

Commissioners' Journal
March 4, 2025

The Geauga County Board of Commissioners met in session on March 4, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Offices located at 12611 Ravenwood Drive, in Room B303 in Chardon, Ohio.

It is declared and determined that all formal actions of the Board of County Commissioners concerning and relating to the adoption of all resolutions that were adopted in this meeting, and that all deliberations of the Board of County Commissioners that resulted in such formal action were open to the public and were in compliance with all legal requirements, including section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

The President of the Board, James W. Dvorak opened the meeting at 9:33 a.m. by leading the Board and audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Commissioner Spidalieri was absent for a portion of the meeting because he was attending to a county matter.*

Commissioner Dvorak read the following prayer:

A prayer for today

Father God, your Word promises that you will guide me if I seek you

Show me how to order my time and arrange my schedule to accomplish your will

In Jesus name

Amen

MEETING MINUTES

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and execute the minutes for the meeting of February 20, 2025.

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	<i>Commissioner Spidalieri</i>	<i>Absent*</i>
	<i>Commissioner Brakey</i>	<i>Aye</i>
	<i>Commissioner Dvorak</i>	<i>Aye</i>

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and execute the minutes for the meeting of February 27, 2025.

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	<i>Commissioner Spidalieri</i>	<i>Absent</i>
	<i>Commissioner Brakey</i>	<i>Aye</i>
	<i>Commissioner Dvorak</i>	<i>Aye</i>

APPROVE FINANCIALS

Budget and Finance Manager Adrian Gorton explained the financials for today as including an Appropriations transfer to the Sheriff for miscellaneous refunds, reimbursements and web checks that were deposited into the General Fund; Cash transfer from the Sick and Vacation Accrual Fund to the General Fund to replace amounts paid by the General Fund for retirement payouts of sick and vacation time over the last few years from the Sheriff's Office; Then and Now for the Board of Developmental Disabilities to Fogle/Stenzel Architects Incorporated for design work for the external addition of a stair case on House D and from the Commissioners' Office to Kimberly A Baioni for appointed counsel fees from 2023 that were not previously encumbered; Travel request for the Common Pleas Court; a Purchase Order for Water Resources to Junction Auto Sales for a 2024 GMC Terrain AWD SUV replacement vehicle, replacing a 2019 Ford Fusion (\$11,000.00 trade-in allowance); a payment for the Sheriff to Motorola Solutions, Incorporated for a 9-1-1 Eventide Logging Recorder System in the amount of \$67,201.04, a payment for the Sheriff to Aviat US Incorporated for microwave tower upgrades including new antennas and waveguide systems for the towers in the amount of \$183,634.30; and Revenue Certifications for the Commissioners in the new County Agricultural Society Fund and from the Board of Elections Special Election Fund for additional unbudgeted revenues to be received in 2025.

Commissioner Brakey asked for additional information on the Microwave Tower Upgrades. Mr. Gorton explained that the system was outdated and needed to be updated, and it went in conjunction with the purchase of all new 800 MHz radios. Clerk Christine Blair added that this project had gone out to bid.

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Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and execute Resolution #25-034 itemizing the financials for the meeting of March 4, 2025.

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	<i>Commissioner Spidalieri</i>	<i>Absent</i>
	<i>Commissioner Brakey</i>	<i>Aye</i>
	<i>Commissioner Dvorak</i>	<i>Aye</i>

PROBATE / JUVENILE COURT – OHIO DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES SUBSIDY GRANT (RECLAIM) AMENDMENT #1 FOR FY2025 FUNDING

Court Administrator Kim Laurie explained that this is an annual amendment that allows them to re-align funds or to change programming. Ms. Laurie explained that part of this years amendment includes the addition of prosocial activities and adding vendors in the FLIP program portion of the grant.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and authorize the President of the Board to execute the Ohio Department of Youth Services Subsidy Grant (RECLAIM) Amendment #1 for FY2025 funding for the FLIP program, Monitoring, Screening and Assessments and the addition of Prosocial Activities in the amount of \$4,800.00, for a total grant amount for 2025 of \$533,721.46.

