

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, May 06, 2025 Convenes at 9:30 a.m.
Approve Agenda
Approve Minutes April 29, 2025
Approve Appropriations, Transfers, New Line Items Requests/Changes, Then & News, & Bills
Fund to Fund; Comm \$16.75 from 001.1236.560000 General Comm Grant to 016.3016.560100 Bldg Renov

- 9:30 EMS
- 9:45 DJFS Dir Jean Demosky - weekly updates
- 10:00 Bid Opening Engineer - ATH-CR29-0.00-FY25 Chip Seal Project
- 10:15 Jeff Jenkins and Nate Simons- About Eng. firm to use for J-VIII NRG Proj. and change order for Lin Hall Proj.
- 10:30 W&S Supt Oscar Carson - weekly updates
- 10:45 Chase Carter, Doug Francis- Public Defenders Contract
- 11:00 Amy Lipka- Senior Update
- 11:15 Connor Lavelle- Rural Action, Affordable Housing
- 11:30 LUNCH
- add- 3:00 Solar Finance

Agenda Items

- W&S Extensions (Ratify Commissioner Adkins & Commissioner Eliason's Signatures)
- Resolution - ODOT 2025 Salt Contract (Ratify Commissioner's Signatures)
- Rt 50 disbursements April 2025 (Ratify Commissioner Eliason's Signature)
- Affordable Housing
- OSU Extension Relocation

~TRAVEL

- DJFS Jean Demosky; OJFSDA Annual Training Conf, Columbus OH; 05/06 - 05/09/25
- WIOA Morgan DeLay; OMJ GRIT 4.0 Meeting, Marietta OH; 05/29/25
- WIOA Morgan DeLay; Regional Managers Meeting, Noble Co JFS; 05/14/25
- WIOA Morgan DeLay; OWD Day at the Statehouse, Columbus OH; 05/13/25
- WIOA Morgan DeLay; ODJFS Directors Conf, Columbus OH; 05/07/25 - 05/09/25
- Kathy Wickmann; BCS Grant Funded Directors' Meeting, Lewis Center OH; 05/09/25
- Auditor Jill Davidson & Tammi Goeglein; CAAO Legislative Day, Columbus OH; 05/07/25

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 April 29, 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 & News, & Bills

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel approving the Appropriations, Transfers, New Line Items Requests/Changes including Fund to Fund; Comm \$16.75 from 001.1236.560000 General Comm Grant to 016.3016.560100 Bldg Renov and approving the payment of the required County Bills, which are included in the Auditor's Office INVOICE TRACKING REPORT - From: 04/24/2025 To: 04/29/2025, INVOICE TRACKING REPORT - From: 04/29/2025 To: 05/01/2025, INVOICE TRACKING REPORT - From: 05/01/2025 To: 05/06/2025 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.

EMS - Resignation

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to accept the Resignation from Adena Graham as a Part Time employee with EMS.

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

EMS - New Hires

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve hiring the following part time employees as recommended by Chief Pyle:

- Seth Gooch - Paramedic
- Jason Ash - Paramedic
- Michaela Kowalski - EMT

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

Executive Session - EMS

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to enter into executive session at 9:33 with Chief Amber Pyle to discuss disciplinary action related to an EMS 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 Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to return to regular session at 9:42 and to overturn the disciplinary action previously discussed regarding EMS Employee.

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 Demosky provided the following updates:

1. House Bill 96 - State Operating Budget Concerns

* Key Concern:

House Bill 96 contains a provision that would eliminate simplified and quarterly reporting for SNAP recipients, instead requiring monthly reporting for non-elderly SNAP recipients.

* Impacts Identified:

* Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) estimates this change would:

- * Affect 430,000 households
- * Require 1.4 million hours of additional work annually
- * Necessitate hiring nearly 900 county caseworkers at a cost of \$66 million
- * Incur \$1.3 million in monthly system update costs

* Ohio has not used monthly reporting in decades; this change would be cumbersome, costly, and unfunded.

2. Federal SNAP Budget Concerns

* Report from Kelly:

* Contact has been made with Josh Millard, Legislative Director for Rep. David Taylor, regarding federal SNAP budget cuts under discussion by Congress.

