

Regular Meeting #18 - 2025
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office
April 22, 2025

Review Meeting

The Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. at 210 E. Main St., Lancaster, OH. Commissioner Jeffery Fix called the meeting to order, and Commissioners Steve Davis and David Levacy were also in attendance. County employees present: County Administrator, Aundrea Cordle; Deputy County Administrator, Jeff Porter; Clerk to the Board of Commissioners, Rochelle Menningen; Communications & Information Coordinator, Bennett Niceswanger; Budget Officer, Staci Knisley; JFS Director, Corey Clark; IT Director, Daniel Neeley; EMA & Facilities Director, Jon Kochis; Economic & Workforce Development Director, Rick Szabrak; Utilities Director, Tony Vogel; Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Amy Brown-Thompson; Soil & Water Manager, Nikki Drake; Auditor, Dr. Carri Brown; Recorder, Lisa McKenzie; Office Administrator, Jeff Camechis; Deputy Utilities Director, Josh Anders; Deputy JFS Director, Heather O'Keefe; Interim RPC Director, Holly Mattei; and Sheriff's Deputy, Kevin Romine. Also in attendance: Ray Stemen, Chris Snider, Jack Janoso, Alan Greenslade, Ally Kimber, and Drew Linnenbom.

Virtual attendees: Shelby Hunt, Shannon, Austin Lines, Ashley Arter, Paul, Jeanie, Jerry Starner, Beth Cottrell, Jennifer Morgan, Greg Forquer, Lori Hawk, Deborah, Josh Horacek, Jeff Barron, Lori Lovas, Marcy Fields, Stacy Hicks, Lynette Barnhart, Jim Bahnsen, Abby King, Jared Collins, Alex Lape, Amberly Hannum, Joe Ebel, and Britney Lee.

Welcome

Commissioner Fix opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance.

Utilities Update, Utilities Director Tony Vogel

Mr. Vogel provided a presentation on current plans and the future of the Utilities Department. He spoke about the makeup of the Fairfield County Utilities Department (Utilities) which currently consists of 22 employees, 9 facilities, and 2 Water and Sewer Districts. The Utilities department currently produces 2M gallons of water per day, treats 2.6M gallons, and collects \$10.1M in service revenues and \$1.5M in connection fees. Fairfield County currently operates 3 well fields, and two additional fields will be operating soon. The Senior and Veterans Assistance Program has 206 customers who saved \$20,600 last year. The American Rescue Plan projects consist of the Grant Hampton waterline, the airport sewer and water project, the regional lift and force main project, and the Greenfield waterline. Mr. Vogel spoke about planned commercial and residential development in the county and about new legislation (HB 139). The proposed legislation would require annual fire hydrant inspection and flow testing which would increase operation costs and the loss of water.

Commissioner Davis asked about the ratio of sewer to water customers.

Mr. Vogel replied that there are few more sewer customers due to older houses having their sump pumps hooked into sewer lines in case of large rain events.

Commissioner Davis asked if water could be recaptured during the flow testing of fire hydrants.

Mr. Vogel replied that there is equipment that can be added that will lessen the water used in the flow testing of hydrants but there is no way to recapture the water.

Commissioner Fix added his support for Mr. Vogel and issues surrounding the proposed legislation.

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Commissioner Levacy complimented Mr. Vogel for assisting the county's townships and villages with their sewer and water issues.

Ms. Cordle added that Mr. Vogel also assisted the YMCA with stormwater issues.

Commissioner Fix stated that he is on the board of the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) and the board has started contracting with smaller associations to help townships and villages with necessary steps to build their local infrastructure. Many small entities have very little staff. He asked if there is an opportunity to help them by having them contract with the county for some water and sewer services.

Mr. Vogel replied that it depends on what works financially for small entities.

Commissioner Fix spoke about having a conversation regarding how to assist townships and villages that do not have the necessary infrastructure to support their residents. He added his appreciation and admiration for Mr. Vogel's attendance, assistance, and knowledge in the meetings regarding land use and development throughout the county.

