

Commissioners' Journal
February 3, 2026

The Geauga County Board of Commissioners met in session on February 3, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Offices located at 12611 Ravenwood Drive, Room B303, 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 9:30 a.m. and the Chardon High School Senior Class Officers led the Board and audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chardon High School Senior Class Officers briefly introduced themselves, explained a little about why they became class officers, and talked about their plans after graduation.

Aubrey Fetchik, a Senior Class Officer, explained that her family has always been involved with the Chardon schools and that she loved being a part of it and the school spirit. After high school, she plans to attend Washington & Jefferson College, majoring in Medicinal Chemistry and playing volleyball. She wants to go to pharmacy school.

Haidyn Bunker, Senior Class Officer, explained that she is very busy and cares a lot about public service. She plans to attend the US Military Academy at West Point and study international affairs. She hopes to become a diplomat or something in higher government one day.

Morgan Kilpeck, Senior Class Officer, explained that she has a passion for organizing events, and wanted to unite the senior class. She will be attending The Ohio State University and is looking at pediatric medicine.

Emily Eads, Senior Class Officer, explained that she had recently attended Buckeye Girls State playing a role in a state position and really enjoyed the leadership role. She will be attending The Ohio State University majoring in Biology on the pre-dental track.

Henry Sweet, Student Council Vice President, explained that his family, mainly his mom, was his encouragement into leadership, to be involved and help people. Mr. Sweet stated that he will be attending The Ohio State University, majoring in mechanical engineering.

Walter Sweet, Senior Class Officer, explained that his family pushed him towards leadership and to be part of student council. After high school, he will be attending The Ohio State University majoring in bio-medical engineering in the pre-dental track.

TJ Adair, Executive Student Council President, explained that his interest in public service came mainly from his dad, who served in the US Army. His father's service allowed them to move around a lot, gave him the experience of different cultures, and the ability to see how you can help people in many different ways. Mr. Adair stated that he will be attending the US Military Academy at West Point with his goal of becoming an aviator in the Army, and maybe one day run for President.

Superintendent Michael Hanlon thanked the Board for the opportunity for allowing the students to be here today and listening to them today. He has no doubt that these students will make a great impact and be positive contributors to our community.

Commissioner Dvorak told the kids to work hard with your passion, whatever it may be.

Mr. Dvorak read the following prayer:

Heavenly Father,
With all this snow and cold weather in Geauga County,
Holy one, warm our hearts with acts of kindness, inspire us with the beauty of your creation, and watch over those who work to keep us safe and well.
Amen.

Commissioners' Journal
February 3, 2026

Ohio Supreme Court Appointed Sitting Probate and Juvenile Court Judge Berger wanted to introduce himself to the Board of Commissioners, explaining that he has served fourteen different counties, and normally it is to cover vacations. However, this appointment is for six months. He is a retired Probate and Juvenile Court Judge for Portage County. This appointment comes with administrative duties and wants to come before them since he will be seated through the end of May in Geauga County until Judge Grendell returns. Judge Berger expressed gratitude for the staff in the Probate Juvenile Court, noting that they are extremely efficient, kind and handle the public well.

Commissioner Brakey briefly explained that in the past the Probate / Juvenile Court has not attended Budget Hearings and asked if he would be willing to attend this year. Judge Berger expressed that he did not know anything about the budget, that he was working to clear the docket and keep the court running smoothly. He declined to commit one way or another, and indicated he would discuss the issue with staff.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Residents from the County came before the Board to express their feelings, frustrations and concerns about NOACA, that included Diane Winans, Christine Stenzel, Carol Roberts, and Renee Chesnes. Their main concerns centered around leaving NOACA, that it is not doing good for Geauga County, the restrictions and representation of Geauga County and its seats.

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE - COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

County Administrator Amy Bevan reported on the items approved, as authorized by Resolution #26-003 under the direction and supervision of the County Commissioners that was approved January 6, 2026, pursuant to O.R.C. 305.30.

Ms. Bevan explained that the County Administrator approved the following items on January 27, 2026, January 30, 2026, and February 2, 2026:

January 27, 2026 –

Department on Aging:

Approved hiring Magaly Rios to the position of Full-time Assistant Senior Centers Manager (#1037) to be effective February 9, 2026, at the rate of \$30.00 per hour (Grade 12, Step 4) with a one-year probationary period. This offer of employment is contingent upon the successful completion of the required pre-employment conditions.

Maintenance:

Approved an unpaid medical leave of absence for Matthew Bikulic, Custodian (#1906) for up to two hundred sixteen (216) hours during the period January 15, 2026 through February 20, 2026, for time not covered by accrued sick and vacation leave.

January 30, 2026 –

Maintenance:

Approved hiring Wayne Blankenship to the position of Maintenance Worker (#1904) at the rate of \$20.46 per hour (Grade 6, Step 5) to be effective February 9, 2026, with a one-year probationary period. This offer of employment is contingent upon the successful completion of the required pre-employment conditions.