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	<i>Commissioner Spidalieri</i>	<i>Absent</i>
	<i>Commissioner Brakey</i>	<i>Aye</i>
	<i>Commissioner Dvorak</i>	<i>Aye</i>

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – ADVERTISE FOR BIDS – CDBG PROJECTS – CHAGRIN FALLS PARK COMMUNITY CENTER – ROOF REPLACEMENT AND MAPLE LEAF RESIDENCES – ROOF AND WINDOW REPLACEMENT

Project Coordinator Elaine Malkamaki asked the Board to grant permission to advertise for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects, including the Chagrin Falls Park Community Center Roof Replacement and the Maple Leaf Residences for Roof and Window Replacements in three homes. Ms. Malkamaki noted that the Bid Opening will be held on March 26 and advertised in the Maple Leaf and on the County website on March 6.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to grant permission to advertise for Bids for the CDBG Project – Chagrin Falls Park Community Center – Roof Replacement to be held on Wednesday, March 26, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. Notice of this Bid Opening will be advertised on March 6, 2025, and on the County website.

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	<i>Commissioner Spidalieri</i>	<i>Absent</i>
	<i>Commissioner Brakey</i>	<i>Aye</i>
	<i>Commissioner Dvorak</i>	<i>Aye</i>

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to grant permission to advertise for Bids for the CDBG Project – Maple Leaf Residences – Roof and Window Replacement to be held on Wednesday, March 26, 2025, at 2:10 p.m. Notice of this Bid Opening will be advertised on March 6, 2025, and on the County website.

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	<i>Commissioner Spidalieri</i>	<i>Absent</i>
	<i>Commissioner Brakey</i>	<i>Aye</i>
	<i>Commissioner Dvorak</i>	<i>Aye</i>

MAINTENANCE – CONTRACT MAINTENANCE FORM #1 – INCREASE AGREEMENT – PROFESSIONAL DESIGN SERVICES – CT CONSULTANTS, INCORPORATED / VERDANTAS ARCHITECTURE, INCORPORATEDV- ANNEX BUILDING BASEMENT REMODEL

Project Manager Charles Tkach asked the Board to approve the Contract Maintenance Form #1 increasing the contract with CT Consultants / Verdantas for the Annex basement remodel. Ms. Brakey noted that a services line item was for a 3D model and asked for confirmation if that had been declined. Mr. Tkach noted that it had indeed been declined.

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Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and execute Contract Maintenance Form #1, increasing the Agreement for Professional Design Services with CT Consultants, Incorporated / Verdantas Architecture, Incorporated for the Geauga County Courthouse Annex Building Basement Remodel for additional architectural and mechanical services related to the scope of the project in the amount of \$5,650.00 for a new not to exceed amount of \$41,650.00.

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	<i>Commissioner Spidalieri</i>	<i>Absent</i>
	<i>Commissioner Brakey</i>	<i>Aye</i>
	<i>Commissioner Dvorak</i>	<i>Aye</i>

MAINTENANCE – CONTRACT MAINTENANCE FORM #1 – INCREASE SERVICE CONTRACT AGREEMENT – GABLE ELEVATOR, INCORPORATED

Contract Coordinator Matt Sieracki asked the Board to approve the Contract Maintenance Form #1 increasing the Contract with Gable Elevator, noting that there was just an addendum to add the Courthouse Elevator, and with some repairs we need to increase the contract amount.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and execute Contract Maintenance Form #1, increasing the service Contract Agreement with Gable Elevator, Incorporated for additional services and repairs on elevators, as needed in the amount of \$35,000.00 for a new not to exceed amount of \$50,000.00.

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	<i>Commissioner Spidalieri</i>	<i>Absent</i>
	<i>Commissioner Brakey</i>	<i>Aye</i>
	<i>Commissioner Dvorak</i>	<i>Aye</i>

MAINTENANCE – CONTRACT MAINTENANCE FORM #1 – INCREASE SERVICE CONTRACT AGREEMENT – COUNTYWIDE REPLACEMENT WINDOWS, INCORPORATED

Mr. Sieracki asked the Board to approve the Contract Maintenance Form #1 increasing the contract with Countywide Replacement Windows for additional window projects. Mr. Sieracki noted that they are looking to replace the windows in the Bell Tower Building at the Fairgrounds and it is more intensive than anticipated. Ms. Brakey asked why it was more intensive. Mr. Sieracki explained that area itself is very small, making it difficult to get windows into the area, and may require a lift and scaffolding.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and execute Contract Maintenance Form #1, increasing the service Contract Agreement with Countywide Replacement Windows, Incorporated for additional window projects as needed in the amount of \$20,000.00 for a new not to exceed amount of \$50,000.00.

