

FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF GENERAL SESSION

June 28, 2022

The Franklin County Board of Commissioners convened in the Commissioners Hearing Room, at 9:00 A.M. on Tuesday, June 28, 2022.

*Please note: Commissioner O’Grady and Commissioner Boyce attended virtually and counted as ‘in attendance’ for the purposes of Ohio’s Open Meetings Laws, pursuant to the Virtual Meeting Authority as outlined in H.B. 51, signed into law on February 17, 2022, and valid through June 30, 2022.*

Present were: Erica C. Crawley, President  
John O’Grady, Commissioner  
Kevin L. Boyce, Commissioner

Also present on the dais were Kenneth N. Wilson, 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 9:04 A.M.

Commissioner Crawley: Before we recognize National Zoo and Aquarium Month, and especially since we just said the Pledge of Allegiance, I would like to take a moment to say a few words. I know that the two rulings that came down last week are not lost on any of us. The first ruling came on Thursday, and it overturned New York’s gun law, which is problematic and will be problematic for our citizens. Then, on Friday, *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, which gave the authority back to the states regarding abortion and women’s right to choose. This will have an impact on us and our neighbors here in Franklin County, and it will be a drain on county resources as we think about Children Services, ADAMH, and mental health. Since we just said the Pledge of Allegiance and we are a nation that is divided, I wanted to provide the definition of liberty. Liberty is the state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one’s way of life, behavior, or political views. Hearing from our neighbors in the short amount of time since these rulings, they feel as though they are already being impacted in a number of ways. I would like to say to our neighbors and employees here in Franklin County, on behalf of this Board of Commissioners, that we will do everything that we can to make sure that people still have access

to the resources they need. Take advantage of our mental health resources, and take time for self-care. I am not here to debate the topic of abortion; people know where I stand. What I care about is people's mental health and well-being during this time.

Commissioner Boyce: As County Commissioners, we have to adhere to the state law – it is the governing body for us. We cannot control what the Supreme Court just did, and we cannot control what the state does in the aftermath of this legislation; however, we can control the types of benefits and resources that we provide to women. We can control the type of reproductive and maternity services that can enhance a woman's life and assist in their journey, whatever their situation is. My proposal is that we counter this decision by the legislature by doubling down on the benefits that we provide for women and for families. I think this is an area we can control, we can really make a mark, and we can set the bar high. We can change the conversation around this topic. I want to urge us to begin to think about what we can do from a benefits standpoint for women and families, and how we can enhance the benefits that we provide. I think Commissioner Crawley said it all from the public policy conversation standpoint – there is work that we can do to advocate at that level. In the meantime, I want to challenge our County Administrator and our Human Resources Department to re-think the types of benefits that we provide, and let's go deeper and stronger and take this on in a way in which it has never been done. We are Franklin County. We have the ability to affect the resources that we provide to women and families, and we can change the conversation at that level, so that going forward, we can provide better support for women and families than we do today. That is not to say that we do a bad job now, but I think we should have a conversation about taking it to the next level.

Commissioner O'Grady: As County Commissioners, we do not have a lot of authority in these matters, but we do have a voice. We are thought leaders, we are opinion leaders, and we are political leaders. I watch as a lot of men, in particular, white men, make decisions on these issues, including reproductive rights and gun rights, and I wonder what I can do as a County Commissioner? What can we do as County Commissioners of Franklin County? We are the largest county in the state of Ohio, and we are some of the most influential political leaders, not just in Central Ohio, but in Ohio. What we can do is support the women and the residents of Franklin County and the women in our lives by being opinion leaders, thought leaders, and policy leaders in this regard. All of the things that Commissioner Crawley and Commissioner Boyce just mentioned are crucial for us to do – letting our opinions be known, and sharing our opinions with other elected officials, with the media, and with the residents of the county, whether they agree with us or they do not. We need to make sure our voices are heard on these topics. Standing in support of the residents of Franklin County and the women of Franklin County on these topics every day is an important thing for us to do. It is important that we are not only acting on their behalf, but speaking on their behalf, especially on topics that are this crucial and this controversial.