* Federal Cuts:

* Agriculture Committee tasked with reducing \$230 billion over 10 years.

* Proposals include:

- * Shifting costs to states
- * Expanding work requirements
- * Cutting the Thrifty Food Plan update

3. Conference & Collaboration Updates

* Dir Demosky will attend a state conference this week.

* Plans include:

- * Discussing ways to advocate as a group regarding SNAP issues.
- * Exploring potential state use of 510 West Union for agency offices.

House Bill 96 Letter

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to draft and send a letter of opposition to Senator Chavez and Governor DeWine on House Bill 96:

May 8, 2025

Dear Members of the Ohio Senate,

On behalf of the Athens County Board of Commissioners, we write to express our serious concerns regarding **House Bill 96**, specifically the provision outlined in **Revised Code Section 5101.546**, which mandates **monthly income and expense reporting by non-elderly Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients**.

This provision, if enacted, will impose a significant unfunded mandate on counties and greatly increase bureaucracy and administrative costs in the SNAP program. Under current federal rules and state practice, SNAP recipients are required to recertify every six months and report any

major changes in circumstance that would affect their eligibility. This **simplified reporting system** has functioned effectively and is used by the majority of states, including Ohio.

The proposed monthly reporting requirement would:

1. Affect approximately **430,000 non-elderly SNAP households**.
2. Require county Job and Family Services (JFS) offices to recalculate benefits and verify eligibility **each month**, even in cases of no significant change.
3. Demand an estimated **1.4 million additional hours of work annually**, which would necessitate the hiring of nearly **900 additional caseworkers statewide**.
4. Result in projected staffing costs of **\$66 million annually** (\$33 million state share, \$33 million federal).
5. Add **mailing costs of \$1.3 million per month** (\$15.6 million annually), in addition to **system updates to the Ohio Benefits platform**.

Importantly, the proposed changes risk reinforcing the **benefit cliff**, discouraging work by penalizing recipients who take extra shifts or short-term jobs. This undermines the very goals of economic independence and self-sufficiency that our public assistance programs are intended to promote.

Furthermore, under current protocols, counties are already equipped to identify and act on major eligibility changes, either through self-reporting, system alerts, or during the six-month recertification process. Clients are regularly educated on these rules and act in good faith to avoid overpayments or disqualification.

We respectfully **urge the Senate to remove this provision from HB 96**, or at minimum, **fully fund the associated implementation and operational costs**. A corresponding amendment to eliminate this requirement has already been drafted (**Amendment #SC0220**), and we support its adoption.

Ohio should not move forward with this dramatic policy change at a time when potential federal changes to SNAP are also under consideration. Maintaining flexibility and avoiding unnecessary state-level bureaucracy is critical, especially when no clear improvement in program integrity would result.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this urgent matter.

/s/Lenny Eliason, President

/s/Charlie Adkins, Vice President

/s/Chris Chmiel, Commissioner

/s/Jean Demosky, Executive Director
Athens County Job and Family Services

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

DJFS PR Specialist New Hire

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the hiring of the PR Specialist as recommended by Dir. Demosky: Georgi Wolfe as Public Relations Specialist with a pay rate of \$29.55/hr and a recommended start date of May 5, 2025.

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

W&S Extensions

A motion was made by Mr Adkins and seconded by Mr Chmiel to ratify Mr Eliason's signature authorizing an extension as requested by Thomas Gould for monies owed the Athens County Water and Sewer District for water and sewer service, the total amount due is \$170.24 with payments to be paid by 06/01/25, 07/01/25, and 08/01/25 of \$40.08 each month. 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 Mr Adkins and seconded by Mr Chmiel to ratify Mr Adkins's signature authorizing an extension as requested by Laura Plotner for monies owed the Athens County Water and Sewer District for water and sewer service, the total amount due is \$240.05 with \$107.59

to be paid by 05/12/25. 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 Mr Adkins and seconded by Mr Chmiel to ratify Mr Adkins's signature authorizing an extension as requested by Ryan Forrest for monies owed the Athens County Water and Sewer District for water and sewer service, the total amount due is \$139.27 with \$100.00 to be paid by 05/09/25. 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 Mr Adkins and seconded by Mr Chmiel to ratify Mr Adkins's 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 \$325.32 with \$148.42 to be paid by 05/15/25. 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.

