

THE BOARD OF ATHENS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, met in regular session, with Lenny Eliason presiding, Chris Chmiel and Charlie Adkins in attendance.

Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the following agenda:
Athens County Board of County Commissioners

Meeting Agenda for Tuesday, December 23, 2025 Convenes at 9:30 a.m.

Approve Agenda

Approve Minutes December 16, 2025

Approve Appropriations, Transfers, New Line Items Requests/Changes, Then & Nows, & Bills

9:30 911 LEADS Policies/Information Exchange Agreement
10:00 Jeff Jenkins HAPCAP-93 High Street and 485 Richland projects
10:15 Law Library Budget hearing
10:30 W&S Supt Oscar Carson - weekly updates
10:45 EMS - Captain Position/Discipline
11:00 Weston Lombard & Molly Jo Stanley-community forest
11:30 LUNCH
Recess

Agenda Items

Amended Certificate
Assigned Counsel Report from Auditors Office
MOU for BOE Email
Port Authority Resolution
Liquor Permit
2026 Temporary General Fund Budget
2026 Temporary Outside Fund Budgets
Buckeye Hills Letter of Support
Athens County Computer Systems & Technology Use Policy
Cancel Meeting of 12/30/2025
Athens County Lodging Tax Regulations
Maintenance - Heat Exchanger
Acknowledge Receipt of Prosecutor's FOJ
Adopt Changes to Athens County Personnel Policy Manual
add- Appropriations, Transfers, New Line Items Requests/Changes, Then & Now, & Bills
add- Amended Certificates

~TRAVEL

Auditor: Jill Davidson; Southeast District Meeting, Wellston OH; 01/09/2026
Sheriff: Keith Wright; Defensive Edge Armorer Training, Columbus OH; 01/04 - 01/09/26

ADJOURNMENT

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the minutes of December 16, 2025.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Appropriations, Transfers, New Line Items Requests/Changes, Then & Nows, & Bills

A motion was made by Commissioner Chmiel and seconded by Commissioner Adkins approving the Appropriations, Transfers, New Line Items Requests/Changes and approving the payment of the required County Bills, which are included in the Auditor's Office INVOICE TRACKING REPORT - From: 12/16/2025 To: 12/19/2025 and the bills are hereby the same and authorize the County Auditor to issue warrants on the County Treasurer for payment in the same. Complete list of bills maintained in the Auditor's office.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

911 LEADS Policies/Information Exchange Agreement

Security & LEADS Policy Updates

- * Reason for updates: Recent technical security inspection identified gaps requiring changes.
- * MOU (Information Exchange) with Sheriff's Office:
 - * New Section C added to place responsibility on the Sheriff's Office to ensure officers' background checks, fingerprinting, and required training are current.
 - * MOU is signed and in effect; pending return to the LEADS auditor.
- * LEADS Policies Restructured:
 - * Prior single, catch-all LEADS policy split into three standalone policies per auditor recommendation.
 - * Content based on LEADS boilerplate, tailored to Athens County; no operational changes for outside agencies beyond facility access controls.

Facility Access Controls (911/Comms Center)

- * Change in practice:
 - * Unescorted access will no longer be allowed for non-Sheriff agencies.
 - * The Sheriff's Office retains access under the MOU; all other visitors must be escorted.
- * Access procedure:
 - * Visitors may enter the public lobby and use the door buzzer; staff will buzz them in and escort them.
 - * This replaces the prior model where multiple upstairs staff held door access.
- * Rationale:
 - * Avoid maintaining and auditing background checks/fingerprints for all outside personnel.
 - * Aligns with LEADS auditor's guidance and resolves red-flag items from the inspection.
- * Communications:
 - * Commissioners noted the need to notify affected agencies (e.g., Prosecutor's Office, Nelsonville, etc.) about the access change.

Review & Approval

- * Legal review: Policies were reviewed by TL (county legal) and deemed acceptable.
- * Auditor coordination: Sheriff's Captain Cooper, 911 Dir. Fouts-Imler, and the LEADS auditor met and agreed the MOU language resolves the issue.

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to adopt the updated MOU and the three LEADS/Security Policies (after review by the Prosecutor). MOU and Policies available on file in the Commissioners Office.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

911 - Grant Update

Applications received via 911/EMA:

- * York, Richland, The Plains departments included.
- * 911 applied for base-station radios for every department (through 911).
- * EMA applied for a mobile radio for the EMA vehicle (current unit cannot be authenticated; must be replaced by July).

Timeline: Submission window extended to Jan 5 (NOFO not yet released). Staff will send an email update reflecting the extension.

