

Regular Meeting #29 - 2025
Fairfield County Commissioners' Office
July 22, 2025

Review Meeting

The Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room, 210 E. Main St., Lancaster OH. Commissioner Fix called the meeting to order, and the following Commissioners were present: Steve Davis, David Levacy, and Jeff Fix. 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; Auditor, Dr. Carri Brown; Engineer, Jeremiah Upp; Recorder, Lisa McKenzie; Sheriff, Alex Lape; Finance Director, Bart Hampson; JFS Director Corey Clark; EMA & Facilities Director, Jon Kochis; Economic and Workforce Development Director, Rick Szabrak; Utilities Deputy Director, Josh Anders; Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Amy Brown-Thompson; FCFC Manager, Tiffany Wilson; Interim Regional Planning Director, Holly Mattei. Also in attendance: Sherry Pymer, Ray Stemen, Francis Martin, Barb Martin, Jeff Williamsen, George Bennett, Betty Bennett, Kevin Elder, Christina Hill, Jo Price, Jerry Starner, Melissa Connor, Brandy Marshall, Stephanie Taylor, Paul McCord, Roger Ruble, and Carolyn Ruble.

Virtual Attendees: Staci Knisley, Belinda Nebbergall, Beth Cottrell, Lisa, Lori Hawk, Jim Bahnsen, Jeff Barron, Shelby Hunt, Jessica Murphy, Lori Lovas, Shannon Ward, Josh Horacek, Deborah, Keith, Jason Grubb, Michael Kaper, Andy Robberts, Jennifer Morgan, Brian Wolfe, Tony Vogel, Ashley Arter, Steven Darnell, Lynette Barnhart, Vince Carpico, Baylie Blevins, and Scott Barr.

Welcome

Commissioner Fix opened the meeting by welcoming everyone in attendance.

CCAO 2025 Scholarship Recipient Presentation

Steve Caraway, CCAO Service Corporation Manager/OCERP Administrator, spoke about Commissioner Fix and his support of the CCAO scholarship program. Mr. Caraway introduced Katelyn Wynkoop, a distinguished recent graduate from Bloom-Carroll High School and a recipient of this year's CCAO scholarship. The CCAO provides scholarships which are judged by a scholarship review panel. The application is based on a submitted essay. Mr. Caraway read a portion of Ms. Wynkoop's essay that spoke about Commissioner Fix and his support of 4-H. Ms. Wynkoop is in many organizations and has received several awards and accolades, including Bloom Carroll FFA, and National Honor Society.

Ms. Wynkoop stated she will be attending Wilmington College to study Agriculture with a focus on Animal Science. She is hoping to be one of Ohio's first elementary agricultural educators.

Commissioners Davis and Levacy congratulated Ms. Wynkoop on her achievements and for being the recipient of CCAO's scholarship.

Commissioner Fix spoke about attending events throughout Fairfield County and observing the exceptional talent of the young people in Fairfield County.

Public Comments

Ray Stemen of Lancaster spoke about a motor vehicle accident which resulted in one fatality and our responsibility to help family, friends, and neighbors in times of crisis. He offered a prayer for a sense of community.

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Chuck Williamson of Baltimore spoke about property rights and the rights of those who live near solar facilities. He asked the Commissioners to help ensure that all CAUV areas remain agricultural.

Paul McCord of Millersport stated he has solar panels on his house but opposes the use of solar on agricultural land. He asked the Commissioners to help preserve the long-term health of natural resources and that they write a letter to the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) opposing the Eastern Cottontail project.

Stephanie Taylor of Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Ohio (Habitat) stated that she is the current president of the local Rotary and is working on a special project at Big Brother Big Sisters (BBBS). Habitat is completing two playhouses for BBBS, one for inside the Book Nook and the other for the Bigs and Littles space. BBBS receives grant funding from Rotary and Habitat. Habitat and Rotary are excited to provide playhouses for BBBS.

Kevin Elder of Pleasantville stated there are 14 large landowners adjacent to the proposed solar project. He stated he contacted Eastern Cottontail to ask questions and added that the adjacent landowners indicated they had not been contacted by Eastern Cottontail.

Betty Bennett of Pleasantville stated she would like the Commissioners to send a letter to the OPSB opposing the Eastern Cottontail project.

