

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, September 30, 2025 Convenes at 9:30 a.m.

Approve Agenda

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

9:30 Mike Biggins Bricks  
9:30 Veterans - Final Budget Request  
9:35 Taylor Sappington - Treasurer Report  
9:45 DJFS Dir Jean Demosky - weekly updates  
10:00 Recycle Center - Letter of Support  
10:15 Mark McIntyre  
10:30 W&S Supt Oscar Carson - weekly updates - Bob Toy  
10:45 Jeff Jenkins-HAPCAP- 87 High Street Bid Opening  
11:00 Connor Lavelle - Attorney General Dump Grant  
11:15 Jill Davidson, Auditor- Property Tax  
11:30 LUNCH

#### Agenda Items

Assigned Counsel Report from Auditors Office  
Tech Growth Ohio  
Frontier Invoice 01-060525 Amesville Boardband \$41,027.20 to be paid with ARPA Funds  
W&S Truck

#### ~TRAVEL

Auditor: Scott Dunfee, Larry Hines, & Stephen Roach; Regional Training Event for W&M Inspectors, Chillicothe OH; 10/30/25  
Auditor: Jill Davidson & Katherine Smith; CAAO Southeast District Meeting, Gallipolis OH; 10/10/25  
Auditor: Janet Harner; CAAO CAUV Training, Mt Sterling OH; 10/08/25  
Auditor: Jill Davidson, Marsha Few, & Brandi Sanders; '25 CAAO Winter Conf, Dublin OH; 11/18 - 11/21/25  
WIOA: Morgan DeLay; CFIS Conference, Lewis Center OH; 10/05 - 10/07/25  
WIOA: Morgan DeLay; SE Ohio Workforce Collaboration, Caldwell OH; 10/01/25

#### ADJOURNMENT

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: 09/23/2025 To: 09/25/2025, INVOICE TRACKING REPORT - From: 09/25/2025 To: 09/30/2025 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.

#### Supt Mike Biggins - Bricks

Building Supt Mike Biggins provided the following information:

- \* What's on hand: About 218 commemorative bricks with people's names were removed and are now stacked on pallets/skids.
- \* Original idea (prior discussion): Clean/wash the bricks and publicly announce that named bricks are available for owners/families to pick up.

- \* Open questions about ownership/origin:
  - \* Funds never flowed through the County for the brick program.
  - \* Likely sponsor: Kiwanis Club (possibly the Athens chapter), but not yet confirmed; timing believed to be late 1990s–early 2000s.
  - \* Supt Biggins contacted a prior organizer, who didn't recall details.
- \* Current actions:
  - \* Shari (records center) is searching past minutes to verify who sponsored the program and the original terms (e.g., whether bricks were gifts, loans, or permanent installations).
  - \* After verification, staff will draft a press release explaining:
    - \* The program's origin/sponsor.
    - \* That bricks are available for claim/pick-up.
    - \* When/where/how to retrieve them (and any ID needed).
  - \* Draft release will be shared with the Commissioners before publication.
- \* Board guidance:
  - \* Wait for documentation (sponsor/terms) before announcing anything.
  - \* If it was Kiwanis, consider coordinating with them on the outreach/return plan (they may prefer to help manage distribution or messaging).

### **Veterans - Final Budget Request**

Kim Spencer provided the following Final Budget Request for the Veteran's Office:

1. Flag and Marker Funding
  - \* Kim reminded the board about an earlier request for up to \$32,000 for flags and markers.
  - \* Typically, the line item is set at \$26,000, but the increase was proposed to cover rising needs.
  - \* Kim asked the commissioners to consider raising the allocation but noted they would work within the existing budget if not approved.
2. Budget Adjustments
  - \* Medical Reimbursements:
    - \* An increase was requested in the medical expense reimbursement line.
    - \* This is due to higher reimbursements for medical copays observed this year.
  - \* Capital Improvements:
    - \* Adjusted down to match the exact rent cost instead of carrying extra funds.
  - \* Salary Officials Line:
    - \* Corrected earlier in the year after an issue was discovered.
3. Commissioner Requests
  - \* Kim confirmed that the commissioners have not submitted any additional increase requests for this budget cycle.
  - \* Unless something changes, the plan is to move forward with the submitted estimates.