Kenneth N. Wilson, County Administrator: Commissioner Boyce, as County Administrator, I do accept that challenge to look deeper into what County Administration can do in regards to our benefits package and the ways in which we can enhance what we offer in response to the landscape that will result from this ruling. We will do everything that we can within our legislative abilities. There are some limitations on what we can do, but we will ask all the tough questions and look at expanding the benefits offered to our female employees and all of our employees' female

dependents. I am confident that we can be more progressive because this Board of Commissioners has the ability to offer fringe benefits to the employees of Franklin County. I am confident that my colleagues in County Administration, the ThriveOn staff, and the staff in our benefits department will lock arms and determine what we can do moving forward. I commit to taking on this challenge as a husband, as a father, as a brother, and on both a personal and professional level.

Commissioner Crawley: As I am among the men who just spoke, it definitely feels good to have allies; it matters. I recently tweeted out that I come from ancestors who did not have bodily autonomy and agency, which has visceral effects. To have men speak out and support women in their lives, personally and professionally, definitely makes a difference so that we know that we are not in this alone.

Commissioner O'Grady: There is a time to be silent, and there is a time when we should fight another day. This is not that time. Being silent on this issue and in this moment is not the right thing to do. Voices need to be heard right now. Having grown up in a Catholic community, I have struggled with this issue for a long time. Once I no longer struggled with this issue, I got beat up on this issue for a long time. I have been beaten up by my Catholic community for my stance on reproductive rights, LGBT+ rights, freedom to marry rights, and many other issues. This is one of those times that we should not be silent.

//

Commissioner Crawley: National Zoo and Aquarium Month is celebrated annually in June to honor zoos and aquariums' role in the conservation and research of animals and aquatic life. Zoos provide the ability for families to span the world in a day, viewing extraordinary, exotic, colorful species from all corners of the globe. The first American zoo started in 1874 in Philadelphia to care for wildlife, and the expansion of zoos everywhere has become a fixture in communities, delivering a hands-on learning environment for families to create memories. Zoos provide a local view of majestic animals and exotic fish that many could have never seen otherwise. It also encourages youth to study related fields such as biology or animal science and become involved in environmental justice and conservation efforts. Zoos and aquariums also provide a safe haven for endangered species, to protect them from extinction. The health of wildlife is intertwined with the health of our environment and zoos help raise awareness about the need for balanced ecosystems and understanding the human impact on the environment. These reasons and more are why we recognize June as National Zoo and Aquarium Month.

//

Approval of the minutes for the June 21, 2022, General Session. Commissioner O'Grady moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Boyce. The minutes were unanimously approved by roll call vote.

**Resolution No. 0486-22**, authorizing a contract extension with Action for Children for Parenting Seminars (\$39,672.60) (Domestic Relations), presented by Barb Reeves, Deputy Director, Court of Common Pleas, Domestic Relations Division.

Ms. Reeves reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Commissioner O'Grady moved to approve Resolution 0486-22, seconded by Commissioner Boyce. The Resolution was unanimously adopted by roll call vote.

**Resolution No. 0487-22**, awarding contract and approving contract bond to Shelly & Sands, Inc., for the 2022 Franklin County Township Resurfacing Program (\$3,549,310.35) (Engineer), presented by Cornell Robertson, Engineer, Engineer's Office.

Mr. Robertson reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Commissioner O'Grady moved to approve Resolution 0487-22, seconded by Commissioner Boyce. The Resolution was unanimously adopted by roll call vote.

**Resolution No. 0488-22**, report (2nd) of the Franklin County Engineer, establishing sums of compensation for a portion of the owners of property abutting the Norton Road, County Road No. 3, and Kropp Road-Grove City Road, County Road No. 135, Improvement project, Pleasant Township, Franklin County, Ohio (\$70,592.00) (Engineer), presented by Cornell Robertson, Engineer, Engineer's Office.

Mr. Robertson reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Commissioner O'Grady moved to approve Resolution 0488-22, seconded by Commissioner Boyce. The Resolution was unanimously adopted by roll call vote.

**Resolution No. 0489-22**, authorizing an amendment to the agreement with OARnet for switch based internet connection (\$84,780.00) (Franklin County Data Center), presented by Julie Lust, Chief Financial Officer, Data Center.

Ms. Lust reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Commissioner O'Grady moved to approve Resolution 0489-22, seconded by Commissioner Boyce. The Resolution was unanimously adopted by roll call vote.

