer spoke about changes due to lack of vehicles to buy and sell and monies budgeted accordingly. He continued by speaking on a new proposed position which would replace a contracted service provided by Brinks.

Commissioner Fix asked about costs for new position.

Mr. Meyer continued by speaking about additional plans for 2023 and possible lease options at the Fairfield Center and the possible need for a new vehicle at the title office. Mr. Meyer finished by speaking about a possibility of a new Title Clerk Driver's Examiner.

Ms. Cordle asked about parking space needed for driving exams.

Mr. Meyer stated that the Fairfield Center had the space needed.

Proposed changes to Court of Appeals Districts were also discussed by Mr. Meyers.

**Fairfield County Municipal Judges**

Judge Fields and Jackie Long from the Municipal Court stated the court is very financially sound and continues to apply for grants designed for the court. Judge Fields mentioned talks he has had with Economic Development to provide Workforce Center options for 18–24-year old's who appear in his court. He believes Fairfield County is much further along in these services and programs compared to other counties in the State of Ohio.

Commissioner Levacy thinks the proposed partnership with the Workforce Center would be a great addition to the programs provided by the court.

Judge Fields spoke about grants for different courts and monies needed for specialty dockets and added that his staff continues to look for grants.

Ms. Cordle asked if the one time ask would change if additional funding was received.

Judge Fields stated that the one time ask would be reduced if that happened.

**Fairfield County Municipal Clerk**

Municipal Clerk of Courts, Valeda Slone provided a letter from the City of Lancaster certifying the Municipal Court Clerk's salary.

Ms. Knisley spoke about the process of the invoice we receive for the contract service line for the salary.

Commissioner Davis asked for an explanation of the city's budgeting process.

Ms. Slone spoke about the VIP Analytic software used and the process for the budget. She added that the only increase in the last seven years has been salaries and postage.

**Budget Hearing Meeting #46 - 2022**  
**Fairfield County Commissioners' Office**  
**October 25, 2022**

**Fairfield County Auditor**

Auditor Brown spoke about the packet and PowerPoint provided. Highlighted departmental budgets and stated the budget is flat except for a one-time request of a vehicle which caused a 4.3 increase. She added that salary increases of 3.5% had been included and spoke about additional highlights, including contractual services. She stated that the Munis system is now called Enterprise Resource Planning.

Commissioner Levacy asked if the Auditor was happy with the Tyler platform and services.

Auditor Brown stated she is happy with Tyler and spoke about the recent SaaS upgrade complications being due to configurations not matching, and hardware issues. The Auditor also spoke about reduced travel expenses and increased fuel costs.

Commissioner Davis asked about vehicles belonging to the Auditor's office.

Auditor Brown explained the office has a total of five vehicles.

Auditor Brown spoke about the Real Estate Assessment Fund, GIS support, the GIS and 911 connection with the City of Lancaster, and how the GIS and 911 technology has improved. She continued by explaining the difference between triennial updates and sexennial appraisals and spoke about the new processes her team have participated in since she became Auditor.

Commissioner Fix asked if the triennial update and the sexennial reappraisal would overlap.

Auditor Brown explained that they would not because the two differ in how granular the reports are. She continued by speaking on the General Fund Revenue projections and touched on the hotel/motel tax.

Commissioner Fix asked about sales tax base and when we would be comfortable predicting sales tax revenue.

Auditor Brown stated some counties are uncertain due to the market turn. She referred to her "By the Numbers" flyer and spoke about her table of organization and two vacancies that will be posted in January. Auditor Brown requested an evaluative meeting regarding the MCJDC fiscal officer role.

Commissioner Davis spoke about utilization rates for juvenile court, additional fiscal issues and roundups.

Auditor Brown highlighted the all-staff survey that compares 2021 to 2022 and added strategies to address stress indicated in the survey. She also stated that ARP funding will not cover SaaS expenditures starting in 2025.

Commissioner Levacy stated he expected great things when Dr. Brown became Auditor and has not been disappointed.

Commissioners Fix and Davis commended the Auditor's work.

**Budget Hearing Meeting #46 - 2022  
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office  
October 25, 2022**

**Fairfield County Sheriff**

Commissioner Fix thanked the Sheriff for returning and asked if he had proposed reductions for the budget.

Sheriff, Alex Lape stated that contractually employees will bid for shifts, and this will reduce overtime expenses. The Sheriff explained the bid process and explained the difference in 8 hour and 12-hour shifts. Lape explained that the idea of an integration of an 8-hour shift among the schedules. He added that predominately overtime is not working over but staffing unfilled shifts.

Commissioner Davis asked if there was a maximum number of hours allowed for an officer to work a day.

Commissioner Levacy asked when a 12-hour shift would start.

Sheriff Lape replied that a 12-hour shift would be 6am-6pm.

Commissioner Levacy stated that there is always a new and better way and commended the Sheriff.

Commissioner Fix asked if the Sheriff was confident that the overtime plan to reduce the budget would work.

Sheriff Lape stated he is 90% confident but added that loss of staff would affect the plan and that predicting staff changes is difficult.

Commissioner Fix asked the Sheriff about staffing and asked if he would be staffed by January.

Sheriff Lape said the department turns away about 50% of the applicants and spoke about training academies and added that for profit academies do not perform any background checks.

The Commissioners thanked Lape for his work on reducing the budget.

**Fairfield County Juvenile/Probate Court**

The Commissioners welcomed Judge Vandervoort and thanked her for returning.

Judge Vandervoort stated she had reduced her budget by 50k as requested and that she would still like to have the Court Appointed Attorney fees taken out of her budget.

Commissioner Davis stated that the Commissioners are looking for ways to accommodate the request to remove the Court Appointed Attorney fees.

Judge Vandervoort stated she is working on a proposal regarding the Court Appointed Attorney fees that she will later provide.

Commissioner Davis asked if it would involve a cap rate.

Judge Vandervoort stated it would along with different offenses.

Commissioner Davis asked about the fiscal impact.

