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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 9, 2025

Fairfield County Board of Commissioners Approves 2026 Budget

Lancaster, Ohio – Today, the Board of Fairfield County Commissioners approved the county expenditure budget for 2026. The 2026 general fund budget, which covers expenditures for daily operations of county services, was approved at \$70.8 M, an approximate 5.4% *decrease* from the current budget.

Commission President, Jeff Fix, stated, “The County remains committed to strengthening our workforce, housing, and transportation systems, while also managing the funding constraints faced by community support initiatives. Fairfield County continues to prioritize law enforcement, dedicating nearly one-third of the General Fund to Sheriff’s Office operations. These investments reflect our ongoing commitment to the safety and well-being of our community.”

Commissioner Steve Davis added that the 2026 budget provides for spending slightly below current conservative revenue estimates for 2026. While the County remains fiscally strong on a relative and actual basis, we are monitoring developments that could meaningfully impact the County in 2026 and beyond.

The “all funds” budget, comprised of multiple fund types, was approved at \$251.3 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.

A few highlights of the 2026 *general fund* budget expenditures:

- \$ 550,000 Investment in Public Safety
- \$ 447,263 IT investments in network infrastructure
- \$ 200,000 Visitation Center Support
- \$ 150,000 Hicks Partners grant writing services
- \$ 104,000 Ohio University Extension including the Fairfield County Nutrition Education Program
- \$ 75,000 Increased investments in cyber security
- \$ 75,000 Regional Planning for model zoning code development
- \$ 60,000 Veteran Services outreach programs

A few notable reductions in the 2026 general fund expenditure budget:

- \$2,235,000 Capital Improvements completed in 2025
- \$ 80,000 Rental and Lease reduction in 2026



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General fund estimated revenues for 2026 are about \$68.8 M, and estimated expenditures (at 96% of the appropriation level) are \$67.9 M. Carryover cash is estimated at \$46.1 M for 2025. Carryover cash is required for planned expenditures and future projections.

However, with the uncertainty of market conditions and inflationary pressures, the leadership remains cautious with increases in expenditures. The carryover cash balance of the general fund supports the county's ability to maintain flexibility.

By the Numbers

Total <i>general fund</i> expenditure budget, 2025 (current revised estimate)	\$ 74.8 M
Total <i>general fund</i> expenditure budget, 2026	\$ 70.8 M
Percentage change of general fund budget, 2026 as compared to 2025, current	5.4%
Total <i>all funds</i> expenditure budget, 2025	\$ 244.6 M
Total <i>all funds</i> expenditure budget, 2026	\$ 251.3 M
Percentage increase for wages, merit-based (non-bargaining)	up to 5%
Annual increase for an employee earning \$50,000 and exceeding performance expectations	\$ 2,500
Estimated annual employer cost of a family health benefits plan per employee	\$ 27,139
Estimated annual employer cost of a single health benefits plan per employee	\$ 10,482
Appropriations for the Sheriff's Office and jail	\$22.8 M
Percent of general fund	32.2%
General fund estimated revenues for 2026	\$68.8 M
Estimated 2026 expenditures (at 96% of appropriation level)	\$67.9 M
Approximate unencumbered carryover cash, general fund, estimated for 12.31.2025	\$46.1 M

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