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	<i>Commissioner Spidalieri</i>	<i>Absent</i>
	<i>Commissioner Brakey</i>	<i>Aye</i>
	<i>Commissioner Dvorak</i>	<i>Aye</i>

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES – SERVICE CONTRACT AGREEMENT – BILL CONTI PLUMBING, LLC

Director Nicholas Gorris asked the Board to approve a service contract agreement with Bill Conti Plumbing for plumbing services. Mr. Gorris noted that they use this contract to do testing on the backflow devices annually and includes on call services if needed.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and execute the service Contract Agreement with Bill Conti Plumbing, LLC to perform plumbing services, as needed at various locations within the Department for a one-year period, effective March 4, 2025, in an amount not to exceed \$2,500.00.

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	<i>Commissioner Spidalieri</i>	<i>Absent</i>
	<i>Commissioner Brakey</i>	<i>Aye</i>
	<i>Commissioner Dvorak</i>	<i>Aye</i>

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COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE – REQUEST FOR PARTIAL PAYMENT #17 – INFINITY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, INCORPORATED

Acting County Administrator Linda Burhenne asked the Board to approve the President to execute the request for partial payment #17 for Infinity on the Courthouse Expansion project.

Ms. Brakey asked Ms. Burhenne to explain the process of approval on the pay requests. Ms. Burhenne explained that the County has an Owners Representative, NV5, that is the liaison between the County and the Contractor, Ms. Burhenne attends the weekly meetings, Director Glen Vernick does a weekly walk with the Construction Manager and Mr. Gorris handles the Prevailing Wage, so there are multiple sets of eyes on the project, that are more than just the project manager.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and authorize the President of the Board to execute the Request for Partial Payment #17 for Infinity Construction Company, Incorporated for the Geauga County Courthouse Expansion, GMP Phase #1 and Phase #2 Expenses in the amount of \$799,702.55.

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	Commissioner Spidalieri	Absent
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE – EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to move into Executive Session for the purpose of considering the purchase of property for public purposes, if premature disclosure of information would give an unfair competitive or bargaining advantage to a person whose personal, private interest is adverse to the general public interest, pursuant to O.R.C. 121.22 (G)(2).

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	Commissioner Spidalieri	Absent
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

The Board moved into Executive Session at 9:48 a.m. with Ms. Burhenne. Commissioner Spidalieri joined the Board in Executive Session. The Board returned at 10:18 a.m. and as a result the following actions were taken:

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to authorize the President of the Board to finalize negotiations on a property being considered for expansion of county services.

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to authorize Commissioner Spidalieri and Acting County Administrator to begin negotiations on a property being considered for expansion of county services.

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE – EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: by Commissioner Spidalieri, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the employment and compensation of a public employee, pursuant to O.R.C. 121.22 (G)(1).

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

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The Board moved into Executive Session at 10:20 a.m. with Ms. Burhenne and Human Resources Administrator Kathy Hostutler. The Board returned at 10:38 a.m. with no action taken.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Courthouse Change Orders – 1 for Electrical, Data and Cabinetry and 1 for Alarm System

Ms. Burhenne explained that there are two proposed change orders for the Courthouse. The first, noted as Infinity #16 includes a number of things, mill work, cabinetry, countertops, electrical that includes data and power drops for additional printers and access for the gate for the back secure parking lot, intercom systems, podiums and that is over \$50,000.00. Regarding Infinity #17, Ms. Burhenne noted that several weeks ago the Sheriff was looking at a silent alarm system for \$200,000.00 and instead has gone back and looked at other options and has chosen to go with one similar to what is going into this building, that utilizes the fire alarm system and is only \$7,700.00. Ms. Brakey has a hard time with the \$50,000.00 worth of changes, specifically data drops, and that these change orders really add up and questioned why some of these things are not included in the original design. There was a brief discussion about the items in the list regarding duct tape, countertops and that we need to really be scrutinizing these. Ms. Blair clarified that while the items labeled Infinity # 16 and #17 are before the Board, only four change orders have been approved on the project to date. I don't want confusion out there that we have done that many. Ms. Brakey asked if Court Technology and NV5 could come and explain these changes.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to approve moving forward with the Infinity Change Order #17 regarding the alarm system in the amount of \$7,700.