Resolution - ODOT 2025 Salt Contract

A motion was made by Mr Adkins and seconded by Mr Chmiel to ratify the commissioners signatures on the following ODOT 2025 Salt Contract Resolution:

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION
IN THE ODOT ROAD SALT CONTRACTS AWARDED IN 2025**

WHEREAS, the Athens County Engineer, Athens County (hereinafter referred to as the "Political Subdivision") hereby submits this written agreement to participate in the Ohio Department of Transportation's (ODOT) annual road salt bid in accordance with Ohio Revised Code 5513.01(B) and hereby agrees to all of the following terms and conditions in its participation of the ODOT road salt contract:

- a. The Political Subdivision hereby agrees to be bound by all terms and conditions established by ODOT in the road salt contract and acknowledges that upon award of the contract by the Director of ODOT it shall be bound by all such terms and conditions included in the contract; and
- b. The Political Subdivision hereby acknowledges that upon the Director of ODOT's signing of the road salt contract, it shall effectively form a contract between the awarded salt supplier and the Political Subdivision; and
- c. The Political Subdivision agrees to be solely responsible for resolving all claims or disputes arising out of its participation in the ODOT road salt contract and agrees that each party hereto shall be responsible for liability associated with that party's own errors, actions, and failures to act.
- d. The Political Subdivision's electronic order for Sodium Chloride (Road Salt) will be the amount the Political Subdivision agrees to purchase from its awarded salt supplier at the delivered bid price per ton awarded by the Director of ODOT; and
- e. The Political Subdivision hereby agrees to purchase a minimum of 85% of its electronically **submitted** salt quantities from its awarded salt supplier during the contract's effective period; and
- f. The Political Subdivision hereby agrees to place orders with and directly pay the awarded salt supplier on a net 30 basis for all road salt it receives pursuant to ODOT salt contract; and
- g. The Political Subdivision acknowledges that should it wish to rescind this participation agreement it will do so by written, emailed request by no later than Friday, May 2, **by 5:00 p.m.** The written, emailed request to rescind this participation agreement must be received by the ODOT Office of Contract Sales, Purchasing Section email: Contracts.Purchasing@dot.ohio.gov by the deadline. The Department, upon receipt, will respond that it has received the request and that it has effectively removed the Political Subdivision's participation request. Furthermore, it is the sole responsibility of the Political Subdivision to ensure ODOT has received this participation agreement as well as the receipt of any request to rescind this participation agreement. The Department shall not be held responsible or liable for failure to receive a Political Subdivision's participation agreement and/or a Political Subdivision's request to rescind its participation agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it ordained by the following authorized person(s) that this participation agreement for the ODOT road salt contract is hereby approved, funding has been authorized, and the Political Subdivision agrees to the above terms and conditions regarding participation on the ODOT salt contract:

Signed this 1st day of May 2025

/s/Lenny Eliason, President

/s/Charlie Adkins

/s/Chris Chmiel

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

Rt 50 Disbursements April 2025

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to ratify Mr. Eliason's Signature on the Rt 50 Disbursements for April 2025. See back of page 157.

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

OSU Extension Relocation

Chris Chmiel will follow up with HAPCAP Glen Crippen for clarification and recommendations.