Melissa Conner of Pleasantville stated she believes she has become the spokesperson for the Citizens of Fair Fields and represents thousands of people opposing the Eastern Cottontail project. She asked the Commissioners to write a letter to the OPSB to show that the people of Fairfield County are more important than progress.

Sherry Pymmer of Walnut Township spoke about the statistics she presented at the July 15, 2025, meeting. She stated that there are 1036 people within a mile of the project. She added that Eastern Cottontail is concerned about profit and not people.

Barb Martin of Cattail Road asked the Commissioners to protect the land from a French owned property and oppose the Eastern Cottontail project.

Allison Barrick of Lake Road stated that the Kingwood project was denied by the OPSB because the people and Commissioners of Greene County opposed the project.

Commissioner Fix thanked everyone for attending and providing their input.

Legal Update

None.

County Administration Update

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

Week in Review

August 5th Evening Meeting

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The Commissioners' meeting on August 5, 2025, will be held at the Rushcreek Township Fire Department, 201 Marietta Street in Bremen, at 7:00 p.m. The Commissioners have four evening meetings a year to provide residents who may work during the day, or who cannot easily travel to Lancaster, with the opportunity to attend a meeting.

Highlights of Resolutions

Administrative Approvals

The review packet contains a list of administrative approvals.

Resolution Review

There are 19 resolutions on the agenda for the Regular voting meeting.

Resolutions of note:

- Economic and Workforce Development has a resolution to approve the Ohio Means Jobs Center contract between South Central Ohio JFS and the Fairfield County Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners are the administrative and fiscal agent to South Central Ohio JFS and the Area 20-21 WDB has procured a provider for the Hocking, Ross, and Vinton County Ohio Means Jobs Centers.

Mr. Szabrak spoke about the importance of the Area 20-21 Workforce Development Board to the community and how the Board has assisted former Pixelle employees.

- Facilities has a resolution to approve awarding the Spires Paving Company, Inc. with the contract for the asphalt resurfacing and striping of the Government Services Building. Spires Paving has the lowest bidder and has been deemed a responsive and responsible bidder.

Mr. Kochis thanked Jason Grubb for his work on the project and added that they are also working with the City of Lancaster on the paving of a lot.

- The Sheriff's Office has a resolution to extend the Hocking County contract for inmate housing. The contract between Hocking County, the Fairfield County Sheriff, and the Fairfield County Commissioners expired December 31st, 2024. This contract extension will terminate December 31st, 2025.

Sheriff Lape stated that his office continues to offer inmate housing contracts to other counties.

- MCU has a resolution authorizing a partial repayment of an advance. The Advance was to the 7864 Recovery Ohio Grant fund from the General Fund. A partial repayment was previously made, and this is the final repayment for this advance.

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- Transit has a resolution to establish a 2025 calendar year budget, and appropriations, for Public Transit's SFY2026 ODOT grant.

Budget Review

Mr. Hampson stated the July sales tax numbers were strong and June's auto and non-auto are both higher than in 2024.

Calendar Review/Invitations Received

Informational Items

- South Licking Water Conservancy District Meeting, July 22, 2025, 3:00 p.m., Licking County Agricultural Center, 771 E. Main St., Newark
- ClearSky Rehabilitation Hospital of Lancaster, Community Cookout, August 1, 2025, 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., 1201 River Valley Blvd., Lancaster

Correspondence

- Fairfield County Municipal Court, Criminal/Traffic Division, Fee Report, June 2025
- Correspondence Regarding Large Scale Solar Facilities
- Fairfield County Sheriff's Office, 2024 Annual Report

Updates from Elected Officials and Department Heads

Ms. Mattei stated RPC is continuing to work with villages and townships on the model zoning code, the planning code, and floodplain updates.

Sheriff Lape stated he has three employees retiring next week.

Engineer Upp stated they are ready to start chip and seal paving of roads and spoke about the science behind the process.

Commissioners Levacy asked when ODOT would start the project at SR 158 and Coonpath Road.

Engineer Upp replied that the project was delayed until 2026.

Auditor Brown spoke about a GIS in-service, the modernization process, lodging taxes, and senior citizens who have called about property reappraisals. She added that she and her office agree that the housing market is aggressive and they are working through the process of the sexennial update.