Amended Certificate

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel acknowledging receipt of the 2026 Temporary Amended Certificates, dated December 23, 2025 prepared by Jill Davidson, Athens County Auditor:

Fund	Unencumbered Balance	Gross Taxes	Other Sources	Total
Athens County	\$58,163,319.28	\$26,084,516.45	\$79,468,752.93	\$163,716,588.66
ACCHD	\$ 3,000,283.21	\$ 1,283,788.71	\$ 2,778,348.47	\$ 6,921,972.73
317 Board	\$ 6,633,159.59	\$ 5,400,000.00	\$ 7,970,760.00	\$ 20,003,919.59

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Jeff Jenkins - HAPCAP Updates

Jeff Jenkins presented the HAPCAP Updates for 93 High & 485 Richland:

1. Lynn Hall (The Ridges)
 - * System testing occurred last week; pending/awaiting state sign-off.
 - * Overall status: wrapping up.
2. 93 High (Glouster) – CARES-funded
 - * Construction is nearing completion; no major issues reported.
 - * State granted an extension through July to finish spending remaining CARES funds.
 - * Plan is to keep the current contractor on site and use remaining funds for close-out items (e.g., tuckpointing, dumpster bollards, fencing, other site needs).
 - * Approx. \$260k remains to be spent; a change order will be issued to deploy these dollars on eligible scope.
3. 485 Richland (Athens) – CARES-funded
 - * Apartment rehab bid drew no bidders; scope pivoted to roof replacement (near completion; custom gutters pending paint color).
 - * Because the apartments are already livable and timing is tight under CARES, the State approved shifting remaining 485 funds to 93 High to ensure timely spend within the extension window.
4. Grant/Eligibility Constraint
 - * CARES dollars must remain within already-approved grant activities.
 - * Funds cannot be redirected to unrelated properties (e.g., potential Nelsonville disposal/marketing); the State has reaffirmed this limit.
5. Schedule & Communications
 - * Target completion (93 High close-out items): aiming for spring (around April), within the July spending deadline.
 - * Event: Team coordinating with PR (Valerie), SAOP, and the architect to plan a ribbon-cutting/grand opening for 93 High when work is complete.

Port Authority Resolution

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to ratify Administrator JoAnn Rockhold's Signature on the updated Resolution reflecting the funding source. See Resolution on back of page 425.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Liquor Permit

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel for No Hearing for the Liquor Permit for Par Mar Oil Co.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

2026 Temporary General Fund Budget

- * Approach: Adopt 2025 original budget as the 2026 temporary baseline.
- * Noted pressures & increases:
 - * Regional Jail: Planned from \$2.2M – \$2.5M (+\$250k).
 - * Landfill/Testing: \$78k – \$85k.
 - * Capital needs (sheriff cruisers/radios): use Capital Improvements line (approx. \$300–385k discussed; cruisers/radios around \$194k component).
- * Health Insurance budgeting issue:
 - * Some departments likely budgeted off 27 pays and then added 4%, overstating 2026 needs.
 - * 2025 actual GF medical ≈ \$2.8M; some lines show \$3.3M (~+\$400k variance).
 - * Plan: Recalculate by taking actuals and adjust only for known plan changes/new hires; no wholesale rebuild employee-by-employee for the temporary.

Athens County Commissioners



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December 17, 2025

PORT AUTHORITY RESOLUTION

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel, authorizing the Athens County Port Authority to be the applicant for a \$1,323,600 loan with a mortgage from the rural industrial park loan program and certify that no existing industrial park is located in the county that would compete against an industrial park that would be developed and improved in the county through the use of financial assistance provided to the applicant under the rural industrial park loan program, and authorize them to apply on the County's behalf.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea.

I, JoAnn Rockhold, Administrator for the Board of County Commissioners of Athens County, Ohio, certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by said Board December 23, 2025, and appears in the Commissioners' Journal 122.

JoAnn Rockhold
Administrator, Board of Commissioners
Athens County, Ohio

- * Certificate math / balancing:
 - * Use temporary certificate total (~\$24.442M).
 - * Adopt temp budget at the 2025 original level; any difference between the certificate and adopted temp budget goes to Capital Improvements (helps cover cruisers/jail needs).
- * Raises guidance:
 - * Departments may only implement raises within their existing salary lines as adopted in the temporary (remember 2025 was a 27-pay year). No overspending with expectation of later backfill.
 - * Administrator Rockhold to email departments reinforcing these constraints.
- * Merchant/McIntyre (congressional earmark consulting):
 - * Board favorable to proceed (~\$50k) to pursue \$2–3M for Guysville/Stewart sewer; to be budgeted from contingency (timing next year is fine).