**Resolution No. 0490-22**, declaring it necessary to renew a tax levy in excess of the ten-mill limitation and requesting the Auditor to certify the total current tax valuation of Franklin County and the dollar amount of revenue generated by the tax levy (Office on Aging), presented by Zachary Talarek, Director, Office of Management and Budget, and Chanda Wingo, Interim Director, Office on Aging.

Mr. Talarek and Ms. Wingo reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Commissioner O'Grady: I am glad that we have gotten all of this work done, and I am thankful for the Levy Review Committee. Zak, I am thankful for all of your hard work on this, and I am anxious to get this levy passed in the fall.

Commissioner Crawley: I would like to echo what Commissioner O'Grady said and applaud the work of the committee and everything that they have done to get to this point. We know that these dollars absolutely make a difference for our aging community and those who take care of them. I recently did an interview with a news station to talk about the resources that are provided from these levy dollars, and I have had a number of communications with our residents who take advantage of the services. Some people did not know about these services until they saw the interview with the news station, so we already know that we have work to do in that regard, but Chanda is already getting the word out and using other resources that we had not used before to make sure that every resident knows about the services available through our Office on Aging. Congratulations on your new role as Interim Director, and thank you for all of the work that you all do to take care of our aging community.

Commissioner O'Grady moved to approve Resolution 0490-22, seconded by Commissioner Boyce. The Resolution was unanimously adopted by roll call vote.

**Resolution No. 0491-22**, authorizing a COVID-19 Recovery Grant with The Ohio State University on behalf of its Cooperative Extension to fund the Urban ROOTS Exploration Experience for Urban Youth Program (\$115,779.00) (Community Partnerships), presented by Curtis Brown, Community Partnerships Coordinator, Community Partnerships.

Mr. Brown reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Jacqueline Kirby Wilkins, Ph.D., Associate Dean and Director, The Ohio State University (OSU) Extension Chair, Department of Extension, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences: It is an absolute pleasure to be here in person to thank you for your ongoing partnership, funding, and support for OSU Extension, and in particular for extending this engagement through its Urban ROOTS program. It was wonderful to hear the authenticity that you had this morning, and to see the demonstration of care and compassion for families and communities. That is always what we intend to do through OSU Extension as the primary outreach and engagement arm of The Ohio State University,

and with our Land Grant Mission. I know that this initiative, in particular, has been President Crawley's vision, and we want to thank you for that vision and the support of the Commissioners in our efforts to move something like this forward. It is so exciting to see youth identify their spark for the things that interest them, which in this case, is around agriculture and natural resources. I was enjoying the camaraderie among your team this morning, and that is exactly what we have with OSU Extension. We brought a wonderful team of people from Franklin County here who, like you all, are committed to youth, families, and communities. We are here today to express our commitment to pathways for youth.

Stacie Burbage, Program Coordinator and Community Catalyst, OSU Extension, Franklin County: I am very grateful for the funding that you have provided for this program. I have over twenty years of experience in building relations with communities, parents, families, and youth. We are ready to hit the ground running.

Solomon Garner, Graduate Student, OSU Extension: I am also grateful for this opportunity and I am trying to find the words to express how I found my passion for youth. It started with working with youth at the Franklin County Juvenile Detention Facility, and working with a woman named Kay Wilson. With what she planted in me, I learned that the same resources are needed to help youth find their vision. You can learn that in many different ways, and agriculture is one way to do that. It is a way to see yourself grow and be a fruit of labor. That is why I am excited about this program, because not only did it work for me to be a part of OSU Extension, but I can see that for other youth. Being from the west side of Columbus, I was able to see how agriculture fits in different facets of the community, as well. That also is what has helped to spark my passion for this program.

Yolanda Owens, Pathways and Partnerships Strategist, OSU College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences: I am really excited about this program and my new role as Pathways and Partnerships Strategist. Having grown up in Franklin County and Central Ohio, I am a product of Columbus City Schools. Being able to understand what we do within the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, and the connection to the world around us, was something that I found at a fairly young age. To be able to introduce that to other young people through programs like Urban ROOTS is very exciting to me. To be able to share that passion with others, especially in the work that we are doing within the College is exciting. We talk about how we sustain life, and we are able to introduce that concept to these young people and show them that agriculture is not just about plows, cows, and sows, but there is this space of innovation and technology that connects not only to the food that we eat, but the fiber in the clothes that we wear and the fuel that is in our cars. I really appreciate this opportunity and you, President Crawley, for saying this is what you want to do and allowing us this space to be able to grow and create such a program.

