

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 Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to approve the following agenda:
Athens County Board of County Commissioners
Meeting Agenda for Tuesday, February 11, 2025 Convenes at 9:30 a.m.

Approve Agenda
Approve Minutes February 5, 2025
Approve Appropriations, Transfers, New Line Items Requests/Changes, Then & Nows, & Bills

9:30
9:45 DJFS Dir Jean Demosky - weekly updates
10:00 Otis Crockron- Children Services Building Update
10:15 HAPCAP - Jeff Jenkins - Release of Funds Jacksonville NRG & Albany Playground & Amesville Broadband
10:30 EMS - New Hires
10:45 Judge Lang
11:00 Justin Grant - CEBCO 3rd Qtr Review
11:15 Justin Grant - CEBCO 3rd Qtr Review
11:30 Lunch

Agenda Items

Utility Permits
W&S Extensions
Purchase of Maintenance Equipment
W&S Request for Approval - Reconnection Fee
EIRRA Letter of Support AEP
Engineer RUMA Agreement
Engineer AFSCME Contract
CDBG Administrative Services Contract
317 Board resignation and appointment
Rome Twp Road Vacation Fairfax Alley

~TRAVEL

Auditor - Jill Davidson; Ohio GFOA Board Meeting, New Albany, OH; 2/7, 3/21, 5/16, 9/16, & 11/21
Auditor - Jill Davidson; OCCO Board Meeting, Columbus, OH; 1/29, 5/28, 7/9, 9/24, & 11/12
Auditor - Jill Davidson; OCCO Board Meeting, Columbus, OH; 4/8

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 Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to approve the minutes of February 5, 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 Adkins and seconded by Commissioner 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: 01/30/25 To: 02/05/25, INVOICE TRACKING REPORT - From: 02/05/25 To: 02/07/25, & INVOICE TRACKING REPORT - From: 02/07/25 To: 02/11/25 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.

DJFS Dir Jean Demosky - Weekly Updates

Dir Jean Demosky provided the following weekly updates:

- 1. Program Updates
*Nelsonville Building Certification: Progress continues on getting the Nelsonville building OMJ certified, with Lisa & Jordan managing the process.

*Executive Orders Impact: No direct impact on the organization has been identified yet, but partners have reported potential funding cuts that could affect shared programs. Dir Demosky hopes to gain more insight from an upcoming executive board meeting.

2. Facilities

*Bid Advertisement: Interest has been shown at 510 W. Union Street Building

*Commissioner Adkins provided an update that the city will take responsibility for fixing the drainage issue near the building entrance. The city will also repair blacktop areas as part of a punch list.

*Surplus Items: 2 file cabinets-one with a lock, one without

*Large Safe: The Nelsonville Building came with a locked gun safe without a handle or combination. Discussion centered around its potential value and disposal, with suggestions to check its contents before surplus disposal.

3. Human Resources

*New Hire: Social Program Coordinator Shawn Stover

*Contract Negotiations: Final negotiations were expected to be completed this afternoon, with Dir Demosky reporting that the process has gone well.

*Staff Training & Agency Closure: Dir Demosky requested agency closure on April 23rd for a staff training retreat focusing on disaster preparedness and emergency operations.

DJFS Surplus

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to approve the following DJFS Surplus to Destroy as requested by Dir Demosky:

Property Description:

4 drawer cabinet metal beige (No Lock)

4 drawer cabinet metal brown (Has Lock)

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

DJFS - New Hire

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to approve the recommended Social Program Coordinator Position:

Shawn Stover with the rate of pay \$25.55 an hour and a start date of February 24, 2025.

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

DJFS Agency Closure April 23rd

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to approve the requested DJFS Agency Closure on April 23, 2025 for a staff training retreat focusing on disaster preparedness and emergency operations.

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

Utility Permit

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to approve the following Utility Permit:

Permit No. 25-581

From: AEP

9135 SR 682

Athens, Ohio 45701

We hereby request permission to install utility lines within public right-of-way limits.

Location of work: Co Rd # 19, Co Rd Name: Radford Rd

Description of Work: Electric

Type of Installation: Overhead Line Crossing Rd & Utility Pole Installation

Estimated Project Schedule: 03/03/2025 through 03/04/2025

Agreed to by: /s/Adam Pfeiffer, AEP

Athens County Commissioners

/s/ Lenny Eliason

/s/ Chris Chmiel

/s/ Charlie Adkins

/s/Jeff Maiden, Athens County Engineer

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

W&S Extensions (2)

A motion was made by Commissioner Chmiel and seconded by Commissioner Adkins to ratify Commissioner Adkins signature authorizing an extension as requested by Ruth Evener for monies owed the Athens County Water and Sewer District for water and sewer service, the total amount due is \$260.27 with \$140.74 to be paid by 02/10/25. If the terms of this agreement are not met, the account will be considered delinquent and service could be shut off.

