

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, February 17, 2026 Convenes at 9:30 a.m.

Approve Agenda

Approve Minutes February 3, 2026 & February 10, 2026

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

9:30 Amber Pyle- EMS Update
9:45 DJFS Dir Jean Demosky - weekly updates
10:00 March DD Awareness Month
10:15 Boone Troyer - Visitors Bureau & Auditor / Air BnB contract
10:30 W&S Supt Oscar Carson - weekly updates
10:45 Treasurer - January's Reconciliation & Fund Amounts
11:30 LUNCH
6:00 New Marshfield Sewer Meeting

Agenda Items

Utility Permits
Hock Hocking Adena Bikeway Committee Appointment
Airbnb Contract
FEMA .gov grant
Direct pay application
Liquor Permit
Advanced Painting Quote- PWS
Buckeye Hills Regional Commission Appointments
Chamber Event
Regional Planning Commission Appointments

~TRAVEL

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 February 3, 2026 & February 10, 2026.

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: 02/05/2026 To: 02/10/2026, INVOICE TRACKING REPORT - From: 02/10/2026 To: 02/12/2026 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 - Maintenance List for All Stations & Glouster Station Driveway

* Commissioner Adkins spoke with Supt Mike Biggins and requested to get with Chief Pyle and Assist Chief Crossen to review and discuss the maintenance list and future needs within EMS next week.

* Commissioner Adkins also discussed an ongoing issue in Glouster involving a blacktop area/roadway and uncertainty over ownership and maintenance responsibility. Masonic Lodge contacted Commissioner Adkins requesting a quote to address work in the same area, potentially reducing costs since the same equipment mobilization would be required for both small or large job. A key point of discussion was that property/maintenance responsibility is unclear because it is not confirmed who owns which portion of the blacktop area. It was reported that one understanding is the Lodge owns the entire blacktop area and the County begins ownership at the concrete pad; another understanding is that ownership is split. Commissioners expressed that if the County regularly uses the surface, the County likely has an obligation to maintain at least the portion it owns (and potentially roadway-related responsibility), but acknowledged the need to confirm any existing agreement. Staff were directed to research ownership and any agreement. It was suggested that Ashley Cooper (Recorders Office) could search for relevant records, and the legal description could be located through the Recorder's office to determine boundary lines and identify the responsible party. The group agreed to reconvene soon once boundaries/ownership are clarified.

DJFS Dir Jean Demosky - Weekly Updates

Dir Demosky provided the following DJFS Weekly Updates:

1. Program Updates / Leasing (Vehicles & Property)

* Dir Demosky reported on a recent leasing meeting with the State regarding both vehicle leasing and property/building leasing.

* Vehicle leasing: The State's guidance was essentially "go ahead and do it." Dir Demosky explained the key accounting point: because the County is not being reimbursed for the vehicle lease cost, it is treated as an outright cost and not a depreciation issue for the County in the same way as reimbursed assets. The vehicle remains on the County ledger as an asset, but the State's guidance emphasized that at the end of the term the vehicle would be returned (rather than the County being repaid via depreciation).

* Commissioners asked if the guidance was in writing; Dir Demosky confirmed it was and had been emailed to the Board.

* Leasing space in buildings: The State discussed that leased space may need to be deducted from the depreciation value. Dir Demosky noted this may or may not matter depending on decisions expected in the coming weeks. Commissioners confirmed this information was also included in the written email, and staff thanked Sabrina for requesting that the guidance be put in writing.

2. State/Association Update – SNAP Error Rate & QA Requirements

* Dir Demosky shared an update from the OJFSDA executive meeting regarding changes tied to the SNAP error rate costs and House Bill provisions. A working group is being established to determine how SNAP error rates will be handled going forward.

* Counties will be required to conduct Quality Assurance (QA) reviews by pulling a set number of cases monthly. Athens County's classification (small vs. medium) may vary depending on population criteria; staff anticipates Athens will likely fall into the small category.

* Estimated monthly workload: Athens will likely need to review 15 or 20 cases per month. The County will apply State-provided factors to evaluate application accuracy and submit results to the State for review/validation.

* Dir Demosky stated the process is complex, but noted some counties are panicking because they do not have QA staff. Athens currently has trainers conducting QA reviews and supervisors also reviewing, so staff believes the County will be able to meet the requirement.

* Dir Demosky emphasized that maintaining adequate Public Assistance (PA) staffing is important for two reasons:

* Fewer PA staff processing applications can increase the pressure to go faster and may lead to more eligibility errors.

* The new QA workload adds additional process requirements.

* Commissioners discussed why error rates matter: the higher the statewide error rate, the more costs counties may have to contribute toward the overall system. Dir Demosky noted that even if Athens performs well, statewide performance can impact County costs.