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to adopt the 2025 Original Budget as the 2026 Temporary General Fund Budget exclude the transfer to City of Athens Municipal Court.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

2026 Municipal Court Temporary Budget

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the 2026 Municipal Court Temporary Budget in the amount of \$297213.85. Complete list of the 2026 Municipal Court Temporary Budget maintained in the Commissioner's Office.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, abstain; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

2026 Temporary Outside Fund Budget

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the 2026 Outside Fund Temporary Budgets:

Org. #	Department Name	Amount \$
1285, 1286	DJFS - Public	\$12,143,629.40
1300, 1301, & 1302	Engineer	\$ 6,100,000.00
1430, 1624, 1625	Children Service	\$16,592,209.49
1440, 1441, 1442, 1443, 1444, & 1445	EMS	\$ 8,314,368.49
2425	FCSS	\$ 46,564.00
2430	Family and Children First	\$ 259,793.00
2501	County Planner	\$ 98,835.32
2651	Soil & Water	\$ 544,742.14
2660	Epidemiolo	\$ 102,610.00
2662	Health Dept	\$ 3,900,986.39
2663	Food Services	\$ 282,070.00
2664	Health-SW	\$ 75,000.00
2665	Health Trailer	\$ 6,500.00
2666	Health Swimming	\$ 5,500.00
2667	Health Construction	\$ 15,500.00
2668	Ortho Clinic	\$ 11,000.00
2670	Dental	\$ 10,534.74
2671	Cardiovascular Program	\$ 120,000.00
2672	Public Health Pre Care	\$ 72,258.00
2673	Medical Reserve Corp Grant	\$ 15,005.00
2676	PHEP Grant	\$ 77,571.00
2677	Mosquito	\$ 12,000.00
2678	Scrap Tire Grant	\$ 10,200.00
2684	Global Learn Grant	\$ 48,250.00
2685	Get Vaccine	\$ 21,825.00
2688	Public HWF Grant	\$ 275,000.00
2690	Imprv Grant	\$ 143,019.39
2691	Co Rd 19 Grant	\$ 54,990.00
2678	Scrap Tire Grant	\$ 10,200.00
2706	317 Board	\$ 300,000.00
2707	317 Board	\$11,668,627.00
2708	SMI Project Fund	\$ 75,000.00

2708	SMI Project Fund	\$ 75,000.00
2709	Hocking County House Fund	\$ 25,000.00
2712	CATIE	\$ 50,000.00
2713	OHF	\$ 83,210.00
2718	Special Projects (718)	\$ 300,000.00
2827	VSP Claim Costs	\$ 48,000.00
3002	Dog & Kennel	\$ 294,839.00
3004	Senior	\$ 1,398,500.00
3005	Bikeway Maintenance	\$ 12,000.00
3006	Ins Reimb	\$ 51,000.00
3008	HSTS	\$ 200,000.00
3011	Spay Program	\$ 10,465.53
3017	Co Building Bond	\$ 104,965.79
3021	Health Reno	\$ 61,587.63
3022	CAP Proj	\$ 134,241.45
3024	Workers Comp	\$ 300,000.00
3025	Emp Comp	\$ 16,060.00
3031	CS Building	\$ 8,755,072.23
3032	S&N Trust	\$ 25,000.00
3036	Eng Equip Bond	\$ 247,684.00
3037	Dental SI	\$ 330,000.00
3041	ARPA	\$ 2,300,000.00
3042	911 Bond	\$ 1,110,312.40
3043	911 Bond CP	\$ 287,437.29
3044	SEORJ Rehab	\$ 220,000.00
3049	Co Building Bond	\$ 769,400.00
3101	Real Estate	\$ 1,421,050.00
3102	GIS	\$ 248,700.00
3103	Unclaimed	\$ 10,000.00
3121	DRETAC Pros	\$ 74,479.91
3123	DIV Pros	\$ 349,850.00
3131	ACE	\$ 262,000.00
3162	VAWA 2013	\$ 52,600.00
3169	VOCA	\$ 71,399.83
3170	SVAA	\$ 8,129.61
3176	TCAP	\$ 206,430.00
3177	JAG	\$ 14,995.00
3191	Recorder Equip	\$ 50,000.00
3201	DRETAC Treas	\$ 139,500.00
3203	Tax Lien	\$ 81,500.00
3211	BCI	\$ 25,000.00
3212	CCW	\$ 19,043.14
3213	Sheriff Grants	\$ 440,400.00
3217	K9 Donation	\$ 1,000.00
3221	DARE	\$ 43,707.99
3224	OCJSDVDA	\$ 50,000.00
3227	LETF Sheriff	\$ 40,000.00
3229	ENV Deputy	\$ 132,728.00
3232	Seniors & Law Enforce Together	\$ 100.00
3234	Interdiction	\$ 18,030.50
3237	OPPT Grant	\$ 27,039.50
3251	CP Comp Legal	\$ 4,500.00
3252	Special Projects CP	\$ 48,139.32
3253	Monitoring	\$ 4,000.00
3254	SP Proj ME	\$ 5,000.00
3255	Special Projects 2	\$ 31,500.00
3256	PSI Grant	\$ 55,542.65
3257	Veterans Court Special Project	\$ 1,500.00
3262	VET CT SP	\$ 47,271.13

