

Roundtable Meeting #9 - 2025
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office
February 25, 2025

Review Meeting

The Commissioners met at 1:00 p.m. at the Agricultural Center at 831 College Ave., Lancaster, OH. Commissioner Fix called the meeting to order, and the following Commissioners were present: Jeff Fix, Steve Davis, and David Levacy. County employees present: Aundrea Cordle, Jeff Porter, Rochelle Menningen, Bennett Niceswanger, Abby Watson, Leighann Adams, Bart Hampson, Rick Szabrak, CJ Roberts, Engineer Jeremiah Upp, Daniel Neeley, Jon Kochis, Jason Grubb, Tiffany Wilson, Corey Clark, Rachel Elsea, Auditor, Dr. Carri Brown, Judge Terre Vandervoort, Recorder Lisa McKenzie, Clerk of Courts Branden Meyer, Tony Vogel, Baylie Blevins, Kelly Frank, Austin Lines, Treasurer James Bahnsen, Michael Kaper, Marcey Fields, Marcy Shafer, Shannon Carter, Nikki Drake, Chad Lucht, Sheriff Alex Lape, and Angela Krile.

Welcome

Commissioner Fix opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance and thanked everyone who submitted their department updates ahead of the meeting.

Proclamation

Commissioner Fix provided a proclamation to Dr. Carri Brown for receiving the Excellence in Government Leadership award at the National AGA Conference.

Dr. Brown thanked the Commissioners and everyone in the room for their support and leadership throughout the county. She thanked Rachel Elsea for her part in the application.

2025-2028 Strategic Plan, Final Review

Ms. Cordle spoke about the previous Roundtable and added that the ideas provided at that meeting were incorporated into the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan draft.

Angela Krile stated that the goals for the Strategic Plan draft were established based on feedback from the department heads and elected officials. Opportunities were identified to improve broadband and infrastructure, expand Social Services, and providing affordable housing. Updates relating to workforce included childcare reform and ways to remove barriers for individuals who wish to work. County Operations must continually improve so that the county remains a leader in the state.

Ms. Cordle stated that other agencies have been incorporated into the pillars of the Strategic Plan as part of the action items. She emphasized that the cooperation of all the agencies in the county will help to bring the goals of the Strategic Plan to fruition.

Commissioner Fix thanked all those involved in the drafting of the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan. He wishes for the plan to be a living-breathing document as the county moves forward.

Contract Routing, Competitive Bidding, and HB 497

Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Austin Lines, provided updates on the changes included in HB 497. He explained the competitive bidding process, which products and services require competitive bidding, and the process for requests for qualifications. He also explained the process for reviewing contracts and reminded the attendees that contracts are reviewed to form and cannot contain indemnification clauses by law.

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County Website, Updated Bid Tab

Mr. Niceswanger stated that under HB 497 public notices can be posted on the county website and social media accounts instead of being advertised in the newspaper. There will be a new section added to the "Bids" tab on the county website for public notices to be posted.

Ms. Cordle stated that public notices can still be advertised in the newspaper, but the new bill allows the county to save time and money by posting them to the website and social media pages.

Ms. Elsea asked if the social media account being used must be the county's account, or if other agencies can post their own public notices to their accounts.

Mr. Lines stated that it should be posted to the county's social media account.

Ms. Cordle stated that there will be a template that Mr. Niceswanger uses for the social media posts so the notices remain consistent.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Levacy stated that he appreciates everyone in the room for their part in the county's success. He added that many people throughout the state look to Fairfield County as the model system.

Leadership Conference

Mr. Porter stated that the Leadership Conference will be held on April 15th at Alley Park in Lancaster and will include presentations by CORSA on required training.

Department Updates

Nikki Drake with the Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District spoke on the funding that is available to assist farmers who were impacted by the drought in 2024. One of her employees recently was licensed to operate drones which will assist their organization in their field operations.

Shannon Carter with OSU Extension stated that her office offers programs in family consumer sciences and gardening, which are always open to the public. They will be hosting 4H Discovery Days at the fairgrounds for youth interested in learning more about 4H.

Kelly Frank with the Coroner's Office stated that Luann Davidson had retired from her position. She and the Chief Investigator recently attended training for death investigation.

Baylie Blevins with the Health Department stated their office has onboarded a new community health worker. The child fatality review will begin next week which offers insight from their community partners.

Marcy Schaffer with the Parks District stated that they finished their winter hike series, and will have a new trail opening this spring in Smeck Park. They have also transferred several properties to other governing authorities which were unsuitable for park use.

Recorder Lisa McKenzie stated that property fraud has increased in recent years so she will be offering training opportunities to local HOA's.

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Juvenile Court Judge Terre Vandervoort stated that the court was awarded an ARPA grant to assist with families experiencing attendance issues. The court was able to build a collaboration with other agencies and the schools to have a case management system. She anticipates it will serve over 100 families once it is ready.

Rachel Elsea with the Auditor's Office summarized the DocLink system and how it will be utilized by the Budget Commission. The Auditor's Office will be hosting the upcoming CAAO meeting at the Records Center.

Tiffany Wilson with Family and Children First Council stated that she plans to begin the Parent Education class next month to assist families with strong willed children in their home. Her office is also searching for a suitable applicant for a position as a parental coordinator.