Commissioner Fix stated he spoke with Representative Jeff LaRe about property taxes. The Commissioner added it is time for state government to take a comprehensive look at property taxes so that seniors aren't being taxed out of their homes.

Commissioner Fix asked the Auditor if there were other townships besides Violet Township wanting to participate in lodging taxes. Auditor Brown replied that only Violet Township was inquiring about the lodging tax.

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The Auditor also stated that the Ohio 2025 sales tax holiday will be August 1st through the 14th.

Josh Anders stated that Utilities is helping Millersport with water and wastewater needs.

Mr. Szabrak thanked Josh for help and added the project would not have happened if not for Josh Anders, Holly Mattei, and others. He spoke about the job fair and the excellent assistance received from the state and Jobs Ohio.

Mr. Kochis spoke about flooding in Millersport and asked people to stay weather aware.

Commissioner Levacy stated the Buckeye Lake region received 6.4 inches in a few hours in a storm that occurred a couple of days earlier and added that the rainfall was considered a 1000 year event.

Mr. Clark stated JFS is hosting a bike race and bike decorating contest on August 1st at 5:30 p.m. for children ages 4-10.

Mr. Porter stated that animal shelters across the United States are experiencing high population levels, and the animals under care are staying for long periods of time. He encouraged people to consider that information when buying a pet or surrendering an animal to a local shelter.

Commissioner Fix asked about the number of dogs at the Fairfield County Dog Shelter.

Mr. Porter replied that the number remains around 50 dogs.

Old Business

Commissioner Davis spoke about grant expirations and suggested that Mr. Hampson and Ms. Knisley place the grant information in one place so that it is clearer as to what principals are being applied to the decision-making process. He also spoke about the many concerns of residents regarding their property taxes.

New Business

Commissioner Levacy stated that the Fairfield County Veterans Hall of Fame committee would be meeting later that day.

Regular (Voting) Meeting

The Commissioners continued to their voting portion of the meeting with the following Commissioners present: Steve Davis, David Levacy, and Jeff Fix. 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; Auditor, Dr. Carri Brown; Engineer, Jeremiah Upp; Recorder, Lisa McKenzie; Sheriff, Alex Lape; Finance Director, Bart Hampson; JFS Director Corey Clark; EMA & Facilities Director, Jon Kochis; Economic and Workforce Development Director, Rick Szabrak; Utilities Deputy Director, Josh Anders; Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Amy Brown-Thompson; FCFC Manager, Tiffany Wilson; Interim Regional Planning Director, Holly Mattei. Also in attendance: Sherry Pymer, Ray Stemen, Francis Martin, Barb Martin, Jeff Williamsen, George Bennett, Betty Bennett, Kevin Elder, Christina Hill, Jo Price, Jerry Starner, Melissa Connor, Brandy Marshall, Stephanie Taylor, Paul McCord, Roger Ruble, and Carolyn Ruble.

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Virtual Attendees: Staci Knisley, Belinda Nebbergall, Beth Cottrell, Lisa, Lori Hawk, Jim Bahnsen, Jeff Barron, Shelby Hunt, Jessica Murphy, Lori Lovas, Shannon Ward, Josh Horacek, Deborah, Keith, Jason Grubb, Michael Kaper, Andy Robberts, Jennifer Morgan, Brian Wolfe, Tony Vogel, Ashley Arter, Steven Darnell, Lynette Barnhart, Vince Carpico, Baylie Blevins, and Scott Barr.

Announcements

Clerk Menningen stated the August 5th meeting would be in the evening at the Rushcreek Township Fire Department in Bremen.

Approval of Minutes for July 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, July 15, 2025, meeting.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

Approval of Roundtable Minutes for July 15, 2025

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

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 Commissioners

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 Commissioners:

2025-07.22.a A resolution to appropriate from unappropriated funds in a major expense object categories for the General Fund# 1001, Security Budget.