3271	Indigent	\$ 6,700.00
3272	Marriage Lic	\$ 11,500.00
3273	PJ Comp	\$ 20,000.00
3274	PJ Com Legal	\$ 5,000.00
3275	Probate Court Projects	\$ 30,000.00
3276	Juv Drivers	\$ 3,000.00
3277	Juv Tobac	\$ 19,849.00
3278	Id At	\$ 4,000.00
3279	Probate Crt Mental	\$ 15,500.00
3280	Juv Crt Projects	\$ 59,000.00
3283	Juv C&C	\$ 156,628.00
3286	Juv PRC	\$ 4,000.00
3287	Appalachia Children Coalition	\$ 59,750.00
3292	Juv Voca	\$ 74,560.81
3301	CP Comp	\$ 40,000.00
3302	Title	\$ 488,414.55
3311	Law Library	\$ 82,096.46
3401	Beacon School	\$16,589,457.63
3404	Beacon CI	\$ 450,000.00
3432	CS Trust	\$ 5.00
3433	IDA Brooks	\$ 10.00
3436	Multi System	\$ 263,000.00
3462	CDBG PY21	\$ 0.00
3463	Amesville	\$ 0.00
3466	CHIP CDBG	\$ 0.00
3467	CHIP Home	\$ 0.00
3477	CHIP-OHTF	\$ 0.00
3493	CO CAP IMP	\$ 100,000.00
3495	BW221AE1	\$ 0.00
3496	BD221AE4	\$ 0.00
3497	BF221AE1	\$ 0.00
3502	CHAN ODOT	\$ 0.00
3509	County Projects	\$ 85,000.00
3521	EMA	\$ 171,880.35
3539	LEPC	\$ 14,000.00
3541	HMEP	\$ 14,000.00
3572	CSEA	\$ 2,404,189.00
3573	WIA	\$ 335,000.00
3576	JFS SI	\$ 160,000.00
3577	CCMEP WIOA	\$ 400,000.00
3579	JFS 2019 Building Bond	\$ 169,640.00
3591	911	\$ 3,837,071.03
3593	911 GV AST	\$ 165,000.00
3603	PL Sewer	\$ 629,035.00
3604	PL Water	\$ 1,223,254.00
3605	UNAPP CASH	\$ 70,000.00
3607	DRESCHER	\$ 9,081.45
3619	Route 50	\$ 1,215,080.00
3621	US 50CAP	\$ 500,000.00
3626	New Marshfield	\$ 5,260,000.00
3661	TB	\$ 1,216,814.54

Complete list of the 2026 Outside Fund Temporary Budgets maintained in the Commissioner's Office.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

W&S Supt Oscar Carson - Weekly Updates

Supt Carson provided the following W&S weekly updates:

1. Portable generator hookup (lift stations)
 - * Status: Cables for the towable generator have been ordered; delivery pending.
 - * Why custom cables: Utility discovered connector/hub standards changed on newer lift stations (even at a ~2-3-year-old site). Off-the-shelf cables wouldn't fit; a vendor in Louisiana is fabricating compatible leads.
 - * Procurement notes:
 - * Cables were not included in the prior generator purchase specs; the bid documents did not specify cables.
 - * Funding for the new cables will come from the department's operating budget.
 - * Safety/compliance: New setup will be color-coded to prevent mis-connection and improve on-site safety during deployments.
 - * Context: County previously had only a fixed generator at the plant; the towable unit enables power to individual lift stations during outages (an EPA expectation).
2. Treatment plant capacity & anticipated upgrades
 - * Site review: Nick Hammer scheduled for an on-site assessment next Monday to evaluate plant needs.
 - * Expected outcome: Potential plant upgrades likely needed due to:
 - * New Marshfield flows; and
 - * Three new apartment projects on The Plains, expected online ~2027, adding an estimated ~2 million gallons/month.
 - * Funding mechanism: Growth-related improvements are intended to be offset by capacity fees charged to the developments.
 - * Next step: Utility director will draft a letter/report with findings and recommendations after the site visit and will bring it to the Board for review/approval before submission.
3. Aeration pilot concept (local innovator)
 - * Proposal: Low-cost aeration device using hydraulic head ("water-drop" induced pressure) developed by a local entrepreneur (Morgan County).
 - * Due diligence: Referred to RCAP; active technical discussions underway.
 - * Regulatory: If piloted and retained, may require a Permit to Install (PTI); coordination initiated with Ohio EPA (Brandon Atwood).
 - * Cost: Proponent initially requested \$2,500 for a pilot; Board directed additional due diligence before any funding.
4. Logistics/other
 - * Fleet: Awaiting delivery of a truck; shipped to carrier, but driver shortages may delay arrival.