### **Treasurer Report - Treasurer Taylor Sappington**

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to authorize Commissioner Eliason to sign the Treasurer's Report for the month of August 2025.

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

### **Treasurer Update**

Treasurer Taylor Sappington provided the following Audit Verification:

- \* An independent firm, Clark Schaefer, performed a cash balance check.
- \* Their review was completed quickly (within a few hours) and showed no discrepancies between the Treasurer's books and the reconciled accounts.
- \* A report was prepared and forwarded to the commissioners

### **DJFS Dir Jean Demosky - Weekly Updates**

Dir Demosky provided the following Weekly Updates:

1. Winterfest Update
  - \* Event Date: October 11.
  - \* Applications: Extended through today, with about 500 children registered.
  - \* Funding: Sufficient donations and funds are available to cover the event, so no financial concerns.
2. Resource Guide Development
  - \* Jean presented a draft resource guide being created for customers.
  - \* Purpose: Provide a consolidated directory of available help for:

- \* Utility assistance
  - \* Housing support
  - \* Food pantries and free meal programs
  - \* Transportation resources
- \* Commissioners received a draft for review, with the guide still in progress.
3. 15-Passenger Van Disposal
- \* Issue raised regarding the sale of the van.
  - \* Originally, bids were sought using Carvana's offer as a minimum price.
  - \* Carvana's offers have fluctuated significantly:
    - \* \$27,400 at first.
    - \* Dropped to \$22,800 (9/24).
    - \* Rose again to \$23,200 (9/29).
  - \* Commissioners agreed it was unlikely bids would exceed current Carvana pricing.
  - \* Decision: Authorize disposal to Carvana, accepting the most current offer available.
4. Grant Proposal
- \* Jean reported collaboration with Professor Trembly of Ohio University on an AHRQ Power Grant proposal.
  - \* The county would serve as the workforce development component, focusing on:
    - \* Job readiness
    - \* Skills training
    - \* Micro-certifications/micro-credentials
  - \* Seen as an exciting funding opportunity to expand workforce support.
5. Staffing Changes
- \* CFO resignation announced.
  - \* Current stopgap: fiscal officer working with Julie (from Auglaize County) and some assistance from Vince.
  - \* Commissioners discussed whether to:
    - \* Post the position, or
    - \* Appoint an interim.
  - \* Emphasis placed on moving quickly to determine responsibilities and ensure financial functions continue smoothly.

#### **DJFS Contract - Prosecutor's Office Contract Amendment**

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the Prosecutor's Office Contract Amendment, this Legal services contract was amended to expand scope, previously covered only criminal cases, now includes civil cases as well. Contract amount remains unchanged.

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

#### **Executive Session - DJFS**

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to enter into executive session at 9:46 with Dir. Jean Demosky, Asst Dir. Lisa Radford, & Administrator JoAnn Rockhold to discuss reduction, layoff, and discipline 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 Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to return to regular session at 10:19 no action to be taken right now.

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

#### **William A. Holland - Transportation Issues**

##### **1. Medical Transportation Funding**

- \* He reported missed doctor appointments in Columbus due to Athens County Job and Family Services running out of funds for medical transport.
  - \* Expressed frustration about poor planning and the sudden suspension of services.
  - \* Commissioners explained funding was tight but assured him services would be restored as soon as fiscally possible.
- Dir Demosky & Lisa Radford agreed to work directly with him to help arrange immediate transport for his appointments.

##### **2. Housing & Safety Concerns**

- \* Described unsafe housing conditions (bed bugs, lack of handrails, dogs causing sanitation issues).
- \* Reported being assaulted and ongoing disputes with local authorities about enforcement.

**Mark McIntyre - Merchant McIntyre Associates**

Merchant McIntyre Associates met with the commissioners to discuss federal grant opportunities and services.

**1. Grant Expertise & ROI:**

They emphasized that Athens County is "eligible for everything" through federal programs and highlighted their history of securing major grants. They routinely deliver returns on investment of 10:1 to 30:1 for local governments, citing examples such as millions in funding for sewer expansions, pump stations, and public safety radio equipment.