Dinsmore FMC Conduit Debt Presentation

Drew Linnenbom and Ally Kimbler of Dinsmore & Shohl LLP (Dinsmore) spoke about a bond document and allowing FMC to sell a small area of their property to Harcum House. The county has no financial responsibility with the transaction.

Commissioner Davis thanked everyone who worked on the proposal and added his support for the resolution.

Ms. Cordle asked about the timeline for Harcum House to purchase the property.

Mr. Linnebom replied that he is hopeful the transaction will occur a few days after the passage of the Commissioners' resolution.

Ms. Kimbler added that the resolution drafted by Dinsmore authorizes FMC to sell a small part to Harcum House. She added that the bonds are not county debt and are conduit bonds which are solely repayable by Fairfield Medical Center.

Ms. Cordle stated that the Prosecutor's Office will review the resolution and documents.

Mr. Linnenbom added that there is another mortgage that must be released and that is being processed. The sale of the property can then move forward.

Commissioner Fix thanked Mr. Linnenbom and Ms. Kimbler for attending.

Public Comments

Ray Stemen spoke about the anniversary of his wife's death. He closed his remarks with a prayer for all decision makers in the county.

Legal Update

Amy Brown-Thompson stated that she had reviewed the resolution provided by Dinsmore and had no issues.

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County Administration Update

- *The County Administration Update was provided by the County Administrator, Aundrea Cordle, unless otherwise noted.*

Week in Review

Top Workplaces 2025

Mr. Porter stated that Fairfield County had been recognized as a Top Workplace in Central Ohio for the fourth year in a row. He spoke about the other large private corporations that were among the other distinguishable workplaces and added that the award is based on employee responses.

Commissioner Fix stated that the Columbus Dispatch had an article and there were 60-70 employers recognized, and Fairfield County was the only government entity among the group. He added that the county's HR does things bigger and better than most employers.

Commissioner Levacy noted that Fairfield County moved up in the ranking from 2024.

April is National County Government Month (NCGM)

April is National County Government Month, and we are continuing to highlight the role that counties play in serving our residents and all Ohioans. April 22nd, today, is Earth Day, so today we will spotlight the Fairfield County Parks District. The Parks District was founded in 1981 and operates 1177 acres for education, recreation, and conservation. The Parks District also maintains and preserves many historical features. There are 12 parks across Fairfield County operated by the parks district. These parks feature covered bridges, waterways, trails, an ancient earthwork/mound, Ohio and Erie Canal Locks, tree houses, an early 1800's cemetery, soccer fields, and even a red-tailed hawk sculpture. Stebelton Park at Rock Mill is the home to an 1824 mill that was powered by the Hocking River. Next to Rock Mill is the Rock Mill covered bridge built in 1901 by Jacob R. "Blue Jeans" Brandt. The 1901 bridge was a replacement bridge for an original built in 1849. Two Glaciers Park was named because the property is where the last great glaciers to cover Ohio ended.

The Fairfield County Parks Districts has so many features to offer families and individuals of all ages. So, on Earth Day 2025, plan to visit one, or all the Parks in the Parks District this year.

This month, we also take time to honor key members of law enforcement:

- Last week was National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, recognizing our dispatchers.
- May 4-10 is National Corrections Officers Week, honoring those who maintain order and safety in our jails.
- May 15 is Peace Officers Memorial Day, an occasion to remember and honor law enforcement officers who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

As we reflect on County Government Month, please take a moment to appreciate the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office for all they do daily to protect and serve the residents, businesses, and visitors of our county.

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Veterans Hall of Fame Grant

Last week, Fairfield County was awarded a \$5,000 grant from America 250. This was the third and final round of grants awarded to fund programs and initiatives that will commemorate Ohio's important contribution to American history. Bennett Niceswanger submitted the grant application on behalf of the county. The maximum grant amount was \$5,000 and there were 57 grants awarded for a total of \$278,834. Fairfield County's project title was "Fairfield County Veterans Hall of Fame: Celebrating Local Veterans." The grant will fund educational materials, a marker which will be located near the Courthouse, and a ceremony to unveil the Fairfield County Veterans Hall of Fame. The marker will list historical content, and the impact Fairfield County veterans have had on the community.