Buckeye Hills Letter of Support

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve sending a Letter of Support for Buckeye Hills Regional Council's application for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfield Assessment Grant. See Letter of Support on back of page 429.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Cancel Meeting of December 30, 2025

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the cancellation of the December 30, 2025 Commissioner Meeting.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Athens County Computer systems & Technology Use Policy

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the Athens County Computer Systems & Technology Use Policy as presented. See back of page 430 for policy.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Athens County Commissioners



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December 23, 2025

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Zeldin,

On behalf of the Athens County Board of Commissioners, we write to express our strong and urgent support for the Buckeye Hills Regional Council's application for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfield Assessment Grant. This critical funding opportunity will provide essential resources to communities across the eight-county Buckeye Hills Region, empowering them to advance redevelopment projects that promote public health, economic revitalization, and environmental sustainability.

The Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BHRC) serves an eight-county region that includes Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, and Washington Counties--an area that has faced persistent economic challenges tied to legacy industrial decline and environmental degradation. Brownfield sites across this region pose ongoing barriers to investment, job creation, and safe land use. The resources made available through EPA's Brownfields Program are among the most effective and transformative tools available to help our communities overcome these challenges and build a more resilient, sustainable future.

Through prior USEPA funding, Buckeye Hills has demonstrated exceptional success in leveraging federal resources for local impact. To date, their assessment programs have generated more than \$3.5 million in additional investment, catalyzed nine major redevelopment projects, and supported dozens of site assessments across the region. Under the FY23 Brownfields Assessment Grant alone, BHRC has completed 13 Phase I Environmental Site Assessments, multiple Phase II investigations, and a series of asbestos, lead, and HAZMAT reports, directly enabling cleanup and redevelopment actions that have improved public safety, reduced exposure risks, and restored community trust in formerly blighted properties.

As a committed regional partner, the Athens County Board of Commissioners fully endorses this application and urges the Agency's favorable consideration. We stand ready to collaborate with the Buckeye Hills Regional Council and USEPA to accelerate site identification, assessment, and remediation activities that will yield measurable benefits for both residents and the environment.

Should the USEPA require additional information or wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact our office at your convenience.

Sincerely,
Athens County Board of Commissioners

Lenny Elason

Charlie Adkins

Chris Chmiel



The Board of Athens County Commissioners is an Affirmative Action employer and does not discriminate for reasons of race, gender, age, religion or disability.



Athens County Lodging Tax Regulations

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to adopt the Athens County Lodging Tax Regulations with an effective date of April 1, 2026. Athens County Lodging Tax Regulations document on page 433 front & back.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Maintenance - Heat Exchanger

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to authorize the purchase to replace a boiler bladder in the amount of \$21,500.00 from Davidson Bush.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Acknowledge Receipt of Prosecutor's FOJ

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to acknowledge the Prosecutor's FOJ Report expended during the year 2025.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Adopt Changes to Athens County Personnel Policy Manual

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to adopt changes to the Athens County Personnel Policy Manual pending legal review by Jeff Stankunis.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Surplus - EMS

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to declare the EMS Gloucester Station Surplus and authorize sale with sealed-bids, Chief Pyle to check with Maintenance Supt. Mike Biggins first to see if county could use:

Description	Model #	Serial #
Craftsman 42 in riding mower	917.287070	041007C006350

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

EMS - Phones

Status: Commissioners' & EMS Offices have not received the invoice to purchase additional phones.

Inventory: Commissioners Office currently has five spare handsets; issuing them now would exhaust spares if a phone fails.

Action: Administrator Rockhold to contact Jason from Freedomlinx to locate or resend the invoice; consider issuing up to five units now and backfilling from the new order once processed.

EMS - Nelsonville Captain Position

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the promotion of Paramedic Charles Dunlevy II as Captain at the Nelsonville Station (54).

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Law Library Budget Hearing

Judge McCarthy provided the Budget Overview — Law Library

1. Financial Status & Subscriptions

- * Current cash balance: ~\$8,100; an additional \$4,400 deposit is pending (bringing cash to ~\$12,500).
- * Thomson Reuters (publications) cost: +3% for 2026
 - * 2025: \$3,935.68 (basis figure cited) – 2026: \$4,053.78
 - * Estimated annual total: \$48,645 (covers Prosecutor's Office, Courts, Domestic Relations, Magistrate, and Law Library access under the bundled agreement negotiated by the Prosecutor).
- * Receipts trend:
 - * 2025 YTD receipts previously noted at \$47,469; with the recent deposit, total ~\$51,900, down from \$59,249 in 2024 (≈ \$7–8k decrease).

2. Funding Sources & Transfers

- * Ongoing revenue from court fines and costs (County, Municipal, and Clerk of Courts) plus a modest state library consortium distribution (~\$1,100).
- * A longstanding General Fund transfer of \$18,500 ("18.5") from the Prosecutor's allocation is expected to continue; there was a past-year administrative miss in requesting/appropriating that transfer, now corrected going forward.
- * Carryover: Law Library is an outside fund; balances carry forward (no return to General Fund).