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Chmiel and seconded by Commissioner Adkins to ratify Commissioner Adkins signature authorizing an extension as requested by Stacey Valentine for monies owed the Athens County Water and Sewer District for water and sewer service, the total amount due is \$177.40 with \$108.37 to be paid by 02/14/25. If the terms of this agreement are not met, the account will be considered delinquent and service could be shut off.

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

Purchase of Maintenance Equipment

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to 2 snowblowers from Wakefields in the amount of \$3,100.00 for the maintenance department.

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

W&S Request for Approval - Reconnection Fee

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to approve the reconnection fee for the W&S department with Frontier.

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

EIRRA Letter of Support AEP

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to approve sending a letter of support to AEP: February 10, 2025

U.S. Department of Energy
Grid Deployment Office
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Subject: Letter of Support for American Electric Power's Application to DOE's Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas (EIRRA) Grant

Dear Grant Review Committee,

On behalf of Athens County Board of Commissioners, are pleased to write this letter in full support of American Electric Power (AEP)'s application for the Department of Energy's Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas (EIRRA) Grant. As a trusted community partner, AEP has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to enhancing energy resilience, reducing costs, and supporting economic development in our rural communities. This grant will play a pivotal role in ensuring that undeserved areas within AEP's service territory gain access to modern, reliable, and sustainable energy infrastructure.

Many rural and remote areas face persistent challenges related to grid reliability, energy affordability, and infrastructure modernization. The funding provided through the EIRRA program will allow AEP to implement critical advanced grid modernization projects. These initiatives will enhance energy reliability, drive local job creation, improve energy efficiency, and contribute to long-term environmental sustainability.

Our organization has collaborated with AEP on various community and economic development initiatives, and we have witnessed firsthand their dedication to expanding energy access, fostering innovation, and empowering rural communities. Through this project, AEP will provide direct benefits to residents, businesses, and essential service providers, ensuring that our region remains competitive and resilient in the face of evolving energy demands.

We strongly urge the Department of Energy to consider AEP's application for funding under the EIRRA Grant Program. This investment will transform rural energy infrastructure and create lasting economic and social benefits for the communities we serve. Our organization stands ready to support AEP in successfully implementing this initiative.

Respectfully,

Lenny Eliason, President Charlie Adkins Chris Chmiel

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

Engineer RUMA Agreement

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to approve the RUMA (Road User Maintenance Agreement) with Water & Land Solutions, LLC, and the Athens County Commissioners (Athens CR 69 Chase Rd).

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

Engineer AFSCME Contract

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Athens County Engineer and Local 103, Ohio Council 8, AFSCME, AFL-CIO effective January 1, 2026 until December 31, 2028. Complete copy of Contract 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.

CDBG Administrative Services Contract

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to approve CDBG Administrative Services Contract. Complete Contract 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.

317 Board Resignation and Appointment

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to accept Joe Gay's 317 Board Resignation and send a thank you letter:
February 11, 2025

Dr. Joe Gay
9149 Echo Lane
Athens, Ohio 45701

Dear Dr. Gay:

The Board of Athens County Commissioners would like to sincerely thank you for your service as a member of the Athens County 317 Board. It is not always easy to find dedicated board members, and your hard work and commitment have been truly valued. Your contributions will be greatly missed.

Once again, thank you for your service to the people of Athens County. We extend our best wishes to you in all your future endeavors.

Sincerely,
/s/Lenny Eliason, President
/s/Charlie Adkins, Vice-President
/s/Chris Chmiel

ACC:jr

cc: Diane Pfaff

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to appoint Wenda Sheard to the unexpired term for the 317 Board:
February 11, 2025

Wenda Sheard
13499 Dutch Creek Rd
Athens, Ohio 45701

Dear Ms. Sheard,

The Board of Athens County Commissioners, in its regular session on February 11, 2025, appointed you to serve on the 317 Board to fill the unexpired term that began on July 1, 2022, and ends on June 30, 2026.

Thank you for your willingness to serve the people of Athens, Hocking, and Vinton Counties.

Sincerely,
/s/Lenny Eliason, President
/s/Charlie Adkins, Vice-President
/s/Chris Chmiel

ACC:jr

cc: Diane Pfaff

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

Rome Twp Road Vacation Fairfax Alley

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to set the viewing and hearing for March 25, 2025: February 13, 2025

The Athens Messenger
Rt. 33 North & Johnson Rd.
Athens, Oh 45701

RE: Public Notice

PUBLIC VIEWING AND HEARING

The Athens County Commissioners will hold a public viewing at 8:00 a.m. on March 25, 2025, in Rome Township. The public hearing will follow at 9:30 a.m. in the Athens County Board of Commissioners meeting room, located on the 2nd floor of the Courthouse Annex, 15 South Court Street, Athens, Ohio.

