

FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

January 3, 2023

The Franklin County Board of Commissioners convened in the Commissioners Hearing Room, at 9:00 A.M. on Tuesday, January 3, 2023.

Present were: Erica C. Crawley, President
John O'Grady, Commissioner

Also present on the dais were Kris J. Long, Deputy County Administrator; and Brittany A. Razek, Clerk to the Board of Commissioners.

Using hybrid meeting technology, participants were also able to access General Session via Zoom conferencing, by dialing (929) 436-2866, Meeting ID:978 8790 2896; Passcode:628826, or by joining at: <https://franklincountyohio.zoom.us/j/97887902896>

Commissioner Crawley called the meeting to order at 9:16 A.M.

Clerk Razek: Good morning and welcome, everyone. It is my great honor and privilege to introduce Franklin County residents to their first African-American female elected member of the Board of Commissioners, Erica C. Crawley. At this time, I invite Judge Beatty Blunt to administer her Oath of Office.

Commissioner Crawley took her Oath of Office.

Commissioner Crawley: I just wanted to take a few moments to talk about this election and being the first Black woman elected to the County Commission. I wore white today to continue to pay homage to the women who came before me – the suffragists who fought for enfranchisement for women voting more than one hundred years ago. And not just the ones who ended up gaining voting rights when the 19th Amendment was ratified, but those who continued to fight for voting rights, especially for Black women, who led the fight for voting rights but were not able to vote, themselves, in 1920. I want to pay homage to those like Sojourner Truth, who gave a speech up in Akron in the 1850s that said, “Ain’t I a woman?”; and to my favorite African-American trailblazer, Ida B. Wells; and Mary Church Terrel, who coined the phrase, “Lift as we climb.” I would also like to pay homage to my sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., which is the first African-American Greek letter organization, and to the visionary, Ethel Hedgeman Lyle. One of our tenants is to study and alleviate problems that girls and women face, in order to improve their stature in society. It is not lost on me that I would not be where I am today had it not been for those trailblazers.

Commissioner Crawley (cont.): This county was founded in 1803, and here we are in 2023 with the first woman of color ever elected in 220 years. I will always remember Mary Church Terrell's words and will continue lifting as I climb. I know I will not be the last, and I will make sure that Black and Brown girls who look like me see themselves in me, and across our agencies. My colleagues and I have put forward another mission to make sure that all of our agencies are as diverse as they can be and reflect our community. It makes a difference when little white boys can see themselves in Commissioner O'Grady, and little Black boys can see themselves in Commissioner Boyce. It is important that others can see themselves in leadership positions; it matters. I do not care if people are uncomfortable with the mission that my colleagues and I have set forward to continue to focus on Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI), to ensure that equity is one of our core tenants, and that all county agencies reflect that. It is my distinct honor and privilege to serve, and I thank all of our neighbors in Franklin County who elected me to this position. I do not take it lightly. I am here to serve every resident, every day, and to make sure that every one of our neighbors has the same opportunities to thrive and not just survive. Thank you for putting me in this position; I will not fail and I will not let you down.

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Commissioner Crawley: We would like to recognize and thank the PFM staff who were working in the middle of the night in freezing temperatures to shovel and plow out county facilities in the early hours of Friday morning and over the weekend during last week's storm. I would like to turn to PFM leadership to introduce PFM staff in attendance this morning. We also have the President of City Council, President Hardin, here, and I know that his team of road warriors at the City was out there working just as hard as our PFM staff. Thank you to the City and to PFM.

Darla Reardon, Director, Public Facilities Management, and Vivian Alexander, Chief Operating Officer, Public Facilities Management, offered brief remarks of appreciation for their staff.

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Commissioner Crawley: We would also like to recognize and thank the Health and Human Services staff members who have gone above and beyond over the last week to assist fellow residents who had to leave their homes in Sawyer Towers. I would like to turn to Deputy County Administrator Joy Bivens to introduce and recognize the county team.

Joy Bivens, Deputy County Administrator, Board of Commissioners, offered brief remarks of appreciation for the Health and Human Services directors and staff.

Commissioner Crawley: I cannot say "thank you" enough, and I feel like "thank you" is inadequate for what you all did last week. It was emotional and overwhelming. As Deputy County Administrator Bivens said, it made a difference for people to see you there and hold their hands. One of the residents was out in the snow with a walker with just three wheels, and Director Wingo got him a new walker.