Issue 2 Yard Signs

State Issue 2 yard signs are available for folks to take.

Highlights of Resolutions

Administrative Approvals

The review packet contains a list of administrative approvals.

Resolution Review

There are 13 resolutions on the agenda for the Regular voting meeting.

Resolutions of note:

- The first resolution on the agenda is to remove the June 3rd Board of Commissioners' Meeting due to scheduling conflicts on that date. R.C. 305.06 requires that County Commissioners hold 50 meetings per year. The Commissioners' meeting schedule currently has 53 meetings. This resolution will mean that there are 52 meetings on the Commissioners' schedule for 2025.
- There is a resolution for a fund-to-fund transfer from the General Fund to fund #3910, the Sheridan Building Fund. This resolution allows for the transfer and appropriations of money for the Sheridan Center renovations.
- The Coroner's Office has a resolution to approve a contract for investigator services.
- The Engineer's Office has a contract to approve the 2025-2026 Winter season road salt contract.
- The Engineer's Office also has an amendment to the RUMA (Road Usage Maintenance Agreement) between Fairfield County and the Ohio Power Company. This amendment allows additional portions of roads to be added to the agreement.
- Facilities has two resolutions. The first is to authorize a contract with GAG Incorporated for landscaping services. The second is to approve the contract bid award to Gutknecht Construction for the Sheridan Conference Center Project. Gutknecht Construction submitted the lowest bid, in the amount of \$1,894,000, and was determined to be a responsive and responsible bidder.

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- Regional Planning has a resolution to approve the final public improvements to Spring Creek subdivision Section 3-1A.
- The Sheriff's Office has a resolution authorizing the donation of two 2014 and two 2016 Dodge Chargers to Meigs County.

Calendar Review/Invitations Received

- *The review of the calendar, invitations received, and correspondence were provided by the Clerk to the Fairfield County Board of Commissioners, Rochelle Menningen.*
- Fairfield Beach Tornado Shelter Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, April 22, 2025, 1:00 p.m., 5056 Beaver Dr. NE, Thornville
- Bremen Chamber Luncheon, April 24, 2025, 12:00 p.m., Bremen Community Methodist Church, 205 N. Mulberry St., Bremen
- Ohio Attorney General's Elder Abuse Commission Meeting, April 28, 2025, 10:00 a.m., State Library of Ohio, 274 E. 1st Ave., Columbus
- Fairfield County Board of Elections' Candidate's Night April 30, 2025, 6:00 p.m., Board of Elections - Liberty Hall, 951 Liberty Dr., Lancaster
- Pickerington Food Pantry Spring Gala, May 3, 2025, 6:00 p.m., Wigwam Event Center, 10190 Blacklick Eastern Rd. NW, Pickerington
- The 2025 PACC Annual Awards & Athena Celebration, May 15, 2025, 5:00 p.m., Wigwam Event Center, 10190 Blacklick Eastern Rd. NW, Pickerington
- Save the Date, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Event, June 11, 2025, 8:00 a.m., Life Church Vineyard, 5550 Lancaster-Newark Rd. NE, Pleasantville

Correspondence

- Correspondence Regarding Industrial Solar Projects

Updates from Elected Officials and Department Heads

Recorder McKenzie stated she will be attending and speaking at the upcoming County Records Association of Ohio meeting.

Mr. Camechis stated the Engineer's Office will soon fill the new salt barn.

Auditor Brown shared updates including the Park District's "Map of the Month" and her role as a judge at an Ohio Expo event at OU. The winner of the expo designed a site for women facing challenges in Afghanistan. She recently taught a seminar with 170 students pursuing careers in non-profit industries and helped host a DocLink seminar highlighting the new lot split application. The Daughters of the American Revolution will meet at 108 N. High, the site of their first meeting in 1900. The paycheck advice of County employees now features a new design with color and additional details. The Auditor also spoke about serving on the Ohio Supreme Court's Continuing Legal Education Board.

