



A G E N D A

B O A R D O F C O M M I S S I O N E R S

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

County Administrator
Aundrea N. Cordle

Clerk
Rachel A. Elsea

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 14, 2021

Fairfield County Board of Commissioners Approves 2022 Budget

Lancaster, Ohio – Today, the Board of Fairfield County Commissioners approved the county expenditure budget for 2022. The 2022 general fund budget, which covers expenditures for daily operations of county services, was approved at \$56.31 M, an approximate 4.3% *decrease* from the current budget, which includes several one-time capital projects, such as the creation of the training range for the Sheriff's Office and other capital improvements.

While the 2022 general fund budget is a decrease over the current budget, the appropriations include authorization of merit-based increases for employees, up to 3.5%, as well as negotiated increases for law enforcement. An employee within the general fund earning an average of \$50,000 annually and providing exceptional service to the public will receive an annual increase of \$1,750 based on merit. Also, a representative Deputy Sheriff hired within the Sheriff's Office in 2021 earning \$51,000 will receive an increase of \$3,600 based on negotiated increases, prior to the payment of overtime or stipends for uniforms.

Commission President, Dave Levacy, stated, "The 2022 budget is consistent with Fairfield County's priority of supporting law enforcement. Over a 1/3 of the general fund budget is dedicated to Sheriff's Office operations and related capital improvements. Also, we are aware of how Sheriff Lape is conducting surveys about customer satisfaction and support him in this effort, too. We are investing in law enforcement for the safety and good of our community."

The "all funds" budget, comprised of multiple fund types, was approved at \$211 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 departments of the county.

Commissioner Steve Davis added information about the allocation for the Multi-County Juvenile Detention Center, which has been reduced as a result of the effort to "right size" the contribution to the MCJDC based on usage. "The allocation for 2022 is \$523,893, down from \$800,000 just two years ago and even more prior to that time. The county's agreement with MCJDC is through 2023, at which time there will be additional negotiations," stated Davis.

The following planned expenditures were included in the 2022 general fund budget:

- \$1,000,000 A negotiated increase in salaries expenditures for the Sheriff's Office
- \$530,000 Equipment for Information Technology and the Board of Elections
- \$500,000 Allocations to match state or federal grants, such as for JFS, EMA, and Victims Advocacy, and to support partnerships such as with Guardianship Services, a nationally recognized collaboration
- \$300,000 Energy conservation and Administrative Courthouse project debt payments

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- \$270,000 Salaries for Juvenile Court, to support the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative
- \$220,000 Merit-based increases up to 3.5% for over 200 non-law enforcement employees
- \$160,000 Planned reorganization for Commissioners' Office
- \$150,000 Market adjustments for Prosecutor's Office salaries, for more than 20 employees
- \$123,000 New technical position & market adjustments for Information Technology salaries
- \$121,000 A new building coordinator position and market adjustments for Facilities salaries
- \$100,000 Market adjustments for the Clerk of Courts salaries, for more than 40 employees
- \$ 24,600 Codified increases for Elected Official salaries

Also, there were reductions in the 2022 general fund expenditure budget:

- \$5,500,000 Reduction in one-time purchases, such as the planning for the purchase of the Government Services Center NW, the construction of the Sheriff's training range, the creation of a SWAT building, and the purchase of vehicles
- \$ 480,000 Reduction in debt, based on refinancing and terms of bonds

Looking at estimated revenues of the general fund, sales tax revenues are the largest general fund revenue source, with more than \$26 M collected in 2021. The following factors were included for the 2022 revenue estimates:

- For sales tax, an increase of 3% annually using 2019 as a base year, for about \$24.4 M.
- An increase in general property taxes of 1%, for about \$11 M.
- Homestead fees of about \$1.3 M.
- An increase of about \$800,000 in conveyance fees over 2019, for a total of more than \$4 M.
- An increase of 3.5% in charges for services or fees, based on activity, for about \$5.4 M.
- Casino revenues of \$1.75 M annually (a flat estimate over time).
- Interest income of \$600 K annually, based on market conditions.
- \$1.5 M of shared local governmental funds from the state.
- \$1 M as an agreed upon transfer from the Clerk of Courts Certificate of Title Fund.

General fund estimated revenues for 2022 are about \$51 M, and the estimated expenditures (at 94% of the appropriation level) are \$52.93 M. About \$2 M of the approximate \$25 M carryover is expected to be used in 2022, based on current estimates and history. Carryover cash is required for planned expenditures and future projections. By 2025, estimated revenues exceed estimated expenditures. Carryover projections throughout the five-year plan exceed pre-pandemic carryover amounts.

Federal stimulus reimbursements to the general fund (about \$6 M) were helpful to the long-term outlook. In addition, the county is working on a comprehensive plan for technology improvements in

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2022 for implementation in 2022 and beyond. Many of those plans are supported by the American Rescue Plan Act fiscal recovery funds.

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However, the uncertainty of the pandemic is a factor, and the leadership remains cautious with increases in expenditures. The carryover cash balance of the general fund supports the county's ability to maintain flexibility.

One other factor that was beneficial to the county was how health insurance rates have been controlled. Commissioner Jeff Fix stated, "Fairfield County is able to contain its costs of health benefits based on good management of the self-funded program and the \$7.3 M settlement with Franklin County which was received in 2021."

The county website includes the full general fund budget as well as reports about county finances. Please visit <https://www.co.fairfield.oh.us/>

By the Numbers

Total <i>general fund</i> expenditure budget, 2021 (current estimate)	\$ 58.85 M
Total <i>general fund</i> expenditure budget, 2022	\$ 56.31 M
Percentage change of general fund budget, 2022 as compared to 2021, current	-4.3%
Total <i>all funds</i> expenditure budget, 2021	\$ 248 M
Total <i>all funds</i> expenditure budget, 2022	\$ 211 M
Percentage increase for wages, merit-based	up to 3.5%
Annual increase for an employee earning \$50,000 and providing exceptional service	\$1,750
Annual average salary, prior to overtime or stipends for a new Deputy Sheriff	\$51,000
Estimated annual cost of a family health benefits plan per employee	\$ 20,000
Estimated annual cost of a single health benefits plan per employee	\$ 8,500
Appropriations for the Sheriff's Office and jail	\$ 18.3 M
Approximate unencumbered carryover cash, general fund, estimated for 12.31.2021	\$ 25 M

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