Julie Fox, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Urban Engagement, OSU Extension: I echo the team's sentiments. I think that this extends our long-standing partnership between the County Commissioners and OSU Extension. It is exciting to see your ideas and vision

develop in this way, and I think this is just the beginning. Thank you for the opportunity to visit with you today.

Commissioner Crawley: I am excited about this program. It is a two-part, year-long program to really engage youth and families, and to provide these youth with opportunities that they probably would not have otherwise. I want to say thank you to my staff. Autumn Mitchell really spearheaded this in working with OSU. I would also like to say thank you to my colleagues for supporting this program. It is an extension of the work that they were already doing before I got here. Commissioner O'Grady has been really involved in food and urban gardens. We just launched a new initiative a couple of weeks ago. Commissioner Boyce has always worked to provide opportunities to young men and black men, and help them forge a path forward. This is just another extension of the work that was already done, but I am excited to partner with you all and establish my own relationship with OSU Extension. I follow Alexis Nikole, who is a James Beard Award recipient, and I know that she has a relationship with OSU. She is a black woman who is a forager and champion for environmental science. She always talks about being a nerd and representing and advocating for black girls who look like her to have these opportunities. She is a teacher, and I want our youth to be able to see themselves in her and others. My team and I were recently at the zoo, and as this is National Zoo and Aquarium Month, we were with the new CEO there and were talking about what they are trying to do with youth. We mentioned this program, and he was hoping the kids could help with a hydroponic garden to grow lettuce for the manatees. The manatees eat a lot of lettuce every day, and if you ever go to see the manatees, you will see nothing but lettuce leaves floating in the exhibit. I wanted to make sure that I made that connection because I think we can get it done. Thank you to all of you for willing to be partners, and I am really grateful to my colleagues and my team.

Commissioner O'Grady: This is just another great example of the fantastic partnership that we have with OSU Extension and the OSU College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences and the great work that we have been doing with them over the years. You are right, Commissioner Crawley, the manatees eat a ton of lettuce. A few years ago, we took my oldest son, who is a big manatee fan, to the zoo, and he got to feed one of the manatees lettuce. This is a great marriage between two different types of programs that we have been running over the years, and that is what is so great about you putting this together, Commissioner Crawley. You came in and hit the ground running on this type of project, which is just a credit to you and your team.

Commissioner O'Grady moved to approve Resolution 0491-22, seconded by Commissioner Crawley. The Resolution was adopted by roll call vote.

**Resolution No. 0492-22**, authorizing an amendment and extension of a COVID-19 Recovery Grant with Alvis, Inc. (\$2,340,000.00) (Community Partnerships), presented by Curtis Brown, Community Partnerships Coordinator, Community Partnerships.

Mr. Brown reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Commissioner O'Grady moved to approve Resolution 0492-22, seconded by Commissioner Crawley. The Resolution was adopted by roll call vote.

**Resolution No. 0493-22**, authorizing a COVID-19 Recovery Grant Agreement with Columbus Housing Partnership, Inc. DBA Homeport for Down Payment Assistance (\$250,000.00) (Economic Development and Planning), presented by Sierra Faris, Senior Program Coordinator, Economic Development and Planning.