Ms. Drake spoke about an upcoming DEA drug take back event in Berne Township and an electronics recycling event.

Ms. Mattei reported that Amanda Township had recently adopted the model zoning code.

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Mr. Szabrak stated that the Area 20 Workforce Board will be assisting Ross County employees impacted by a potential closing of the paper plant.

Mr. Kochis spoke about a hazardous materials collection event being held by EMA and the Lancaster Fairfield Community Agency. He also noted that the ribbon cutting for the tornado shelter would be later that day.

Mr. Neeley stated the processing had begun for new employee badges.

Commissioner Davis asked about the reason for the new badges.

Mr. Neeley replied that the new and more secure door equipment requires new badges to support the technology.

Ms. Cordle stated that this provides an opportunity for updated employee photos.

Mr. Porter thanked everyone who participated in the Leadership Conference. There were over 100 in attendance. He also thanked Branden Meyer for the opportunity to speak to the Clerks Association on health care benefits.

Old Business

Commissioner Levacy stated he and Ms. Cordle attended the CCAO Legislative Update in Granville.

Ms. Cordle stated her appreciation for CCAO and the work they do.

Commissioner Fix added that he was unable to attend but did have the opportunity to speak with Senator Schaffer.

New Business

Commissioner Levacy stated he and Commissioner Davis will attend the ribbon cutting for the tornado shelter in Fairfield Beach. Fairfield Beach is an unincorporated area but has about 2000 residents. The tornado shelter is an important safety feature for them. He added that the Fairfield County Veterans Hall of Fame has applied for non-profit status.

Regular (Voting) Meeting

The Commissioners continued to the voting portion of the meeting and the following Commissioners were present: Jeffrey Fix, Steven Davis, and David Levacy. County employees present: County Administrator, Aundrea Cordle; Deputy County Administrator, Jeff Porter; Clerk to the Board of Commissioners, Rochelle Menningen; Communications & Information Coordinator, Bennett Niceswanger; Budget Officer, Staci Knisley; JFS Director, Corey Clark; IT Director, Daniel Neeley; EMA & Facilities Director, Jon Kochis; Economic & Workforce Development Director, Rick Szabrak; Utilities Director, Tony Vogel; Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Amy Brown-Thompson; Soil & Water Manager, Nikki Drake; Auditor, Dr. Carri Brown; Recorder, Lisa McKenzie; Office Administrator, Jeff Camechis; Deputy Utilities Director, Josh Anders; Deputy JFS Director, Heather O'Keefe; Interim RPC Director, Holly Mattei; and Sheriff's Deputy, Kevin Romine. Also in attendance: Ray Stemen, Chris Snider, Jack Janoso, Alan Greenslade, Ally Kimber, and Drew Linnenbom.

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Virtual attendees: Shelby Hunt, Shannon, Austin Lines, Ashley Arter, Paul, Jeanie, Jerry Starnier, Beth Cottrell, Jennifer Morgan, Greg Forquer, Lori Hawk, Deborah, Josh Horacek, Jeff Barron, Lori Lovas, Marcy Fields, Stacy Hicks, Lynette Barnhart, Jim Bahnsen, Abby King, Jared Collins, Alex Lape, Amberly Hannum, Joe Ebel, and Britney Lee.

Announcements

None.

Approval of Leadership Conference Minutes for April 15, 2025

On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the Leadership Conference Minutes for Tuesday, April 15, 2025, meeting.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix

Approval of Minutes for April 15, 2025

On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the Minutes for Tuesday, April 15, 2025, meeting.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix

Approval of Resolutions from the Fairfield County Commissioners

On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolutions from the Fairfield County Commissioners:

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| 2025-04.22.a | A Resolution Amending Resolution 2024-12.03.a that Last Established the Fairfield County Board of Commissioners' 2025 Review Session and Regular Meeting Dates, and Special Meeting Dates |
| 2025-04.22.b | A resolution authorizing a fund to fund transfer from General Fund# 1001 and Appropriate from Unappropriated into a major expenditure category to the General Fund# 1001 & Building Sheridan Fund# 3910. |

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: David Levacy, Steve Davis and Jeff Fix

Approval of a Resolution from the Fairfield County Coroner

On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to amend the contract from the Fairfield County Coroner from an Administrative Approval to a resolution.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix

On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution, as amended, from the Fairfield County Coroner:

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2025-04.22.c A Resolution to Approve a contract for investigator services between Fairfield County and Holly Westhoven.