Travel

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

- DJFS Jean Demosky; OJFSDA Annual Training Conf, Columbus OH; 05/06 - 05/09/25
- WIOA Morgan DeLay; OMJ GRIT 4.0 Meeting, Marietta OH; 05/29/25
- WIOA Morgan DeLay; Regional Managers Meeting, Noble Co JFS; 05/14/25
- WIOA Morgan DeLay; OWD Day at the Statehouse, Columbus OH; 05/13/25
- WIOA Morgan DeLay; ODJFS Directors Conf, Columbus OH; 05/07/25 - 05/09/25
- Kathy Wickmann; BCS Grant Funded Directors' Meeting, Lewis Center OH; 05/09/25
- Auditor Jill Davidson & Tammi Goeglein; CAAO Legislative Day, Columbus OH; 05/07/25

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

Bid Opening Engineer - ATH-CR29-0.00-FY25 Chip Seal Project

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to acknowledge receipt of the following bids for the ATH-CR29-0.00-FY25 Chip Seal Project:

Athens County Engineer ATH-CR29-0.00-FY25 CHIP SEAL PROJECT, PID 121881 Bid Tabulation - 5/6/2025 @ 10:00 am					Engineer's Estimate		The Shelly Company		Russell Standard	
REF NO.	ITEM NO.	ITEM DESCRIPTION	QTY	UNIT	UNIT COST	TOTAL COST	UNIT COST	TOTAL COST	UNIT COST	TOTAL COST
1	690E98800	SPECIAL-MISC.: No. 67 Limestone	790	TON	\$ 63.00	\$ 49,770.00	\$ 44.00	\$ 34,760.00	\$ 95.75	\$ 75,642.50
2	690E98800	SPECIAL-MISC.: No. 8 Limestone	527	TON	\$ 63.00	\$ 33,201.00	\$ 44.00	\$ 23,188.00	\$ 110.25	\$ 58,101.75
3	690E98900	SPECIAL-MISC.: Emulsion (AE-90 or MWS-90)	17,546	GAL	\$ 3.75	\$ 65,797.50	\$ 3.15	\$ 55,269.90	\$ 3.43	\$ 60,182.78
4	690E98900	SPECIAL-MISC.: Emulsion (AE-150 or MWS-150)	26,320	GAL	\$ 3.75	\$ 98,700.00	\$ 3.15	\$ 82,908.00	\$ 3.43	\$ 90,277.60
5	614E11000	Maintaining Traffic	1	LS	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 8,500.00
6	624E10000	Mobilization	1	LS	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 4,779.00	\$ 4,779.00	\$ 19,750.00	\$ 19,750.00
7	103E05000	Premium For Performance Bond And For Payment Bond	1	LS	\$ 2,531.50	\$ 2,531.50	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 900.32	\$ 900.32
TOTAL PROJECT COST =						\$ 275,000.00		\$ 217,404.90		\$ 313,354.95

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

Jacksonville NRG Project - Engineering

HAPCAP Jeff Jenkins provided the following information regarding the Jacksonville NRG Project:

- * Engineering RFQ for Jacksonville NRG
 - * The RFQ (Request for Qualifications) for engineering services has been released.
 - * Three firms submitted proposals: DLZ, RVC, and ADR (located farther north).
 - * DLZ is recommended because:
 - * RVC only proposed work on a few project components (e.g., sidewalks and park shower house).
 - * DLZ supported the project earlier and is engaged with other village grants, which improves coordination.

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve DLZ for the engineering work for the Jacksonville NRG Project as recommended by HAPCAP Jeff Jenkins.

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

Change Order for Lin Hall Project

HAPCAP Jeff Jenkins provided the following information regarding the Change Order for Lin Hall Project:

- * Change Order for Len Hall (Plaster Ceiling)
 - * A change order is needed to address sagging plaster ceilings in multiple areas.
 - * Work is necessary to prevent ceiling collapse when removing HVAC equipment.
 - * Ohio University (OU) has agreed to fund the change order as existing grant funds are exhausted.
 - * Cost: \$20,941.62

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the change order for \$20,941.62 with the condition that documentation be obtained from OU confirming payment responsibility.

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

93 High Street Project Update

HAPCAP Jeff Jenkins provided the following updates on 93 High Street Project:

- * Progress is ahead of schedule.
- * Contractors are framing interiors; electricians prepping.
- * Roof installation is complete.
- * Building is now secure and weatherproof, allowing interior work to continue unaffected by rain.
- * Next steps include bringing in plumbing and additional trades.