Marcy Fields with ADAMH stated that the StarLight Center is operational. Venture Place is almost ready to begin site work. They will be hosting their annual dinner on Tuesday, April 29th at Crossroads which will focus on the theme of Raising Hope.

Leighann Adams with the Dog Shelter stated that the shelter has approximately 50 dogs in their care right now. They will be hosting a microchipping event this summer for residents.

Ms. Cordle added that the Dog Shelter is in need of cream cheese donations which helps staff to administer medication to dogs.

Abby Watson with Human Resources stated the new ben admin system called BeSwift is progressing. It will make for an easier experience with users selecting their employee benefits and communicating with the providers. The plan is to implement it slowly with full use by 2025 open enrollment.

Sheriff Alex Lape spoke about the implementation of the Next Generation 911 system his office uses. The system allows callers to approve temporary access to their phones so dispatchers and first responders can see the scene unfolding before they arrive. The system also can translate from Spanish to English and will soon have the capability to translate other languages. He also spoke briefly on the DD levy renewal for which he is a member of the levy committee.

Michael Kaper with the Land Bank thanked the Commissioners and County Administrator for the added security staff at the Courthouse, as well as the additional parking spots for those paying taxes. The Land Bank received funding for a mini grant program which allows them to assist with smaller projects.

Treasurer Bahnsen added that the security presence at the Administrative Courthouse has changed the mood as people have come in to pay taxes. His office is working to improve the processing of foreclosures which historically can take up to a year to conclude.

Tony Vogel provided an update on the utility projects in Violet Township. He also spoke on some of the larger subdivisions that are serviced by the City of Lancaster and those serviced by the county.

Clerk of Courts Branden Meyer stated that his office will conduct in-house testing of credit card processing. He continues to present to different groups on the Good Deeds Program and plans to continue with more presentations.

Corey Clark with Job and Family Services spoke about the impact of SNAP benefit theft and the other types of fraud his office assists in preventing. He also spoke about the Child Abuse

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Prevention Breakfast which will take place on April 4th, and the Family Fun Fest which will take place May 16th.

Commissioner Davis spoke about the positive changes that are taking place internally with the Major Crimes Unit (MCU).

Scott Duff with MCU stated that he is committed to improving the operations at MCU and is thankful for the assistance from the county in getting the agency back to a good financial position.

Jason Grubb stated that Facilities continues to make improvements to county buildings and touched on several of the current projects.

Jon Kochis with Facilities and the Emergency Management Agency stated that there are currently 6 capital improvement projects. The Commissioners purchased the Colonnade Building which will be renamed to the Sheridan Center and will serve as a conference and banquet facility for the county.

Commissioner Davis spoke about the importance of tornado shelters and stated that he has spoken with Mayor McDaniel of Lancaster about the potential of installing a tornado shelter at a mobile home neighborhood in Lancaster.

Dan Neeley with Information Technology stated that fraud is becoming more prevalent and added that IT is working to implement protections against any potential cyber security attacks. He also asked that agencies inform IT about any technology purchases so they can ensure they are added to the county's systems.

Rick Szabrak with Economic and Workforce Development provided an update on the programs being offered at the Workforce Center. He thanked Mr. Corey for his assistance in conducting a hiring event.

Mr. Hampson stated that the Commissioners' budget hearings have been set and he will begin setting up times to meet with each agency.

Commissioner Levacy complimented Mr. Clark and his team for helping seniors in the community and protecting them from fraud.

Commissioner Davis stated that the addition of Deputy Roberts at the Administrative Courthouse has been a great benefit.

Recorder McKenzie shared a story about Deputy Roberts being very thorough in monitoring the security cameras.

Ms. Cordle thanked the Sheriff's Office for their assistance in providing a deputy for the Administrative Courthouse.

Adjournment

With no further business, On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to adjourn at 3:24 p.m.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:
Voting aye thereon: David Levacy and Steve Davis

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The next Roundtable is scheduled for July 15, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Fairfield Center.

Motion by: David Levacy

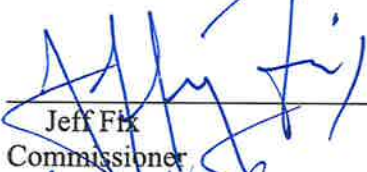
Seconded by: Steve Davis

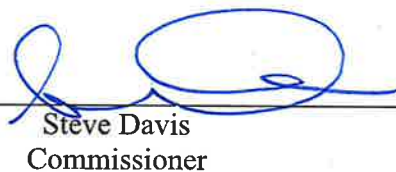
that the February 25, 2025, Roundtable minutes were approved by the following vote:

YEAS: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix
ABSTENTIONS:

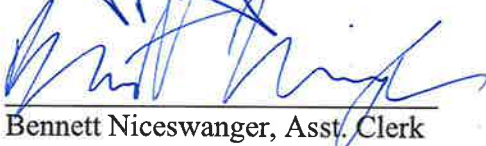
NAYS: None

*Approved on March 4, 2025


Jeff Fix
Commissioner


Steve Davis
Commissioner


David Levacy
Commissioner


Bennett Niceswanger, Asst. Clerk