Commissioner Davis asked how proposed legislation regarding the appointment of the coroner would affect the Coroner's Office.

Commissioner Fix stated the County Coroner would be appointed by the Commissioners under the new law.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix

Approval of a Resolution from the Fairfield County Court of Common Pleas

On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution from the Fairfield County Court of Common Pleas:

2025-04.22.d A Resolution to Appropriate from Unappropriated in a Major Expenditure Object Category for Adult Probation; Fund # 2365, County Probation.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix

Approval of Resolutions from the Fairfield County Engineer

On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolutions from the Fairfield County Engineer:

2025-04.22.e A resolution to approve a reimbursement for share of costs for Monthly Postage paid to Fairfield County Commissioners as a memo expenditure for fund County Engineer 2024-Motor Vehicle

2025-04.22.f A resolution to approve the ODOT Road Salt Contract for 2025.

2025-04.22.g A resolution to approve an amendment to the Road Usage Agreement between Fairfield County and Ohio Power Company, a unit of AEP.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix

Approval of Resolutions from Fairfield County Facilities

On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolutions from Fairfield County Facilities:

2025-04.22.h A Resolution Authorizing the Approval of a Contract with GAG Incorporated and the Fairfield County Commissioners for Landscaping Services

2025-04.22.i A Resolution to Approve the Contract Bid Award for the Sheridan Conference Center Project with Gutknecht Construction in the amount of \$1,894,000

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Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix

Approval of a Resolution from Fairfield County Job and Family Services

On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution from Fairfield County Job and Family Services:

2025-04.22.j A resolution to approve a memo exp./ memo receipt for the costs of Birth Certificates paid to Fairfield County Health Departments as a memo expenditure for fund# 2072 Public Children's Services

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix

Approval of a Resolution from Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission

On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution from Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission:

2025-04.22.k A resolution to approve Final Acceptance of the Spring Creek Subdivision Section 3-1A Public Improvements

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix

Approval of a Resolution from the Fairfield County Sheriff

On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution from the Fairfield County Sheriff:

2025-04.22.l A resolution authorizing the donation of vehicles to the Meigs County Commissioners (Meigs County Ohio)

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix

Approval of the Payment of Bills

On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution for the Payment of Bills:

2025-04.22.m A resolution authorizing the approval of payment of invoices for departments that need Board of Commissioners' approval.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix

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 10:08 a.m.

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Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

Voting aye thereon: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, April 29, 2025,
Commissioners' Hearing Room, 210 E. Main St, Lancaster, OH.

Motion by: David Levacy

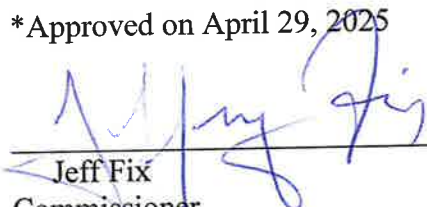
Seconded by: Steve Davis

that the April 22, 2025, minutes were approved by the following vote:

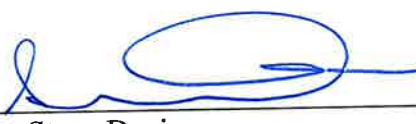
YEAS: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix
ABSTENTIONS:

NAYS: None

*Approved on April 29, 2025



Jeff Fix
Commissioner



Steve Davis
Commissioner



David Levacy
Commissioner



Rochelle Menningen, Clerk