3. Staffing

- * Law Librarian (DJ): scheduled 35 hours/week (increase from 21 hrs). Rationale: reduce overflow traffic to the Clerk of Courts that occurred when the library was open only three days per week.

4. Variance Discussion (Lower Receipts)

- * Drop likely tied to fewer fines/costs flowing from Municipal Court (e.g., changes in traffic enforcement mix).
- * Follow-up suggested: Consult Judge Grace for detail on citation practices and fine allocations that may affect revenue.

5. Documents & Next Steps

- * Publications list/quote to be scanned and shared with the Board.
- * Keller to review statutory obligations and confirm the proper transfer amount/structure given subscription increases; adjust budget lines as needed.

Executive Session - EMS

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to enter into executive session at 10:39 with Chief Pyle to discuss employment and discipline of the public employees.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Regular Session

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to return to regular session at 10:53 with approving the resignation of the Lieutenants position (Paramedic Kevin Kesterson).

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

MOU for BOE Email

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to ratify the Commissioners' participation/signature on the MOU with the State for Board of Elections email.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Travel

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the following travel:

Auditor: Jill Davidson; Southeast District Meeting, Wellston OH; 01/09/2026

Sheriff: Keith Wright; Defensive Edge Armorer Training, Columbus OH; 01/04 - 01/09/26

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Weston Lombard & Molly Jo Stanley - Community Forest

Community Forest – Update & Leasing Request

- * Project recap: Multi-year effort to secure coal-company land in Dover Twp. to create a community forest, connecting Bailey’s Trail System to Strouds Run State Park via the group’s education campus.
- * Status & partners: Several grants secured; no purchase agreement yet with landowner. Newly partnered with Trust for Public Land (TPL) to assist fundraising and completion.
- * Grant timing issue: One acquisition grant (~\$96k of \$100k Great Lakes Thriving Communities funding) must be spent within a year; closing may not occur in time.
- * Request to County: Explore leasing County-owned land behind the Sheriff’s impound lot along Sand Ridge to support the project.
- * Orchard/workforce plan: Additional ~\$125k to establish a community orchard via a workforce development crew (two staff for ~6 months). Site proximity to JFS and Chauncey could boost community use.
- * Site needs: Pond on site is in poor condition; Commissioners suggestion to coordinate with Cathy Bobo (Soil & Water) on pond upgrades and prior planning (trails/access concepts previously developed but unfunded).
- * Board guidance: Submit a written proposal (not a lease draft) detailing:
 - * Desired acreage/location & access plan
 - * Term of lease
 - * Planned improvements (orchard, pavilion, trails, pond priorities), methods (e.g., on-site materials), and timeline
 - * Any budget/funding sources and workforce plan
 - * Proposed market-based lease rate (consult Cathy; compare to conservation leases such as Eric Brooks arrangement)
- * Process & timeline: Email proposal to the Commissioners for review; Assistant Prosecutor to review any future lease. Target: submit by next month.

Recess until 9:25 on January 6, 2026

Suspend Rules

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to suspend the rules and declare an emergency and add the following to the agenda:

- Amended Certificate for HVCRC
- Amended Certificate for Athens Hocking Solid Waste District
- Appropriations, Transfers, New Line Items Requests/Changes, Then & Nows, & Bills

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Amended Certificates

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel acknowledging receipt of the Amended Certificate for HVCRC and Athens Hocking Solid Waste District, dated December 30, 2025 prepared by Jill Davidson, Athens County Auditor.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Appropriations, Transfers, New Line Items Requests/Changes, Then & Nows, & Bills

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel approving the Appropriations, Transfers, New Line Items Requests/Changes and approving the payment of the required County Bills, which are included in the Auditor’s Office INVOICE TRACKING REPORT - From: 12/18/2025 To: 12/23/2025, INVOICE TRACKING REPORT - From: 12/24/2025 To: 12/30/2025 and the bills are hereby the same and authorize the County Auditor to issue warrants on the County Treasurer for payment in the same. Complete list of bills maintained in the Auditor’s office.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

ATHENS COUNTY LODGING EXCISE TAX CODE OF REGULATIONS

PAGE 433

December 23, 2025

ATHENS COUNTY, OHIO COMMISSIONERS' JOURNAL

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D. Administration

Certificate – The Transient Occupancy Registration Certificate issued by the Athens County Auditor to an operator, authorizing the collection of lodging tax from transient guests.

Return – Any tax return filed by an operator or platform on forms prescribed by the Athens County Auditor, reporting total rents, exemptions, and tax collected for the period.