Commissioner Crawley (cont.): If I am ever in the trenches, I want you all there with me because I know we will make it happen and ensure every resident has what they need. It was a scary situation for the residents to leave all of their possessions and not know if they would ever get them back. Thank you all. I also want to thank Jason Jenkins, who is the Director of Community Affairs for the City of Columbus. He was able to bring resources together, including the police and fire departments, as well as the Columbus Humane Society, which worked with our Animal Shelter. We do not always see county and city governments working together in a harmonious way, but what we were able to accomplish last week would not have been able to go off without a hitch had it not been for your leadership, Jason. So, I want to say thank you for your leadership and your presence. I also want to thank Tiara Ross, an attorney who was out there knocking on doors with us. She did not have to do that, but she did, so I want to thank her. I would also like to thank Director Jeff Young, who made the phone call to DCA Bivens on Sunday and got the ball rolling. We have a long road ahead of us. Our residents are in temporary housing, and we are working on permanent housing, but they need food, clothing, and help with transportation and child care. So, if there is anyone who is interested, the County's website has ways for you to get involved. You all are phenomenal, and you make it easy to come to work and do what we do. Service, progress, and excellence are what we saw last week.

Commissioner O'Grady: We talk all of the time about how great you all are and how you make county government what county government is all about. Then last week happened, and it was so evident that this is true. I got a text on Christmas morning when my kids were opening presents, and all I could think about was the families that were being impacted. And then I thought about all of our staff who got up and did their jobs on Christmas morning. You all went and took care of the families that need care. When I came down to Dodge, I came to thank you because I was so proud of who you are and what you did on behalf of the folks who needed all of the services that we provide every day. Here we are a week and a half later, and they still need our help. We still have to figure out what we are doing with Sawyer, where these people are going to live, and who is going to help them. Whether you were one of our employees shoveling snow so that people could come to the courthouse, or you were at Sawyer, climbing steps, knocking on doors, and taking care of pets and families, this is what we do every day, and this is why we do it. There isn't a better job in this world than what we do every day. I am proud of you all every day. The things that you do every day on behalf of the residents of this county are phenomenal, no matter what your job or title is. Thank you for all that you do.

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Resolution No. 0001-23, electing the President of the Franklin County Board of Commissioners for the 2023 term of the Board (Board of Commissioners).

Commissioner Crawley: I nominate Commissioner John O'Grady to serve as President of the Board of Commissioners for the 2023 term.

Commissioner Crawley moved to approve Resolution 0001-23, seconded by Commissioner O’Grady. The Resolution was adopted, installing Commissioner O’Grady as President of the Board for the 2023 term.

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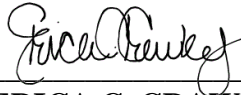
Commissioner O’Grady: Commissioner Crawley was speaking earlier about all of the things and people that shaped her. I went to Ohio Dominican University, and I did not really seek out a Catholic education, but I got one. My parents sent me to Catholic school growing up, and then I chose Ohio Dominican University. Saint Dominic was a believer in lifelong education, and the nice thing about learning at a school where they preach about lifelong education is that I get to sit here all of the time and learn from people who teach me every day. Certainly, Commissioner Crawley challenges me every single day, as does Commissioner Boyce. I have been saying this since the minute Commissioner Crawley showed up in the summer of 2021, that she has been pushing me and pushing me and pushing me. I have to spend all of my time keeping up with Commissioner Crawley. She is like the little sister I never had. I am the youngest of twelve kids, and I always wondered what it would be like to have a little sister. Commissioner Crawley is my little sister, and she is so much smarter than me, it is not even funny. In the spirit of Saint Dominic, this is my pursuit of lifelong learning. I have been thinking for a while about what 2023 should be like for the Board of Commissioners. There are three of us, so no one of us ever gets to set the agenda. Our agenda should look like the three of us. We have our six core principles, but there are specific things that we have been working on and want to continue into 2023. The first is affordable housing, which is the single biggest issue in Franklin County, and in every major urban and rural area in the United States. We talk to county Commissioners all over the state and country all of the time, and affordable housing is the issue that all of us are dealing with. Childcare is another issue we would like to focus on. This is an issue that is near and dear to Commissioner Crawley’s heart, and it goes hand-in-hand with everything that we do. Workforce development is another issue that we would like to focus on in 2023. Workforce, childcare, and affordable housing all go hand-in-hand. We would also like to address broadband, transportation, and education. If you think about all of those issues, you can understand that we cannot handle one without the other. These are all issues that we have been working on and will continue to work on in 2023.

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There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:47 A.M.

(Signature Page Follows)

These minutes are a general summary of the Commissioners' Organizational Meeting on Tuesday, January 3, 2023.



ERICA C. CRAWLEY, PRESIDENT



JOHN O'GRADY



**KEVIN L. BOYCE
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO**

Submitted by:



Lauren M. Graessle

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