3. Fiscal Update – Lack of State Numbers / No Schedule

* Dir Demosky stated they still have no clear communication on firm repayment numbers or schedules. Angie indicated that as late as the previous week the State was still making adjustments to 2025 numbers, preventing firm guidance for planning.

4. Actions Taken to Reduce Costs / Improve Funding (Summary of Corrective Steps)

Dir Demosky outlined a running list of measures implemented over the last year to address the financial situation and avoid the perception that the agency has been "doing nothing." Items included:

* Salary savings / attrition: Reported \$1,066,364 in attrition savings (noted as a key cost-reduction effort).

- * Planned 2026 vacancy holds: Positions vacated and not expected to be refilled (at least temporarily) total approximately \$791,000 in projected savings. Copies were provided.
- * RMS analysis and coding adjustments: A PA supervisor was temporarily assigned to conduct deeper review of RMS "hits," ensuring documentation supports the code used and that codes are selected to maximize benefit to the agency's funding/reimbursement where appropriate.
- * Contract reductions: Example provided—vehicle detailing reduced from monthly to every other month; other non-required contracts were eliminated.
- * Transportation expansion & RMS pool change: Transportation function was moved from the Social Services (SS) RMS pool to the IM pool to potentially increase the reimbursement value per hit (staff described SS hits as roughly \$150 vs. IM hits as \$225–\$250). This change started in the current quarter; results are not yet available because the quarter is still closing.
- * Program reductions: PRC assistance reduced from \$500 to \$300 (CCMEP-related), reflecting an inability to maintain previous levels.
- * Cost reduction in food/meal support: "Full belly bags" cost reduced from about \$27 per bag to \$14 per bag, while still providing complete meals.
- * Grant pursuit and utilization: Multiple grants pursued/received (workforce-related and program support).
- * Scheduling reductions: Bargaining unit schedule changes for ~six weeks; non-bargaining schedule changes ongoing.
- * Spending reviews: Limits on travel/conferences; some maintenance deferred.

5. Commissioner Questions on Grants and "Extra" Services

- * Commissioners asked whether grant-funded programs require additional services beyond mandates and emphasized that the County must remain within its financial means.
- * Dir Demosky responded that grants generally supplement required services (workforce programming is mandated; grants help enhance capacity), but acknowledged that grants can require additional deliverables.
- * Commissioners requested details on the OMOS grant; staff described it as supporting mental health trainings/health worker trainings, and reiterated the goal is to provide more resources to staff already required to deliver services.

6. Facilities – 510 Building / Integrated Services / Public Defender

- * Dir Demosky reported 510 was listed for bid (discovered via the paper).
- * A meeting occurred with Integrated Services, who appeared highly interested and indicated they want the entire building for consolidation of Athens properties. They were not interested in leasing and did not want the complication of having another tenant in the building.
- * The issue of the Public Defender's request for leasing space at 510 was discussed. Dir Demosky stated they had promised the Public Defender an update that day and needed direction on what to tell them if the bid does not result in a sale.
- * Commissioners generally preferred to wait and see whether a bid is received, but staff emphasized the Public Defender needs a timely answer so they can plan and avoid leaving the building unused if a sale does not proceed.

7. Human Resources

- * Dir Demosky reported receipt of an unemployment hearing ruling involving Tracy. The ruling upheld the County's decision for cause. Copies were provided (one complete copy and one partial copy).

DJFS Contract - Athens County Common Pleas Court - Juvenile Division

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the DJFS Original Contract with Athens County Common Pleas Court, Juvenile Division:

Name of Organization	Athens County Common Pleas Court, Juvenile Division
Total \$ Value	\$5,000.00
Contract Period	01/01/2026 - 12/31/2026
Program Accts & Codes to be charged	Non-Reimbursable 899/510050 Title XX 735/510050
Billing Procedure	Monthly invoices to be paid within 30 days

Full 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.

DJFS Contract - Maximus US Services, Inc

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the DJFS Original Contract with Maximus US Services, Inc:

Name of Organization	Maximus US Services, Inc
Total \$ Value	\$7,500.00
Contract Period	02/10/2026 - 03/31/2027
Program Accts & Codes to be charged	050/510050
Billing Procedure	Annual IV-D Budget Document for Sheriff Service of Process for a fee of \$3,500.00, Quarterly Invoices thereafter in the amount of \$1,000.00 each.

Full 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.

Utility Permits

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

Permit No.	26-663
From:	Spectrum
	737 Howard St
	Zanesville, OH

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

Location of work:	Co Rd # 60, Co Rd Name: Federal Rd/ Torch Rd
Description of Work:	Place new poles & new lines on existing poles
Type of Installation:	Overhead Line Parallel to Rd & Overhead Line Crossing Rd
Estimated Project Schedule:	02/16/2026 - 08/16/2026

Agreed to by: /s/Brad St Clair, Spectrum
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.