W&S Supt Oscar Carson - Weekly Updates

Supt Carson provided the following weekly updates:

- * Sewer Relocation Plan for Roundabouts (see back of page 158 for mapping.)
 - * Plans for sewer line relocation were reviewed:
 - * Blue line: Existing sewer line
 - * Red line: Proposed relocated sewer line
 - * Black line: Existing sewer force main
 - * Yellow line: New location of force main
 - * Supt Carson confirms that the plan appears to be well thought out and practical.
- * Generator Purchase Update
 - * The first generator order fell through (manufacturer couldn't fulfill due to being a Kohler unit).
 - * A new generator (HiPower brand) has been offered as a replacement.
 - * Though more expensive, the supplier will honor the original bid price due to the failed initial order.
 - * Final price: \$124,581.00

W&S - Generator Purchase

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve to proceed with the purchase of the Generator for the W&S Department.

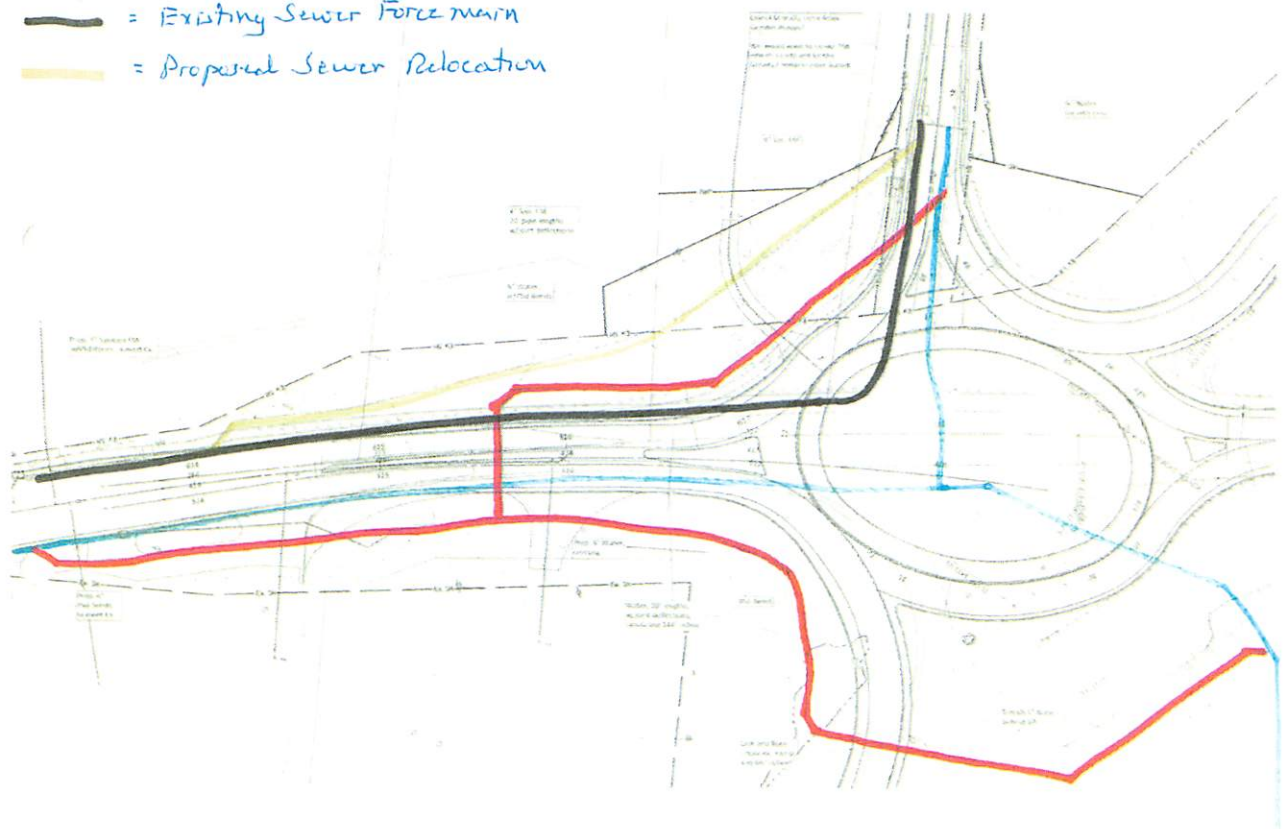
The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Public Defenders Contract