<i>Roll Call Vote:</i>	<i>Commissioner Spidalieri</i>	<i>Aye</i>
	<i>Commissioner Brakey</i>	<i>Aye</i>
	<i>Commissioner Dvorak</i>	<i>Aye</i>

AIRPORT AUTHORITY DISCUSSION

Ms. Brakey explained that she wanted to talk about the Airport, noting that she had met with several airport representatives and asked for some documents, some of which they provided. Ms. Brakey expressed that giving \$1.33 million dollars to the airport to fund a new hangar and some other projects is an irresponsible use of taxpayer money. There is an agreement between the Airport Authority and the Commissioners, and one part of that agreement is that the Airport Authority has to maintain its facilities, while the Commissioners own the land, and the buildings. The Airport Authority provided information to her that some of the hangars are such poor condition, that they cannot charge market rent. Ms. Brakey mentioned former Commissioner Lennon brought up in the fall that they have a 32-person waiting list, if that is the case the market is not functioning. If you have high demand, you raise your prices and shouldn't have government subsidy as a result. Instead of asking taxpayers to fund the new construction, the Airport needs to adjust its rental rates to meet demand. Ms. Brakey added that this makes no financial sense for taxpayers, as the Airport keeps all revenue and that the County would be footing all the bills. Ms. Brakey expressed that we are being rushed into this deal due to FAA grant dollars with a deadline, spending \$1.33 million taxpayer money for approximately \$500,000.00. That is not a good deal; it is a government handout, not economic development. She is not in favor of it and asks that her fellow Commissioners support her on this and not fund this project with taxpayer money.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Newell Howard, South Russell Village asked when the Airport issue was going to be resolved, or they will lose all that money. He asked about the Prosecutor's Office, if they have received a response, how often we contact them, are they responding and when they were going to handle the issue with the Prosecutor. Mr. Howard continued to express his concern about the airport.

Anastasia Nicholas, Chagrin Valley Times reporter, asked Ms. Brakey to explain her comment about economic development. Ms. Brakey explained that when she asks how the airport benefits the average county resident and she is told economic development, but when you flush that out and there is no solid answer that makes sense. Ms. Nicholas asked Mr. Spidalieri to respond to the economic development impact aspect of the airport and what it does for the county.

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Mr. Spidalieri explained that the Airport Board over the years and early days even when he first became a commissioner that they understood that they would not receive more than \$20,000.00 to run the airport. Mr. Spidalieri feels that the Commissioners have failed the airport, and the business community by not investing earlier on, as airports around us have grown and developed. If you bring in business owners from the community, you will see the commercial traffic that flies in for meetings that is based on business, which creates jobs. Mr. Spidalieri feels that by not supporting them all these years, this is playing catch up, using the cost of legal fees over the years that have gone nowhere, we would have an incredible amount of dollars that could have gone to other infrastructure in this county and while it may not affect every person, but it does affect the business community and that is huge. Mr. Spidalieri stated that we need to set this airport up so that years from now, Commissioners won't have to worry, because it was taken care of. Mr. Spidalieri mentioned the recent projects that have been completed that have and are continuing to improve safety and if the expansion can be done to reach a 4,000 square foot runway, that will again increase the types of business traffic that will fly in. Mr. Spidalieri noted that he has no personal interest in the airport, he doesn't have a hangar, has never had a hangar and doesn't purchase fuel there, but he does go to the pancake breakfast to support them.