March DD Awareness Month

The local Developmental Disabilities agency provided four updates and requested a proclamation. First, they promoted this weekend's Polar Plunge (8th year), held with the Albany VFW and WSEO Radio; the VFW has donated \$93,000 to Beacon School over the years, and this year's proceeds will help fund sun shades over swing sets. They noted people can participate by "dip a toe" for \$25 or simply donate.

Second, they shared their winter newsletter, highlighting: (1) the recent levy passed with 67%, the highest passage rate among 17 county boards on the ballot statewide; and (2) recognition of longtime board member Pam Bond, with the cafeteria named the Pam Bond Cafeteria, and her commissioner-appointed successor Raz Sabaiduc joining the board (starting with the January meeting held in February).

Third, they asked to return in April to present their annual report, a budget update, and their five-year financial forecast.

Fourth, they announced March is Developmental Disability Awareness Month and shared a list of March activities, including the DD Awareness Fest on Tuesday, March 3 (6-8 p.m.) at the community center.

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve a Proclamation declaring March 1-31 as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in Athens County:

**Proclamation for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month
March 1-31, 2026**

WHEREAS, Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month is observed each March to raise awareness about the abilities, talents, and contributions of individuals with developmental disabilities; and

WHEREAS, individuals with developmental disabilities are valued members of the Athens County community who enrich our county through their participation in education, employment, civic engagement, and social life; and

WHEREAS, the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities works in partnership with individuals, families, service providers, and community organizations to support people with developmental disabilities in leading meaningful, inclusive lives within the community; and

WHEREAS, this year's Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month theme, "Inclusion is the Main Event," highlights the importance of creating communities where individuals with developmental disabilities are fully included, welcomed, and celebrated in all aspects of community life; and

WHEREAS, promoting awareness, acceptance, and inclusion helps ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities have the opportunity to live, work, learn, and thrive in the communities of their choosing;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, that the Athens County Commissioners do hereby proclaim the month of March 2026, as

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in Athens County,

and encourage all residents to recognize this month by embracing inclusion as the main event and celebrating the contributions and potential of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Signed this 17th day of February 2026.

/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.

Executive Session - EMS

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to enter into executive session at 10:05 with Chief Amber Pyle, Assist Chief Randy Crossen Jr., Assist Prosecutor TL Warren to discuss potential litigation.

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 10:28 with No Action to be taken.

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

Boone Troyer - Visitors Bureau & Auditor / Airbnb Contract

Commissioners, Auditor's Staff, & Boone Troyer (Visitors Bureau) revisited the Airbnb lodging-tax collection contract after a host accidentally paid twice (Airbnb withheld taxes automatically, while the owner also remitted taxes directly). Officials emphasized the core problem: Airbnb sends lump-sum payments with no property-level detail, making it impossible to verify who paid, audit collections, or identify noncompliant short-term rentals. The Visitors Bureau noted they can help with education and outreach to property owners and are also involved in state-level advocacy (through the Ohio visitors bureau association) for legislation addressing short-term rental reporting; they explained platforms differ, with Airbnb resisting data sharing while VRBO is more cooperative in pending legislation discussions.

Staff outlined practical enforcement and next steps: the auditor's office can track known properties directly (example: Fairfield County uses a spreadsheet of properties and does not use Airbnb as a collector), and delinquent accounts can be referred to the prosecutor for collection/letters. Discussion included longer-term options like a dedicated lodging tax administrator model (noted in Hocking County, housed in the CVB and funded by lodging tax revenues), but the group agreed to start with a phased transition tied to new regulations.

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the termination of the Airbnb Contract effective April 1, requiring 30 day written notice now. They directed staff to work with legal counsel to send formal termination notice and to develop public education/communications so property owners understand that, after April 1, they must file and pay lodging taxes directly to the county.

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

Advanced Painting Quote - PWS

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the W&S Advanced Painting Quote in the amount of \$3,840.00 to remove existing wallpaper, patch drywall and prime patched areas, apply two coats promar 200 eggshell on walls and apply two coats emerald satin on door frames.

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 confirmed preparations for that evening's meeting, noting that notices were sent and three public notices were posted at the post office, Family Dollar, and the community building. Plans would be brought to the meeting, and Supt Carson indicated Gary Silcott (DLZ) requested plant plans and planned to visit later to walk through the plant. Commissioners asked whether Mr. Weber would attend, and Supt Carson agreed to call him to confirm, explaining it would be helpful since the meeting was intended to allow stakeholders to meet the contractor. Commissioner Eliason noted he might not attend due to transportation and schedule conflicts, but others indicated they would handle it.