**2. Services Offered:**

Merchant McIntyre acts as federal funding staff for local governments, handling forecasting, application preparation, and grant writing. They also pursue congressional earmarks and noted upcoming opportunities, including FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program expected in November.

**3. Timing & Contracts:**

The firm recommended Athens County consider beginning work in mid-October or November to align with the federal fiscal year. They offered to start preliminary work "gratis" on a handshake while the contract is finalized. Their service agreement is simple, two pages, and based on a monthly retainer (success fees are prohibited by law).

**4. Next Steps:**

Commissioners requested to review the proposed agreement, with the plan to put the matter back on the agenda for discussion next week.

**W&S Truck Purchase**

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the purchase of a F250 4x4 Crew Cab Pickup from Don Wood Ford in the amount of \$59,401.00.

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

**Country Club EDU Discussion - Bob Toy**

\* Request: Attorney Bob Toy (for the Country Club) asked the Board to reduce the sewer EDUs from 25 to 4, citing actual metered use and policy language.

\* Basis cited: Policy 401.7 (Table 4.1 "unless...") — EDUs may be based on actual usage for facilities existing at connection. Club provided 2024–2025 water data showing <1,000 gal/day; applying the guideline factor ( $\times 1.33$ ) yields ~3.26 EDUs; they'll accept 4 EDUs to avoid dispute.

\* Irrigation note: Course uses pond water for irrigation, so metered figures reflect domestic use only.

\* Current assessment: County is billing 25 EDUs, originally estimated from an assumption of ~200 members  $\times$  50 gpd, divided by 400 gpd/EDU ~ 25; staff acknowledged that 200-member figure appears arbitrary/uncertain.

**\* Board considerations:**

\* Adjusting the Club's EDUs affects debt-service cost sharing, potentially shifting costs to others; any change must be weighed system-wide.

\* Other non-residential users (e.g., churches, gas stations, Warehouse Tire, "Pit Stop") may also warrant review if actual-use methodology is applied.

\* Policy contains a clause that Country Clubs' capacity fee is doubled; staff will factor that into any recalculation.

\* Next steps: Staff to recalculate EDUs using verified data, consider the double-capacity provision and overall rate impact, then return with a recommendation. No decision taken at this meeting.

**\* Follow-up on payments to the City:**

\* County currently pays the City per 1,000 gallons treated (stated rate \$4.61/1,000 gal) based on actual connected sewage flow, not on total available EDUs.

\* Staff will compile figures on capacity payments already made to the City (including an additional 3.3 units since the last large payments) and report back. Current capacity fee per EDU cited as \$52.50.

**87 High Street Bid Opening - HAPCAP Jeff Jenkins**

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to acknowledge receipt of the bids for 87 High Street:

Scope: Repairs to the front façade, windows, and rooftop.

Project Estimate: \$246,522.70

Maximum Allowable Bid: \$273,914.11

**Bids Received:**

Buckeye Construction & Restoration (Waterford, OH): \$269,957

Gutknecht Construction (Attica, OH): \$318,000

Stockmeister (Jackson, OH): \$260,450

The bids will now be forwarded to BDT for review and evaluation before a recommendation is brought back next week.

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

**Letter of Support - Recycle Center**

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve issuing a letter of support for the application. See back of page 329 for Letter of Support.

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

**Chauncey Bridge - Planner Connor LaVelle**

Planner LaVelle provided the following for the Chauncey Bridge:

ODOT Coordination:

- \* Meeting held with ODOT at the Chauncey Bridge project site.
- \* Discussed resurfacing of River Road once the bridge project is completed.
- \* ODOT agreed to provide a driveway cut at the former staging area, which is now well-graded and could serve as an access point and parking area for river use.

**Illegal Dump Site Cleanup - Planner Connor LaVelle**

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the MOU with the Attorney General's Office for cleanup of an old illegal dump site in Alexander Township. See back of page 329 for the MOU.

- \* Site had been used by a legitimate trash hauler who illegally dumped waste.
- \* Original funding request was \$150,000 but denied. Later revived when AG's office found \$70,000+ to support the project.
- \* Property has changed ownership; the new owner signed a Right of Entry and Consent to Remediation.