Chase Carter & Doug Francis provided the following updates with the Public Defender Contract:

1. Public Defender Contract Overview
 - * The updated public defender contract remains functionally identical to the prior version.
 - * A 32.5% cost reduction was achieved compared to the fourth quarter of the previous year.
 - * Metrics and case estimates were kept conservative to avoid end-of-year "balloon" payments.
 - * State support via CCAO and legislative budget processes is progressing:
 - * Budget has passed the House, is now in the Senate.

- █ = Existing water main
- █ = Proposed relocation
- █ = Existing Sewer Force main
- █ = Proposed Sewer Relocation



- * Optimism about an increase in reimbursement rates, though not guaranteed.
- 2. Reporting and Reimbursement System (CABS)
 - * CABS system has significantly sped up reimbursements—in some counties by up to 65 days.
 - * Summit County was used for initial testing and debugging; system still improving.
 - * Feedback from counties is welcomed and encouraged to refine the system further.
 - * Issues noted:
 - * Court staff cannot access judge-signed approvals within CABS—this is being addressed.
 - * Contact should be initiated via email or help desk to schedule support or meetings.
 - * IT support is regularly available and flexible (onsite visits, remote calls).
- 3. Attorney Fee Rates and Legislative Cap
 - * Current attorney rate cap is \$100/hr; local counties (e.g., Athens) paying \$125/hr due to market conditions.
 - * The state is actively lobbying to eliminate the \$100/hour cap, citing:
 - * Other counties (4–5) are also exceeding the cap.
 - * Financial flexibility would allow for better local hiring leverage.
 - * Mixed reactions from legislature, but cautious optimism remains.
- 4. Jail Population and Cost Concerns
 - * County jail population is down by over 100 inmates, which impacts costs:
 - * Per inmate cost has risen from \$60/day to \$108/day.
 - * Cost burdens on counties remain a key concern despite lower inmate numbers.
- 5. Contract Timeline and Budget Approval
 - * Final budget expected by end of June (statutory deadline: July 1).
 - * Uncertainty remains; departments have worked up to the deadline in previous years.
 - * Once passed, the final contract and funding allocations will be shared immediately.

Amy Lipka - Senior Update

Amy Lipka delivered a comprehensive update on recent community engagement, transportation initiatives, and coalition activities related to age-friendly development in Athens County. Amy provided handouts summarizing engagements, referrals, and connections made, as well as transportation survey results and plans. See back of page 159 for the Senior Updates.

Rural Action (Easement) - Connor LaVelle

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to adopt the following Resolution:
May 8, 2025

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel that the Athens County Board of Commissioners has reviewed the Letter of Intent from Eric and Jackie Brooks regarding the proposed conservation easement and has formally approved moving forward with the application process. The Board agrees to purchase the conservation easement for Parcel Numbers A0R0020039900 and G010010048902 at a price not to exceed \$3,750.00 per acre, contingent upon a certified appraisal and the availability of funding from the State. Rural Action will be covering all closing and survey costs, with the use of grant funds, on the seller and buyer side.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea ; Mr. Adkins, 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 May 6, 2025 and appears in the Commissioners' Journal 121, page 153.

/s/JoAnn Rockhold
Administrator, Board of Commissioners
Athens County, Ohio

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

Affordable Housing

Todd Acheson is a property owner along First Street in The Plains, where two large housing developments are being proposed.