The purpose is to vacate Third Street alley in Stewart Ohio, Fairfax Addition. The alley starts at the edge of Nelsonville Avenue due North approximately 170 feet and from the center of Second Street alley approximately 270 feet due East to the center of Third Street alley. Rome Township has not maintained Third Street alley in the past 21 years.

By Order of the Athens County Commissioners
Lenny Eliason, President
JoAnn Rockhold, Administrator

Publish 2/18 and 2/25

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 Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to approve the following travel:
Auditor - Jill Davidson; Ohio GFOA Board Meeting, New Albany, OH; 2/7, 3/21, 5/16, 9/16, & 11/21
Auditor - Jill Davidson; OCCO Board Meeting, Columbus, OH; 1/29, 5/28, 7/9, 9/24, & 11/12
Auditor - Jill Davidson; OCCO Board Meeting, Columbus, OH; 4/8

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

Otis Crockron - Children Services Building Updates

1. County Office Building Walkthrough and Bid Update
 - *Otis provided a video walkthrough of the new county office building, highlighting key areas such as the main entrance, lobby, receptionist section, bathrooms, conference rooms, and family visitation areas.
 - *The visitation section includes six rooms, one of which has a sink and cabinetry.
 - *The second floor features conference rooms, a break room, and a patio area.
 - *The "Papa Bear" administrative section houses casework staff, management, a reception area, and executive offices.
 - *There is a designated hoteling section for staff who need a temporary workspace.
2. Project Bidding and Cost Considerations
 - *The county received 11 contractor bids, with the lowest at \$13.64 million—\$1.1 million higher than the anticipated \$12.5 million.
 - *A meeting with the lowest bidder, Pepper, identified 20+ cost-cutting options, with another review scheduled.
3. Water Supply and Potential Annexation
 - *A six-inch water pipe is needed for the building's sprinkler system, but the current supply is only four inches.
 - *The city proposed covering the estimated \$350,000 cost of upgrading the water line if the county annexes the property into the city.
 - *Commissioners discussed annexation's impact, particularly on employee payroll taxes (estimated at \$117,000 annually) and changes in emergency response services.
 - *Otis emphasized he is seeking input, not approval, and noted the county would have to fund the water line if annexation is declined.
 - *The Children Service Board will discuss the annexation at their next meeting on the 25th.
4. General Discussion and Next Steps
 - *Some commissioners noted annexation aligns with prior actions and city boundaries.
 - *Concerns were raised about potential impacts on county vs. city jurisdiction, emergency response changes, and land use.
 - *Otis acknowledged employee concerns about higher taxes but emphasized the financial benefit of city-funded infrastructure.
 - *Remote work will be used during the transition, with some operations shifting to other county buildings and locations.

HAPCAP - Jeff Jenkins - Release of Funds Jacksonville NRG & Albany Playground

Jeff Jenkins main reason for being there is to finalize the requested release of funds for the inclusive playgrounds in Jacksonville and Albany. Once the necessary document is signed, it will be sent to the state for a 15-day public comment period before the funds are released.

He confirms that he can provide a copy of the document and mentions that they have been in touch with Anna regarding the different phases and details of the inclusive playground project. Additionally, he highlights other projects in Jacksonville, including street and sidewalk improvements, park renovations, and flood and drainage work.

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to authorize Commissioner Eliason to sign the Release of Funds Document for Jacksonville NRG and Albany Inclusive Playground.

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

HAPCAP Jeff Jenkins - Amesville Broadband

Jeff Jenkins discussion revolves around the response to the Request for Proposal (RFP) from Agile, which offers fixed wireless service rather than fiber. The speaker reached out to ARC to inquire about obtaining a variance to proceed with fixed wireless, and while the initial response seemed positive, a final confirmation is still pending.

In the meantime, discussions with Mayor Gooseman of Amesville and Tom Reed suggest that the RFP should be reissued in hopes of attracting bids for fiber, which is considered more future-proof and provides better service. The dilemma is that while Agile is a confirmed bidder, reissuing the RFP for fiber could result in no bids, extending the timeline. The original RFP was specifically for fiber, but no fiber bids were received—only Agile's response with fixed wireless.

ARC later changed the preference to fiber, requiring a variance for anything else. The speaker has not yet reached out to other ISPs to understand why they didn't bid, but Tom Reed has received responses from Charter and Frontier for a similar Athens South project. He believes modifying the RFP slightly to match the Athens South format could attract bidders.

Discussions with Broadband Ohio indicate that they are still proceeding with Bead funding plans, expecting to engage ISPs in April, open bidding in the following months, and select providers by the end of the year, with construction beginning in 2026.

Ultimately, the revised RFP is expected to be ready within 7-10 days. If Agile does not rebid or if no bids are received, the process may need to be repeated, though ARC has supported multiple attempts in other counties. The grant's performance period extends until at least 2030, so there is still time, but the risk remains that continued failures to attract bids could delay the project significantly.