Ms. Brakey noted that right now, it is really a hobbyist airport. Mr. Spidalieri disagreed, adding that he knows of at least three companies that use the airport for weekly / bi-weekly meetings. Mr. Spidalieri mentioned the study that is completed by ODOT and the FAA regarding what it does for the County. Ms. Brakey added that she read the study, and does not find it persuasive, noting a \$7.00 fly-in fee if someone is there to collect it or purchase fuel. Ms. Brakey stated that the arguments that she has heard about economic development, just don't logically follow what she is seeing. Mr. Spidalieri mentioned the new hangar that they want to build, that some of the spaces are designed to hold larger aircraft, which will attract other customers. Ms. Brakey added that the runway can be extended, but it is limited by roadways on each end. Mr. Spidalieri stated that the Airport Board has had discussions with property owners and look to maybe being able to get to that 4,000 square foot length. Mr. Spidalieri stated that the old hangars are wooden and had to have emergency repairs done due to a snow load, they are paid for and do generate some revenue but are not the new hangar that has higher rent. Ms. Brakey expressed that supply and demand are out of whack, if they have a wait list of 32 people, they need to raise the rental rates. Ms. Brakey doesn't feel they should be subsidizing somebody's hobby when we have people in the county who are struggling to pay their property taxes. Mr. Spidalieri expressed that they have a difference of opinion on this, noting that as a business owner in Middlefield, he has spoken to business owners in the area that have planes and use the airport, but we are really missing out on are that the facility is outdated compared to other airports. Ms. Brakey noted that she went and visited the Portage County airport and feels that the people that benefit from the airport are the ones that should be paying for it, not the average taxpayers. Mr. Spidalieri noted that it's a county airport, it's our airport and we should maintain it. Ms. Brakey added that per the agreement, the airport authority should be maintaining the buildings, and they are not doing that. They discussed the community programs the airport offers, including those for kids, and how those programs can be a great asset. They don't have the revenue to do the larger projects, and Mr. Spidalieri stated that these things should have been being done twenty-five years ago when it was cheaper to build, but instead it is triple the cost now to do it. Mr. Spidalieri added that no one is going to convince me otherwise, that it is a value. Ms. Brakey added that there is no strategic or business plan. Mr. Spidalieri stated it's a requirement of the FAA, to have a five-year plan, but that it would only be construction, and they were able to do the runway lighting and the parallel taxiway, and when those are complete, Baker, the Consultant will update the five-year plan, and then the next steps to complete would be these items. Ms. Brakey added that I am a numbers person, I asked them to show me the numbers. The argument from the airport was that they can build this hangar, and they rent the space and get revenue to fix the other buildings. Ms. Brakey asked for the business case and didn't get anything. Mr. Spidalieri explained that they have been careful on not asking for more than they needed, and hope that they will get the votes needed for the project, that in years to come this airport will be in a much better position. Ms. Brakey added that she has heard emotional reasons but hasn't seen any facts and figures to convince her that this is a good thing for Geauga County and until she sees that she is not going to subsidize this project.

Ms. Burhenne asked a question, for clarification, that if the airport does not receive the million dollars will they lose this FAA funding? Ms. Brakey expressed that she didn't think they could build a hangar for that amount of money, and they don't have the money. It was presented as they build a hangar and use the funding for other projects. Ms. Burhenne expressed, do they

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have to build a hangar, can they do other projects with the funding, like the office space and the pilot lounge? Mr. Spidalieri added that at the end of the day, they could do those fix up projects, but it doesn't generate revenue, like the hangar project would. Mr. Spidalieri stated that he is looking at the opportunity down the road, and that is what we should be planning for.

Ms. Nicholas asked Mr. Spidalieri how his business relates to the conversation. Mr. Spidalieri stated that his business is in Middlefield, and he talks to the other business owners in the area, including Burton and that the airport has been used to bring clients into their factory to do business, which could result in jobs in the county.

Diane Jones, Auburn Township, addressed Mr. Spidalieri that he says he has no interest or benefit from the airport; however, research has indicated that he may own a helicopter that is listed for sale at the airport. Mr. Spidalieri stated that his helicopter is not based at the airport, that he has never had a hangar at the airport, he houses his helicopter at his house. Ms. Jones expressed that his business listing has his helicopter listed at the airport, to which Mr. Spidalieri again stressed that he has never had a hangar at the airport.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- a) *A monthly report filed by the Geauga County Sheriff's Office of an account of expenses for the Prisoner Transport for the month ending January 2025 as required by O.R.C. 325.07.*

- b) *Ohio Department of Taxation, Journal Entry 25-01-0007 regarding reappraisals and triennial updates for Counties in the State of Ohio, pursuant to OAC 5703-25-07*

OTHER

The Board reviewed upcoming events.

MEETINGS

- Tue., 3/4 ADP Meeting, 2:00 p.m. County Office Building, Room A334*

- Tue., 3/11 Planning Commission, 7:30 a.m., Geauga County Offices, Room A334 (Third Floor)*

- Tue., 3/11 The Commissioners will hold session at 9:30 a.m. that will include a Public Hearing for the Proposed Rehiring of Retirant at 10:00 a.m.*

- Wed., 3/12 Board of Revision, 9:00 a.m. Auditor's Appraisal Conference Room*

- Mon., 3/17 Family First Council, 1:30 p.m. County Office Building, B167-168 (First Floor)*

- Tue., 3/18 The Commissioners will hold session at 9:30 a.m. that will include Public Hearing #1 for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Small Cities Program for FY2025 at 9:45 a.m.*

- Tue., 3/25 The Commissioners will hold session at 9:30 a.m.*

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BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to adjourn the meeting at 11:19 a.m.

Geauga County Board of Commissioners

James W. Dvorak

Carolyn Brakey, Esq.

Ralph Spidalieri

Christine Blair, Commissioners' Clerk

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