- * Current Developments
 - * Two major affordable housing projects are moving forward:
 - * One development (called The Lofts) on the south side of First Street, with 51 units, is part of a two-phase plan by Woda Cooper Companies.
 - * The other development is by Fairfield Homes, also on First Street, near Johnson Road.
 - * These developments are taking place in Athens Township, The Plains, which has R3 zoning – allowing high-density, multi-family housing without height limits.
- * Key Concerns Raised
 1. Lack of Community Notification & Input
 - * Mr. Acheson discovered the developments accidentally when heavy equipment showed up for core samples.
 - * Despite being within 100 feet of both parcels, he received no formal notice or invitation for public comment.
 - * No public hearings or permitting processes are required unless variances are requested, due to the nature of

Age-Friendly Update March-April 2025

Community Engagement & Communication

- The Community Engagement & Communication working group identified the need to build a communications team and to link with existing events and communication channels (e.g., libraries, Facebook, farmers markets).
- Contributing monthly content to the JFS Senior Newsletter, using local stories and resident insights to highlight what age-friendliness looks like in Athens County.
- I've logged 36 direct community interactions in March and April through my work with Age-Friendly Athens County. I believe these numbers represent trust; people are reaching out because they see Age-Friendly Athens County as a place where ideas are heard and acted on.
 - 18 Engagements – Actions taken to support projects, respond to local ideas, or taken action to move efforts forward.
 - 11 Referrals – Connecting people with resources or organizations that can help
 - 7 Connections – Linking people or groups for meaningful collaboration

Transportation: When people can confidently navigate their community, they're more likely to stay socially engaged, access critical services, and maintain quality of life.

- Partnered with HAPCAP to submit an AARP Challenge Grant proposal aimed at improving wayfinding and rider education for Athens Public Transit.
- Coordinating two upcoming field trips for Nelsonville Senior Center members based on recent transit survey responses, which will give them a chance to learn how to use the bus in a supportive setting.
- Working with HCOM and HAPCAP to plan a CarFit event on May 31st. CarFit supports older drivers in staying safe and confident behind the wheel.

Housing:

- March 18 Brainstorming Session: Facilitated by Housing Co-Chairs Susan Urano and Chris Krisely, this session brought together community stakeholders to explore opportunities for improving senior housing across Athens County. Key themes included zoning reform, contractor shortages, accessibility challenges,

and potential early wins like home repair loans and modular housing. Participants emphasized the need for neighborhood revitalization and collaborative problem-solving.

- March 21 Coalition Meeting Subcommittee: During the Age-Friendly Coalition meeting, Susan and Chris led a focused conversation where members shared local housing wins—including new Habitat homes and 3D-printed houses—and discussed challenges like aging housing stock and a lack of repair incentives. The group highlighted the need for revolving loan funds, contractor engagement, and policy solutions tailored to both urban and rural areas.

Community and Health Services:

- With co-chairs now in place, the subcommittee has identified key priorities including improved access to data, advocacy for older adult services, and support for food, housing, hoarding, and social/recreational needs. Members discussed the potential for Age-Friendly Athens County or the Health Department to serve as a central hub for information, especially given ongoing challenges such as the digital divide and recent service cuts.

Upcoming

- Health & Community Services subcommittee meeting
 - May 15th
- Community Engagement & Communication subcommittee meeting
 - May 19th
- Slovenian Delegation
 - May 28-June 4
- Age-Friendly Athens County Coalition meeting
 - May 30th at HAPCAP in Glouster
- CarFit training and event
 - May 31st at the Fairgrounds