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 Dog Shelter

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 Dog Shelter:

2025-07.22.b A Resolution Approving an Account-to-Account Transfer into a Major Expenditure Object Category –2002, Dog Shelter

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

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Approval of a Resolution from Fairfield County Economic & Workforce Development

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 Economic & Workforce Development:

2025-07.22.c A resolution to authorize the approval of the OMJ Center contract between South Central Ohio Job and Family Services and the Fairfield County Board of County Commissioners

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:

2025-07.22.d A resolution to appropriate from unappropriated in a major expenditure object category County Engineer 2024-Motor Vehicle for overtime expenses

2025-07.22.e A resolution to appropriate from unappropriated in a major expenditure object category County Engineer 2024-Motor Vehicle for materials & supplies

2025-07.22.f A resolution to appropriate from unappropriated in a major expenditure object category County Engineer 2024-Motor Vehicle for contractual 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 Facilities

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 Facilities:

2025-07.22.g A Resolution Authorizing the Approval of a Construction Agreement and Bid Award with Spires Paving Company, Inc

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 Family & Children First Council

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 Family & Children First Council:

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- 2025-07.22.h A resolution to approve a memo exp./ memo receipt for the costs of Transportation paid to Fairfield County Transit as a memo expenditure for fund# 2018 Public Assistance Fund
- 2025-07.22.i A resolution request for appropriations for Fairfield County Family Children First Council; # 7521.

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 Job & Family Services

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 Job & Family Services:

- 2025-07.22.j A Resolution regarding an amendment for a previously approved Network Placement and Related Services Agreement between A New Leaf, Inc. and Child Protective Services Department
- 2025-07.22.k A resolution to approve a memo receipt and expenditure for Fairfield County Job & Family Services, Fund 2072 reimbursing Fund 2018
- 2025-07.22.l A resolution to approve a memo exp./ memo receipt for the costs of Transportation paid to Fairfield County Transit as a memo expenditure for fund# 2599 Workforce Fund
- 2025-07.22.m A Resolution to Appropriate from Unappropriated in a Major Expenditure Object Category for Fairfield County JFS; Fund # 2018, Public Assistance Fund

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 Sheriff

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 Sheriff:

- 2025-07.22.n A resolution authorizing the approval of a contract extension with the Fairfield County Board of Commissioners (Fairfield BCC), the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office (Fairfield Sheriff) and the Hocking County Board of Commissioners (Hocking BCC) and the Hocking County Sheriff (Hocking Sheriff) for housing prisoners in the Fairfield County Jail
- 2025-07.22.o A Resolution to Appropriate from Unappropriated in a Major Expenditure Object Category for Sheriff; 2027, Weights

Commissioner Davis asked if Hocking County regularly uses the jail contract.

Sheriff Lape replied that the jail does not house inmates regularly for Hocking County but that Hocking County likes to have the Fairfield County jail as an option.

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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 the South Central Major Crimes Unit

On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following resolution from the South Central Major Crimes Unit:

2025-07.22.p A resolution authorizing the approval of a partial repayment of an advance to the General Fund from MCU 7864 Recovery Ohio Grant

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 Transit

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 Transit:

2025-07.22.q A Resolution Approving an Account-to-Account Transfer into a Major Expenditure Object Category –2908, Public Transit

2025-07.22.r A resolution approving to Appropriate from Unappropriated into a major expense category for Grant Fund# 2908 for the Ohio Department of Transportation grant For SFY2026

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:

2025-07.22.s 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

Executive Session

On the motion of Steve Davis and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to move to Executive Session to discuss pending litigation at 10:08 a.m. Commissioner Davis asked that the Commissioners, County Administrators, Clerks to the Board, and a representative from the Prosecutor's Office be in attendance.

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

On the motion of Steve Davis and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to leave Executive Session at 10:20 a.m.

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Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

Executive Session

On the motion of Steve Davis and the second of David Levacy, the Board of Commissioners voted to move to Executive Session to discuss pending litigation at 10:21 a.m. Commissioner Davis asked that the Commissioners, County Administrators, Clerks to the Board, representatives from the Sheriff's Office, and a representative from the Prosecutor's Office be in attendance.

Roll call vote of the motion resulted as follows:

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

On the motion of David Levacy and the second of Steve Davis, the Board of Commissioners voted to leave Executive Session at 10:33 a.m.

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 10:33 a.m.

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, July 29, 2025, Commissioners' Hearing Room, 210 E. Main St., Lancaster, OH.

Motion by: David Levacy

Seconded by: Steve Davis

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

YEAS: David Levacy, Steve Davis, and Jeff Fix

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS:

*Approved on July 29, 2025


Jeff Fix
Commissioner


Steve Davis
Commissioner


David Levacy
Commissioner


Rochelle Menningen, Clerk