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to reject Agile's bid and reissue the RFP for fiber.

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

EMS - Rescind Offer

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to rescind the position to Gonzalo Pizarro as recommended by Chief Pyle.

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

EMS Full Time EMT Position

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to hire Full Time EMT Position as recommended by Chief Pyle:

Advance EMT Tyler West with a rate of pay \$17.46 an hour.

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

EMS Executive Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to enter into executive session at 10:30 with Chief Pyle and Assistant Chief Crossen to discuss employment of a public employee.

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 Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to return to regular session at 10:32 and approve 2 Full Time Paramedic Hires as recommended by Chief Pyle:

Paramedic Marissa Marshall with a rate of pay \$18.85 an hour

Paramedic Ryan Marshall with a rate of pay \$18.85 an hour

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

Judge McCarthy & Judge Lang - Magistrate's Pay

Salary Adjustment for Magistrate Position

- *The discussion focused on a salary increase of \$15,000 for the domestic relations magistrate, who handles child support, custody, divorces, and dissolutions.
- *The magistrate has been in the position since 2008 or 2009, and the raise aims to align her salary with that of the outgoing magistrate and recognize her longevity and performance.
- *The new magistrate position (to replace the outgoing magistrate) is expected to have a salary range of \$75,000 to \$100,000, depending on experience.
- *The court proposed splitting the \$15,000 raise, with \$7,500 contributed by the court and \$7,500 requested from the commissioners.
- *It was noted that the court already contributes \$20,000 to \$23,000 toward the magistrate's salary, which will now increase to approximately \$30,000.

Funding for Magistrate Position

- *A replacement for Magistrate Perrin is necessary. His current salary is \$54,000, but the new hire is expected to fall within the \$75,000 to \$100,000 range.
- *No additional funds from the general budget are requested for 2025.
- *A potential \$20,000 fund transfer was identified to help cover the new position's salary.
- *Judge McCarthy and the court's budget are expected to cover the remaining costs for 2025.
- *Future funding (beyond 2025) will be addressed in the 2026 budgeting process.

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chmiel to transfer \$7,500.00 to the court's budget for Magistrate Bradford's pay increase.

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

CEBCO 3rd Quarter Review

Justin Grant provided the following updates:

Insurance and Claims Report

Overall Performance:

- *The overall loss ratio is now 93.4%, a significant improvement from last year's 110%.
- *Factoring out high-cost claimants over \$125,000, the net loss ratio is further reduced to 83%.
- *Athens County saw a 5.3% decrease in medical costs.
- *Inpatient medical costs had a major 38% decrease, which was noted as a positive development.

Prescription Costs:

- *Pharmacy costs increased by 12%.
- *The highest-cost prescription remains Kineret (used for inflammatory conditions like rheumatoid arthritis).
- *Wegovy, a weight-loss drug, ranked second but will no longer be covered in 2025.
- *Other non-covered weight-loss drugs, like Zepbound, are also being phased out.
- *Ozempic and Mounjaro remain covered but only for patients with a diabetes diagnosis.
- *The total prescription spend was \$2 million, with \$1.7 million attributed to brand-name drugs and \$281,000 to generics.

Health Trends & Utilization:

- *Athens County remains a high-utilization area, but preventative care is being used effectively.
- *Chronic conditions remain slightly higher than in other counties.
- *Low back pain is the leading condition, and programs like SWORD were suggested to help employees manage pain.
- *Stress, anxiety, and depression are also prominent, and Life Health Online and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) remain available resources.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) & Engagement:

- *The EAP remains underutilized, despite efforts to communicate its availability.
- *Monthly email reminders are sent, but many employees do not engage with them.
- *There was discussion about tracking which departments utilize EAP services to improve outreach.
- *The group considered holding annual training sessions to increase awareness.

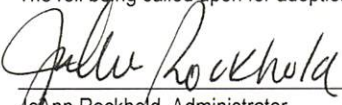
Next Steps & Reporting Changes:

- *Anthem is updating its reporting system to a new platform with improved infographics, which will be introduced in April.
- *The next insurance update is expected in March or April.
- *Additional efforts will be made to promote cost-saving programs like Smart Shopper, which rewards employees for choosing lower-cost medical services.

Adjourn

A motion was made by Commissioner Adkins and seconded by Commissioner 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.



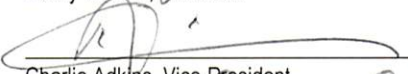
JoAnn Rockhold, Administrator



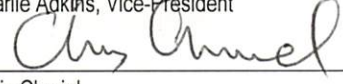
Alison Pierson, Clerk



Lenny Eliason, President



Charlie Adkins, Vice-President



Chris Chmiel