- township (non-municipal) zoning in Athens Township.
2. Oversized Development & Zoning Loopholes
 - * Concerns that these developments are too large and incompatible with existing neighborhood character:
 - * Three-story buildings up to 41 feet tall with minimal setbacks.
 - * Potentially 80% lot coverage for buildings, without accounting for roads or parking.
 - * Current zoning regulations (R3) allow this, making it difficult to oppose developments unless variances are sought.
 3. Traffic & Infrastructure Impact
 - * No sidewalks, curbs, or gutters exist, and the area has heavy pedestrian and bike traffic.
 - * Traffic study results (from Woda Cooper) claim minimal impact, estimating only 5 cars leaving in the morning — a figure widely criticized as unrealistic.
 - * Concern that cumulative impact from three separate developments totaling ~160 units is not being evaluated holistically.
 4. Economic and Social Impacts
 - * Mr. Acheson highlights that while he supports affordable housing, the LIHTC (Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) model:
 - * Extracts wealth from the local economy.
 - * Involves out-of-town corporations that contribute little to the local economy long-term.
 - * Minimally benefits the surrounding community while altering its character.
 - * Suggests that alternative models like Welcome Home Ohio (homeownership-focused) would be better suited.
- * Proposed Actions & Ideas
 - * Strengthening Local Zoning Regulations:
 - * Several speakers suggest revising zoning to include:
 - * Height restrictions
 - * Reduced lot coverage allowances
 - * Public input requirements
 - * It's acknowledged that this is a realistic and necessary first step for controlling future development.
 - * Enhancing Public Accountability
 - * Calls for public hearings and mandatory community sign-off for large-scale developments in unincorporated areas.
 - * Skepticism is expressed that state-mandated public meetings are often ineffective unless tied to real decision-making power.
 - * Comments to State-Level Agencies
 - * The Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) is accepting comments until May 16 on its 2026 guidance.
 - * Suggestion that the county or township submit a formal comment requesting public sign-off or stronger community oversight for LIHTC-funded developments.
 - * Developer Responsiveness
 - * Fairfield Homes is perceived as more open to community feedback and adaptable.
 - * In contrast, Woda Cooper is described as aggressively rigid, with standardized development models that may not suit local needs.

Solar Finance

The meeting, led by Mr. Chmiel and attended by Mr. Eliason, Mr. Adkins, solar developer David from Kokosing Solar, Autumn from the Appalachian Solar Finance Fund, and Jason from Giraffe Financial, focused on understanding the "Direct Pay" or "Elective Pay" provision under the Inflation Reduction Act.

Key Points:

- * Direct Pay Overview:
 - * Local governments can now benefit from federal solar tax credits through a new IRS process called "Direct Pay."
 - * Giraffe Financial helps file the necessary tax documents to secure these credits, with no cost to Athens County due to funding support from the Appalachian Solar Finance Fund.
 - * For systems under 1 megawatt, a 30% base tax credit is available, potentially increasing to 40% with the "Energy Community" bonus, which Athens County likely qualifies for.
- * Reimbursement Timeline:
 - * Projects completed in 2025 can file for tax credits in spring 2026 and receive funds by summer 2026, though some delays are possible.
- * Bridge Financing:
 - * Upfront capital is needed before IRS reimbursement.
 - * Autumn offered assistance with 0% interest bridge loans through Invest Appalachia to cover the interim costs.
- * Project Flexibility & Expansion:
 - * Future expansion of the solar system would qualify for new tax credits in the year it's completed.
 - * The original project scope can proceed now, with potential for future additions if budget allows.
- * Preferred Funding Strategy:
 - * There was consensus that using a bridge loan to fund the gap and pay Kokosing directly is more efficient than delaying

payments until IRS reimbursement.

* Jason emphasized that the IRS requires proof the owner (Athens County) incurred the costs, so paying upfront (via loan or available funds) is preferable.

Mr. Adkins responded by addressing budgetary concerns. They noted that Teresa's department does not have funding allocated for this purpose, as she has mentioned multiple times. This raised the question of how the costs would be covered. Mr. Adkins suggested that it might have to come from the general fund, with the possibility of later reimbursement. They mentioned several potential funding sources:

* The SOPEC grant, from which \$135,000 has already been received, and an additional \$39,000 was awarded this year, though that new amount has not yet been utilized.

* A carbon fee fund that the group created themselves, which currently holds at least \$15,000. However, the intention seems to be to let that fund accumulate further before using it.

Mr. Eliason then provided clarification and a funding strategy. They proposed using the general fund as a bridge loan, since the 911 funds are dedicated and cannot be used for this. The bridge loan would cover the upfront costs, and the repayment would not be due for up to two years, allowing more time for additional funding to accrue, particularly the 40% needed. Mr. Eliason expressed confidence that this plan was manageable in the long term.

Adjourn

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

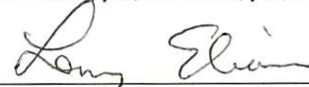
The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.




JoAnn Rockhold, Administrator




Alison Pierson, Clerk



Lenny Eliason, President



Charlie Adkins, Vice-President



Chris Chmiel