

Leadership Conference #16 - 2025
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office
April 15, 2025

Leadership Conference

Commissioner Jeff Fix called the Leadership Conference meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and the following Commissioners were Present: Steve Davis, David Levacy, and Jeff Fix. Also in attendance: L. Adams, T. Ashton, J. Bahnsen, J. Bennett, S. Bergstrom, B. Berry, B. Blevins, G. Blevins, R. Briggs, A. Brown-Thompson, S. Bryan, D. Burgei, J. Camechis, M. Carper, C. Clark, J. Collins, C. Cook, A. Cordle, A. Crist, M. Culbertson, L. Dixon, J. Donnell, B. Downhour, C. Downour, N. Drake, J. Ebel, J. Ehorn, R. Elsea, C. Enyart, W. Ervin, A. Fahner, E. Favinger, B. Fields, M. Fields, C. Finney, L. Fisher, S. Fortner, K. Frank, S. Garren, C. Gaskill, L. George, J. Gordan, M. Gray, J. Grubb, B. Hampson, A. Hannum, L. Hawk, B. Heaston, D. Henwood, R. Hoch, A. Horn, J. Horvath, K. Humphries, K. Hyme, E. Jones, M. Kaper, S. Karns, A. Kennedy, G. Knight, S. Knisley, H. Kochis, J. Kochis, A. Lape, B. Lee, C. Less, A. Lines, C. Lucht, S. Lynch, M. Maffin, E. Maple, H. Mattei, E. McCrady, L. McKenzie, R. Menning, J. Messinger, B. Meyer, D. Miller, R. Moresea, D. Neeley, K. Nelson, G. Neville, B. Niceswanger, H. O'Keefe, L. O'Toole, J. Porter, K. Riddle, CJ Roberts, M. Roberts, E. Robinson, M. Shafer, A. Scheidegger, H. Shields, K. Shoemaker, L. Smith, A. Stedman, H. Stoneburner, J. Stout, R. Szabrak, T. Tennant, M. Thomas, B. Thompson, A. Tobin, D. Toney, T. Vandervoort, T. Vogel, A. Watson, P. Welsh, M. Wesney, K. Wilkerson, T. Wilson, K. Witt, M. Wright, and S. Wyrick.

Welcome & Announcements

Commissioner Fix opened the meeting, and along with Commissioner Levacy, welcomed everyone in attendance.

Human Resources Update

Deputy County Administrator, Jeff Porter, stated that the 2025 Employee Recognition Event would be August 29th at Smeck Park in Baltimore. He also provided information on upcoming dates for New Employee Orientations.

First Amendment Audits

David Moser of Fishel Downey Albrecht & Riepenhoff spoke about First Amendment Auditors and their interactions with public agencies. He shared a video example to illustrate how these individuals often engage with public employees. Mr. Moser explained the legal rights of First Amendment Auditors and emphasized the importance of clearly marking areas that are open to the public versus those with restricted access. He also clarified that while these individuals have the right to film in public spaces, they are not allowed to cause a disruption or interfere with staff performing their essential duties. Those referring to themselves as First Amendment Auditors often seek to test compliance with Ohio's Sunshine Laws. A PowerPoint presentation is available in the minutes documentation and includes information on public records audits.

Prevent Costly Employment Claims by Consistent Application of Workplace Policies – General Employment

Mr. Moser also provided a presentation (PowerPoint available in the minutes) on employee evaluations, employee discipline and investigations, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). He emphasized that evaluations are a valuable tool for assessing whether employees are effectively fulfilling their roles and for helping ensure the office is meeting its overall goals. Moser noted that well-documented evaluations can also play a key role in workplace appeals, especially if an employee

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files a claim. He recommended incorporating job descriptions directly into the evaluation process to create a clearer framework for assessment and he offered guidance on how to approach evaluations constructively when addressing negative performance issues.

Prevent Costly Employment Claims by Consistent Application of Workplace Policies – Frequent Claims Arising in the Workplace

David Moser concluded his presentation with a discussion on preventing workplace claims. He stressed the importance of thoroughly documenting any disciplinary action, ensuring that investigations clearly outline the violation, the actions taken, and the resulting disciplinary measures. An employer's responsibilities under the ADA and the elements a plaintiff must establish to prove an ADA claim were explained; along with FMLA qualifying reasons, intermittent leave, and leave recertification. The need and requirements for workplace drug testing were also explained.

AI in the Public Sector

Bob Bickmeier, Ph.D., of PRADCO, discussed how AI technology can be effectively leveraged in the public sector. He acknowledged that while AI has great potential, it is not without flaws. Mr. Bickmeier explained that there is both generative AI and predictive AI. Generative AI creates something from nothing and has been trained to sound like a human. It is built around the idea of generating content to find input, like a prompt. Prompt engineering is designing a query to tell our interface to generate something for us. You should ask yourself the following questions before using AI: What problems will AI solve? How will data be collected and secured? How will fairness and accountability be ensured? What is the contingency plan for AI errors? How will AI effect employee experiences or their work? Mr. Bickmeier stated that AI generated responses are based on prompts and must be tested and verified to ensure outcomes are accurate, unbiased, and reliable. One practical use of AI is automating communication with job applicants, a feature that addresses growing concerns about transparency during the hiring process. Bickmeier emphasized the importance of data protection and urged organizations to carefully consider how they safeguard information. He highlighted transparency and accountability as key principles when implementing AI in public service. Agencies must clearly communicate how AI is being used, as the average user may not fully understand how their data is processed. When applied thoughtfully, AI can enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and support better decision-making and public safety.

Closing Remarks

Commissioner Davis emphasized the importance of productive communications and encouraged all in attendance to consider setting goals for a desired outcome in each conversation they hold.

Commissioner Levacy thanked those involved in preparing for the Leadership Conference. He also stated his appreciation for the conference content.

Commissioner Fix echoed the sentiments of Commissioner Levacy and stated how much he appreciated the information that had been shared.

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 12:09 p.m.

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

Motion by: David Levacy

Seconded by: Steve Davis

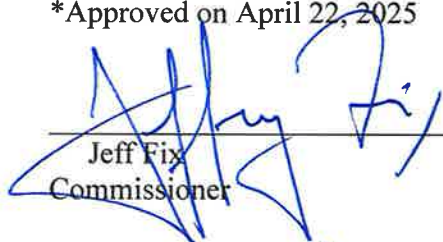
that the April 15, 2025, Leadership Conference minutes were approved by the following vote:

YEAS: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix

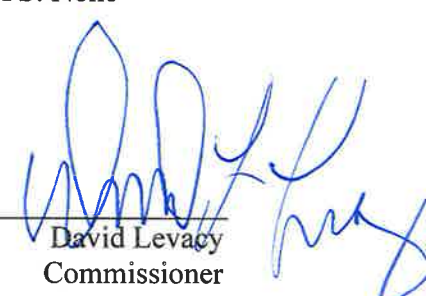
NAYS: None

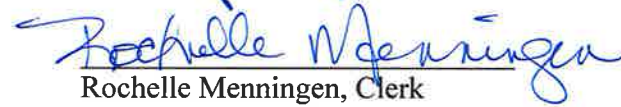
ABSTENTIONS:

*Approved on April 22, 2025


Jeff Fix
Commissioner


Steve Davis
Commissioner


David Levacy
Commissioner


Rochelle Menningen, Clerk

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