SECTION 3. IMPOSITION OF TAX

An excise tax of three percent (3%) is levied on all transactions by which lodging by a hotel, as defined and expanded under R.C. 5739.091, is or is to be furnished to a transient guest in Athens County.

This tax is in addition to the state sales tax levied under R.C. 5739.02.

All exemptions applicable under state law shall apply to this tax.

This tax constitutes a debt of the transient guest and shall be collected and held in trust by the operator for the benefit of Athens County.

SECTION 4. EXEMPTIONS

The following transactions are exempt:

1. Stays of thirty consecutive days or more (R.C. 5739.02(B)(16)).
2. Government or political subdivision use, when exempt by law.
3. Other exemptions under R.C. 5739.02(1).

Operators must obtain and maintain exemption certificates prescribed by the Auditor. The official Exemption Certificate forms is included in Appendix A of these Regulations and must be used for all claims of exemption.

Burden of proof: The operator bears the burden of proving that a transaction is exempt.

SECTION 1. TITLE AND AUTHORITY

This policy shall be known and cited as the Athens County Lodging Excise Tax Code of Regulations.

Authority:

Ohio Revised Code § 5739.09(A)(1)

"A board of county commissioners may, by resolution adopted by a majority of the members of the board, levy an excise tax not to exceed three per cent on transactions by which lodging by a hotel is or is to be furnished to transient guests. The board shall establish all regulations necessary to provide for the administration and collection of the tax. The regulations may prescribe the time for payment of the tax, and may provide for the imposition of a penalty or interest, or both, for late payments, provided that the penalty does not exceed ten per cent of the amount of tax due, and the rate at which interest accrues does not exceed the rate per annum prescribed pursuant to section 5103.47 of the Revised Code."

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Code of Regulations, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section. Where a definition conflicts with or is not provided herein, the definitions in Ohio Revised Code Chapter 5739 shall control.

A. People & Entities

Auditor – The Athens County Auditor, or the Auditor's designee.

Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) – The nonprofit destination marketing organization designated by the Board of County Commissioners to receive lodging-tax allocations and to use them as provided by the Ohio Revised Code.

SECTION 5. FALSE EVIDENCE OF EXEMPTION

No transient guest shall present, nor shall any operator accept, false documentation claiming exemption from the Athens County lodging excise tax.

An operator who fails to obtain a properly executed exemption certificate shall be liable for the tax. Exemption Certificates shall be completed on the form provided in Appendix A.

Pursuant to R.C. 5739.33, any officer, member, manager, or employee responsible for collecting or remitting the tax who fails to do so is personally liable for the tax, along with any applicable penalty and interest.

SECTION 6. REGISTRATION

Each operator shall, within 30 days of commencing business, register with the Athens County Auditor and obtain a Transient Occupancy Registration Certificate.

Certificates must be displayed at the lodging site and on platform profiles.

Certificates are non-transferable. A new certificate is required upon change of ownership, operator, or business structure.

Registration Form: Each operator must apply using the official Registration Form prescribed by the Auditor, included in Appendix C of these Regulations.

Form and Content of Certificate: The form and content of the Transient Occupancy Registration Certificate shall be prescribed by the Athens County Auditor.

SECTION 7. REPORTING AND REMITTANCE

• **Quarterly Reporting:** Taxes are due on or before the 22nd day of the month following each quarter (April 22, July 22, October 22, January 22). [Athens County Resolution, 2015]

Operator – Any person, firm, partnership, corporation, limited liability company, association, or other entity that operates or manages a lodging establishment in Athens County, including owners, lessees, sub-lessees, licensees, concessionaires, or managing agents. Compliance by either an operator or its managing agent shall be deemed compliance by both.

Person – As defined in R.C. 5739.01(A):

"Includes individuals, partnerships, firms, limited liability companies, associations, joint ventures, joint ventures, clubs, companies, corporations, estates, trusts, business trusts, receivers, trustees for the benefit of creditors, trustees, syndicates, the state and its political subdivisions, or combinations of individuals acting as one."

Short-Term Rental Platform – Any person, business, or online marketplace that provides a means to advertise, reserve, or rent lodging to transient guests, and that directly or indirectly collects or receives payment for the lodging from the guest. Examples include Airbnb, Vrbo, and Booking.com.

Transient Guest – As defined in R.C. 5739.01(B)(H):

"Persons occupying a room or rooms in a hotel for less than thirty consecutive days."

Permanent Guest – Any person who occupies or has the right to occupy a room or rooms in a lodging establishment for thirty consecutive days or more without interruption.

B. Places & Occupancy

Hotel – As defined in R.C. 5739.01(D):

"Every establishment kept, used, maintained, advertised, and held out to the public as a place where sleeping accommodations are offered to guests, in which five or more sleeping rooms are used for the accommodation of such guests, whether the rooms are in one or several structures."