Ms. Faris reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Leah F. Evans, President and Chief Executive Officer, Homeport: This is a long-term relationship that we have had with the county – 20+ years of providing down payment assistance. As you all know, we are living in unprecedented times, so we are tremendously grateful, Commissioners, for your willingness to support an increase in funds. This \$250,000 from recovery dollars is outside of the annual \$100,000 federal dollars that we receive, typically in the fall. At the beginning of this year, however, we already had ten more approved applicants than that money would cover. We met with Director Schimmer and his staff to discuss how we could continue to support low- and moderate-income buyers in this market. If they find a house, we should be helping them buy it, and the Economic Development and Planning team was just as committed to that as we were. We really appreciate this opportunity, and we are working with buyers who are as low as fifty percent of the median income, but they have done the work, have the credit score, have gotten a first mortgage lender, and have found a house. They need those gap funds to help them pay for closing costs, down payments, and in some cases, bring down the principal on the first mortgage. It has been tough to keep buyers engaged in this market because of so many disappointments. On average, sellers want a ten-day turnaround because sales prices in our county have gone up to an average of \$349,000, which is an approximately twelve to thirteen percent increase from last year. We are very appreciative and thankful for your creativity and willingness to put recovery dollars not just into rental assistance, but also towards ownership so that those buyers can build their wealth, and pass that wealth on from generation to generation.

Commissioner O'Grady moved to approve Resolution 0493-22, seconded by Commissioner Crawley. The Resolution was adopted by roll call vote.

**Resolution No. 0494-22**, amended Resolution approving a Development Partner Agreement with Thrive Companies for the Purposes of the Ohio Department of Development Brownfield Redevelopment Program and authorizing the submission of that Agreement in support of Thrive



Companies' Brownfield Redevelopment Program Grant application (Economic Development and Planning), presented by James Schimmer, Director, Economic Development and Planning.

Mr. Schimmer reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Commissioner O'Grady moved to approve Resolution 0494-22, seconded by Commissioner Crawley. The Resolution was adopted by roll call vote.

**Resolution No. 0495-22**, approving a contract extension for on-site case management services between the Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services and the OhioHealth Corporation (\$192,541.87) (Job and Family Services), presented by Vivian Turner, Assistant Director, Job and Family Services.

Ms. Turner reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Commissioner O'Grady moved to approve Resolution 0495-22, seconded by Commissioner Crawley. The Resolution was adopted by roll call vote.

**Resolution No. 0496-22**, authorizing three subgrant award agreements for the provision of community-based services for individuals diverted from the prison system and/or at high risk for future criminal justice involvement through the FY 2022 Targeted Community Alternatives to Prison (TCAP) grant (\$210,000.00) (Justice Policy and Programs), presented by Ruchelle Pride, Director, Justice Policy and Programs.

Ms. Pride reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Commissioner O'Grady moved to approve Resolution 0496-22, seconded by Commissioner Crawley. The Resolution was adopted by roll call vote.

**Resolution No. 0497-22**, authorizing a Private Sewer Agreement with 5M Builders LLC for a sanitary sewer main extension to serve 3836 Emmons Avenue (Sanitary Engineers), presented by Ryan Stowe, Project Engineer, Sanitary Engineers.

Mr. Stowe reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Commissioner O'Grady moved to approve Resolution 0497-22, seconded by Commissioner Crawley. The Resolution was adopted by roll call vote.

**Resolution No. 0498-22**, approving purchases for various Franklin County agencies (\$3,568,724.67) (Purchasing), presented by Megan Perry-Balonier, Director, Purchasing, and Marleise Ryan, Economic Equity Administrator, Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion.

Ms. Perry-Balonier and Ms. Ryan reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Commissioner O’Grady moved to approve Resolution 0498-22, seconded by Commissioner Crawley. The Resolution was adopted by roll call vote.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** Resolution to consider the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2023 Tax Budget for Franklin County.

Commissioner Crawley: I would like to open the Public Hearing. Would anyone like to speak regarding this Public Hearing? Seeing none, I will close the Public Hearing and have the Deputy Clerk read the resolution into the record.

**Resolution No. 0499-22**, authorizing the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2023 Tax Budget for Franklin County (Board of Commissioners), presented by Zachary Talarek, Director, Office of Management and Budget.

Mr. Talarek reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

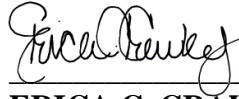
Commissioner O’Grady moved to approve Resolution 0499-22, seconded by Commissioner Crawley. The Resolution was adopted by roll call vote.

//

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:04 A.M.

**(Signature Page Follows)**

These minutes are a general summary of the Commissioners' General Session meeting on Tuesday, June 28, 2022.



---

**ERICA C. CRAWLEY, PRESIDENT**

---

**JOHN O'GRADY**



---

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

Submitted by:



---

Lauren M. Graessle

//bar