



Commissioners
Steven A. Davis
Jeffrey M. Fix
David L. Levacy

County Administrator
Carri L. Brown

Clerk
Rachel A. Elsea

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 8, 2020

Fairfield County Board of Commissioners Approves 2021 Budget

Lancaster, Ohio – Today, the Board of Fairfield County Commissioners approved the county expenditure budget for 2021. The “all funds” budget, comprised of multiple fund types, was approved at \$183 M. Multiple grants are received for defined purposes at different points in a year, and the all funds budget includes these grants and funds for all departments of the county.

The 2021 general fund budget, which covers expenditures for daily operations of county services, was approved at \$50.2 M, an approximate 1.6% increase over the current budget (which was decreased in 2020 due to the pandemic). The 2021 budget is similar to the original 2020 budget. For 2021, Workforce Center capital improvements were restored after having been reduced in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Increases in the 2021 budget include anticipated expenditures for the Sheriff’s Office, capital expenditures, grant matches, and merit-based or codified increases in pay.

Commission President, Steve Davis, stated, “The budget is consistent with Fairfield County’s priority of supporting law enforcement. About a 1/3 of the general fund budget is dedicated to Sheriff’s Office operations. We are prepared to include additional expenditures for the Sheriff’s Office, such as for the creation of a training and firing range, as well, once identified.”

The 2021 general fund budget included \$17 M for the Sheriff’s Office and jail operations, the largest expenditure area within the general fund.

Mr. Davis also reported on the reduction of \$440,000 for the Multi-County Juvenile Detention Center. This reduction was a result of the effort to “right size” the contribution to the MCJDC based on the county usage.

In addition, there were 27 pays in 2020, and there are 26 pays in 2021. This makes the net increase for payroll relatively minor for most departments.

The following *increases* were approved for 2021:

- \$330,000 Sheriff’s Office – net increases for salaries & variable fringe benefits
- \$316,000 Workforce Center equipment and assumption of debt
- \$300,000 Energy conservation project debt estimates



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- \$140,000 Supervised visitation and exchange services, replacing a grant
- \$120,000 Grant matches and shared services, including Economic Development, Victims Advocacy, City of Lancaster Lead Mitigation, & Guardianship Services
- \$ 62,000 Codified elected official salaries & variable fringe benefits
- \$ 20,000 Net increases for merit-based pay & variable fringe benefits (not including the Sheriff's Office)

Looking at estimated revenues of the general fund, sales tax (projected at \$23 M+ for 2021) is the largest general fund revenue source. The following factors were included for the 2021 projection:

- An increase of 3% in sales tax, based on market activity
- An increase in general property taxes of 1%, based on history
- An increase of 1% in conveyance fees, based on market activity
- An increase of 1% in charges for services or fees, based on history
- Casino revenues of \$1.75 M annually (a flat estimate over time)
- Interest income of \$700 K annually, based on market conditions
- \$1.2 M of shared local governmental funds from the state

The general fund estimated revenues for 2021 are \$48.5 M, and the estimated expenditures (at 95% of the appropriation level, based on history) are \$47.7 M.

One factor that was beneficial to the county was how health insurance rates did not increase at all in 2021.

In addition, CARES Act reimbursements to the general fund (about \$5 M) were helpful to the long-term outlook. The uncertainty of the pandemic is another factor, and the carryover cash balance of the general fund supports the county's ability to maintain flexibility.

The carryover cash balance of 2020, available for use in 2021, is expected to be about \$23M. Carryover cash is required for planned expenditures and future projections. The county will be working on a comprehensive plan for technology improvements in 2021 for implementation in 2022 and beyond.

The county website includes the full general fund budget as well as reports about county finances.

Please visit <https://www.co.fairfield.oh.us/>

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By the Numbers

Total <i>general fund</i> expenditure budget, 2020 (current estimate)	\$ 49.4 M
Total <i>general fund</i> expenditure budget, 2021	\$ 50.2 M
Percentage change of general fund budget, 2021 as compared to 2020, current	+1.6%
Actual expected general fund expenditures, based on history	\$ 47.7 M
Expected general fund revenues	\$ 48.5 M
Total <i>all funds</i> expenditure budget, 2020	\$ 190 M
Total <i>all funds</i> expenditure budget, 2021	\$ 183 M
Number of employees (paid on a County Auditor warrant)	900+
Number of <i>general fund</i> employees	335
Percentage increase for wages, merit-based	up to 3%
Total of general fund budget dedicated to wages	\$18 M+
Total of general fund budget dedicated to health insurance benefits	\$ 5 M +
Average base salary of a general fund employee	\$ 48,000
Percentage increase for health benefit plan rate	0%
Annual cost of a family health benefits plan per employee	\$ 22,000
Annual cost of a single health benefits plan per employee	\$ 9,000
Appropriations for the Sheriff's Office and jail	\$ 17 M
Approximate unencumbered carryover cash, general fund, estimated for 12.31.2020	\$ 23 M+

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