Discussed follow-up on Circle Drive/Ms. Hawk, where Patrick McGarry (Health Dept) was expected to verify work; Supt Carson said they would check with Patrick. Commissioners also raised a question about a property where taxes are due and a tax lien has been purchased, asking whether that affects decisions on installing sewer taps. Staff advised that if there is a structure, it typically gets served with a tap regardless of tax status, unless there is a specific reason not to. Supt Carson referenced a prior example in Buchtel where property owners were notified that to avoid a tap, a structure would need to be removed; however, for the current project it may be too late to do that because the number of taps has already been counted in the bid.

Supt Carson provided an update on the ongoing water leak investigation, stating they made progress: a representative identified two leaking hydrants, which were shut off, and another leak was found and scheduled to be repaired Wednesday. Supt Carson suspects additional service-line leaks but noted thawing conditions make leaks harder to detect. Commissioners asked whether the fire department is notified when hydrants are shut off; Supt Carson said they typically place tags on hydrants but agreed it would be better to notify the department directly. Commissioners provided the fire chief's contact information (Kenny Howard) and staff agreed to call and provide a list of hydrants that are out of service.

Treasurer - January's Reconciliation & Fund Amounts

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to acknowledge and sign the Treasurer's January Reconciliation & Fund Amounts as presented by Treasurer Taylor Sappington.

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

Hock Hocking Adena Bikeway Committee Appointment

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to appoint Shelby Elzinga to serve on the Hockhocking Adena Bikeway Committee.

See letter on back of page 59.

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

FEMA .gov Grant

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the conversion process and applying for the FEMA .gov Grant to move county web presence to a .gov domain.

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

Direct Pay Application

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve Commissioner Chmiel to submit the Direct Pay Application related to the solar project and authorization for signatures.

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

Athens County Commissioners



15 South Court St.
Athens, Ohio 45701
(740) 592-3219
Visit us at our website:
co.athensoh.org

Charlie Adkins
cadkins@athensoh.org
Chris Chmiel
cchmiel@athensoh.org
Lenny Elison, MPA
lelison@athensoh.org

JoAnn Rockhold
Administrator
jsikorski@athensoh.org
Telephone (740) 592-3292

Alison Pierson
Clerk
apierson@athensoh.org
Telephone (740) 592-3202

February 17, 2026

Shelby Elzinga
1000 E. Canal St. D2
Nelsonville, OH 45764

Dear Ms. Elzinga:

The Board of Athens County Commissioners, in its regular meeting on February 17, 2026, appointed you to serve on the Hockhocking Adena Bikeway Committee.

Thank you for being willing to serve Athens County in this manner.

Sincerely,

Lenny Elison, President

Charlie Adkins, Vice-President

Chris Chmiel

ACC:jr

cc: Connor Lavello, County Planner



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



Liquor Permit

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve No Hearing for Liquor Permit #10012968-1 tied to ownership change.

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

Buckeye Hills Regional Commission Appointments

Commissioners will return next week with more appointment ideas.

Chamber Event

Commissioners confirmed a Chamber event on February 25 with lunch around 11:00 and program start at 11:45, Commissioner Chmiel will be the speaker for the Commissioners.

Regional Planning Commission Appointments

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to appoint Mayor Michael Thomas Ford as the villages representative:

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

Budget

Administrator JoAnn Rockhold reported the budget is now balanced, aided by two weeks of work consolidating medical, dental, vision, and life insurance out of individual department funds (one remaining item still to move). Commissioners requested the draft be sent to departments with notice that the budget would be passed next week, and departments should raise concerns promptly. They also discussed the need to better track when grant-funded positions/benefits shift costs back to the county, and agreed the budget process should begin in September so elected officials provide detailed staffing and pay information earlier.

Pay Increases to Prepare

Commissioners revisited the countywide 3% wage pool concept and how difficult it is to verify department-by-department accuracy without detailed employee-level data. Administrator proposed requiring departments to provide employee-by-employee worksheets (funding source, rate, hours, etc.) starting in September. They also discussed preparing retroactive wage increases for remaining departments within their group that have not implemented raises yet; Administrator Rockhold said she already has a spreadsheet and would circulate department-specific pages for review.

New Marshfield Sewer Meeting

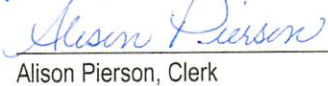
Meeting reconvened at 6:00 p.m. at New Marshfield Senior Center with the Commissioner Adkins, Commissioner Chmiel, Administrator JoAnn Rockhold, Clerk Alison Pierson, ACCHD Patrick McGarry, W&S Supt Oscar Carson & Manager Stephanie Morris, DLZ Gary Silcott, & DV Weber Contractor Dave Weber to discuss the updates on the New Marshfield Sanitary Sewer System with residents of New Marshfield. See back of page 60 for updated project costs.

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