- **Form:** Operators must file on the Auditor's prescribed form. A return must be filed for each reporting period, even if no tax is due ("zero return").
- **Platform Operators:** Short-term rental platforms shall collect and remit on behalf of hosts.

SECTION 8. PENALTIES AND INTEREST

- **Penalty:** Up to 10% of unpaid tax (ORC § 5739.09(A)(1)).
- **Interest:** Interest is not currently assessed. The Board of Commissioners retains the authority under R.C. 5703.47 to impose interest at the rate prescribed by the Tax Commissioner by resolution in the future.
- **Responsible Person Liability:** See ORC § 5739.33 (quoted above).
- **Liens Authority:** [Effective April 9, 2023]; ORC § 5739.094.

"Any tax imposed under section 5739.09... and not paid when due... shall be a lien upon all property of the person owing the tax."

SECTION 9. RECORDS AND INSPECTION

Operators must retain records for three years, including copies of filed Quarterly Returns (Appendix B) and all Exemption Certificates (Appendix A).

Records must be made available at the lodging site or another mutually agreeable location during normal business hours.

The Auditor may audit records at reasonable times. Data sharing with the CVB is authorized under R.C. 5739.061.

SECTION 10. APPEALS

1. **Administrative Appeal:** Operators may appeal an assessment or denial of refund to the Athens County Board of Commissioners within 30 days of notice.
2. **Judicial Review:** ORC § 2506.01.

Athens County, Ohio, by resolution adopted March 5, 2001, further expanded this definition pursuant to R.C. 5739.021 to include establishments in which fewer than five sleeping rooms are used for the accommodation of guests.

Lodging Establishment – Every establishment kept, used, maintained, advertised, or held out to the public as a place where sleeping accommodations are offered for consideration, in which one or more rooms are used for the accommodation of guests, whether the rooms are in one or several structures. The term includes hotels, motels, bed-and-breakfasts, cottages, cabins, condominiums, and vacation homes.

Occupancy – The use or possession, or the right to use or possess, any room or rooms or portions thereof in any lodging establishment for dwelling or sleeping purposes. Use of rooms for office, banquet, private dining, exhibit, sample, or display space is not "occupancy" unless any portion is used for dwelling, lodging, or sleeping.

C. Transactions

Room Price – As defined in R.C. 5739.01(D):

"The aggregate value in money of anything paid or delivered, or promised to be paid or delivered, by a consumer to a vendor in the consummation and complete performance of a sale, without any deduction for the cost of the property sold, cost of materials or labor or service cost, interest or discount paid, or any other expense."

For purposes of this Code, "rent" means the total consideration received by an operator or platform for lodging furnished to a transient guest, including charges for services that are part of the stay, but excluding refundable deposits and separately itemized charges for meals, water, laundry, or other non-lodging services.

Tax is levied under authority of R.C. 5739.09 and these Regulations, due on each taxable lodging transaction in Athens County.

ATHENS COUNTY LOOKING EXISE TAX CODE - APPENDIX B: QUARTERLY RETURN FORM. Includes sections for Return to the Athens County Auditor, Quarterly Return Form, and various checkboxes for reporting requirements.

ATHENS COUNTY LOOKING EXISE TAX CODE - APPENDIX C: REGISTRATION FORM. Includes sections for Return to the Athens County Auditor, Registration Form, and various checkboxes for reporting requirements.

ATHENS COUNTY LOOKING EXISE TAX CODE - APPENDIX D: RETURN APPLICATION. Includes sections for Return to the Athens County Auditor, Return Application, and various checkboxes for reporting requirements.

ATHENS COUNTY LOOKING EXISE TAX CODE - APPENDIX E: RETURN APPLICATION. Includes sections for Return to the Athens County Auditor, Return Application, and various checkboxes for reporting requirements.

ATHENS COUNTY LOOKING EXISE TAX CODE - APPENDIX F: RETURN APPLICATION. Includes sections for Return to the Athens County Auditor, Return Application, and various checkboxes for reporting requirements.

ATHENS COUNTY LOOKING EXISE TAX CODE - APPENDIX G: RETURN APPLICATION. Includes sections for Return to the Athens County Auditor, Return Application, and various checkboxes for reporting requirements.

ATHENS COUNTY LOOKING EXISE TAX CODE - APPENDIX H: RETURN APPLICATION. Includes sections for Return to the Athens County Auditor, Return Application, and various checkboxes for reporting requirements.

ATHENS COUNTY LOOKING EXISE TAX CODE - APPENDIX I: RETURN APPLICATION. Includes sections for Return to the Athens County Auditor, Return Application, and various checkboxes for reporting requirements.


Adjourn

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to adjourn the above meeting.

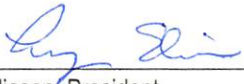
The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.



JoAnn Rockhold, Administrator




Alison Pierson, Clerk



Lenny Eliason, President



Charlie Adkins, Vice-President



Chris Chmiel