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

**Assigned Counsel Report from Auditors Office**

A motion was made by Mr Adkins and seconded by Mr Chmiel to acknowledge receipt of the Assigned Counsel Report from the Auditors Office and submit for payment:

September 2025

Total Juvenile Certifications	2
Amount submitted in Juvenile Certifications	\$1,555.00
All (Non-Capital) Appellate Court Certifications	1
Amount submitted in Appellate Court Certifications	\$1,584.82
Total Number of Certifications (All Courts - All Expenses)	3
Total Amount submitted	\$3,139.82

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

**Tech Growth Ohio**

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve Health Dept Jack Pepper to apply for the Tech Growth Ohio funding using the county's EIN number.

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

**Frontier Invoice 01-060525 Amesville Boardband \$41,027.20 to be paid with ARPA Funds**

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the Frontier Invoice 01-060525 Amesville Boardband \$41,027.20 to be paid with ARPA Funds.

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: Scott Dunfee, Larry Hines, & Stephen Roach; Regional Training Event for W&M Inspectors, Chillicothe OH; 10/30/25
- Auditor: Jill Davidson & Katherine Smith; CAAO Southeast District Meeting, Gallipolis OH; 10/10/25
- Auditor: Janet Harner; CAAO CAUV Training, Mt Sterling OH; 10/08/25
- Auditor: Jill Davidson, Marsha Few, & Brandi Sanders; '25 CAAO Winter Conf, Dublin OH; 11/18 - 11/21/25
- WIOA: Morgan DeLay; CFIS Conference, Lewis Center OH; 10/05 - 10/07/25



WIOA: Morgan DeLay; SE Ohio Workforce Collaboration, Caldwell OH; 10/01/25

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

**Auditor Jill Davidson - Property Tax**

Auditor Davidson provided the following:

1. Main Issues Raised:

- \* Commissioner Eliason warned that if reforms are not passed, voters will likely reject property taxes next year, creating financial chaos.
- \* Treasurer Sappington noted that without change, Ohio risks falling behind nationally, with schools being the most contentious issue. They also highlighted that counties could lose significant revenue streams, such as interest on property tax collections, adding cascading impacts.

2. Proposed Solutions (from Auditor Davidson outline, supported by statewide associations):

- \* Expand Homestead Program – Increase income eligibility and property value thresholds so more seniors and low-income residents benefit, with the state reimbursing subdivisions.
- \* Eliminate the 10% Non-Business Credit & Expand Owner Occupancy Credit – Shifts relief away from landlords/investors and toward homeowners living in their primary residence.
- \* Limit School District Revenue Growth from Reappraisals – Cap growth tied to property value increases with an inflationary index, instead of giving districts the full increase from 20-mill floor protections.
- \* Targeted Tax Relief for Low/Moderate Income Residents – Programs like tax deferrals, abatements, or credits to prevent displacement.

3. Concerns & Context:

- \* Athens County officials noted that local governments have already lost major funding sources over the years (cuts to the Local Government Fund, elimination of personal property tax, shift to state-level CAT tax).
- \* Exemptions and abatements are growing, leaving counties to provide services without proportional revenue.
- \* Rising property values combined with current tax structures could trigger a "perfect storm" of citizen backlash, especially with a reappraisal scheduled for 2026 (impacting 2027 bills).

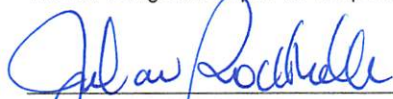
Actions Taken:

- \* Commissioners, Auditor, and Treasurer agreed to draft and sign a joint letter to state representatives, senators, the governor, and lieutenant governor, urging support for reforms and a pause in the reappraisal cycle until structural fixes are made.

**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



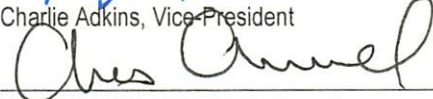
Alison Pierson, Clerk



Lenny Eliason, President



Charlie Adkins, Vice-President



Chris Chmiel