Department of Water Resources:

Approved hiring Shawn Allen to the position of Wastewater Operator I (#2326) at the rate of \$27.76 per hour to be effective February 23, 2026, with a one-year probationary period. This offer of employment is contingent upon the successful completion of the required pre-employment conditions.

February 2, 2026 –

Dog Warden:

Accepted the resignation of Lacey Portman, Part-time Shelter Attendant (#1607) to be effective February 15, 2026.

Granted permission to advertise for the position of Part-time Shelter Attendant (#1607). This position will remain posted until filled.

Commissioners' Journal
February 3, 2026

Maintenance:

Approved hiring Dennis Clarke to the position of Electrician (#1925) at the rate of \$25.48 per hour (Grade 11, Step 1) to be effective February 9, 2026, with a one-year probationary period. This offer of employment is contingent upon the successful completion of the required pre-employment conditions.

Approved and executed a Notice of Commencement of a Public Improvement, pursuant to R.C. 1311.252, for Air Force One to provide and install three (3) new split cooling systems at the Geauga County Sheriff's Office.

Approved and executed a Notice of Commencement of a Public Improvement, pursuant to R.C. 1311.252, for Air Force One to remove and install a new hot water boiler in the Geauga County Safety Center.

Approved and executed a Notice of Commencement of a Public Improvement, pursuant to R.C. 1311.252, for Trane U.S. Incorporated to provide and install a new Building Automation System (BAS) at the Geauga County Safety Center.

MEETING MINUTES

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to approve and execute the minutes for the meeting of October 28, 2025.

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

APPROVE FINANCIALS

Budget and Finance Manager Adrian Gorton explained the financials for today as including Supplemental Appropriations in the Commissioners Reserve Fund for Phase 1 starter appropriations for 2026 to cover change orders, new equipment and other purchases; Cash transfer from the General Fund to the Engineer for office expenses and for the Storm Water Management fund per MOU dated April 30, 2013; Formal contract PO from Community Development to 7145 Pine LLC to re-establish the encumbrance in the Brownfield Remediation Grant fund for the cleaning up of the old Naalco Property; a payment for the Commissioners' Office to Infinity Construction Company for pay request #28 of the Courthouse Expansion Project in the amount of \$950,817.12; a payment for the Common Pleas Court to reimburse for the changes to the Magistrate doors in the new courthouse in the amount of \$33,571.00; a payment for the Sheriff's Office to Expert IT LLC for the licenses for Microsoft Office 365 for their 150 users in the amount of \$66,096.00 and a payment for the Sheriff's Office to Upstate Wholesale Supply, Incorporated for six in car video camera installations in the amount of \$50,922.00.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to approve and execute Resolution #26-019 itemizing the financials for the meeting of February 3, 2026.

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE – REQUEST FOR PARTIAL PAYMENT #29 – INFINITY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY – COURTHOUSE EXPANSION PROJECT

Mr. Gorton asked the Board to approve the request for Partial Payment #29 for Infinity on the Courthouse project.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to approve and authorize the President of the Board to execute the Request for Partial Payment #29 for Infinity Construction Company, Incorporated for the Geauga County Courthouse Expansion Project, GMP Phase #1 and Phase #2 expenses in the amount of \$337,740.51.

Commissioners' Journal
February 3, 2026

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE – ADVERTISE TO ACCEPT COMPETITIVE SEALED PROPOSALS – PREPARATION OF GEAUGA COUNTY COST ALLOCATION PLAN

Mr. Gorton asked the Board to approve advertisement to accept competitive sealed proposals for the preparation of a Geauga County Cost Allocation Plan.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to grant permission to advertise to accept Competitive Sealed Proposals for the Preparation of a Geauga County Cost Allocation Plan, to be held on Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. Notice of this Competitive Sealed Proposal will be advertised on February 5, 2026, February 12, 2026, and on the county website.

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

COUNTY ENGINEER'S OFFICE – UNIT PRICE CONTRACT – GEAUGA HIGHWAY COMPANY – ASPHALT RESURFACING OF GINGERICH ROAD – BURTON TOWNSHIP

Deputy Engineer Shane Hajjar asked the Board to approve and execute the Unit Price Contract with Geauga Highway to resurface Gingerich Road in Burton Township.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to approve and execute the Unit Price Contract with Geauga Highway Company for the Asphalt Resurfacing of Gingerich Road (CH-0034, Section A) in Burton Township in the amount of \$240,465.71.

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

SHERIFF'S OFFICE – RESOLUTION REQUESTING TO ESTABLISH A NEW FUND – JAIL OPIOID REMEDIATION GRANT FUND

Clerk Christine Blair asked the Board to approve a resolution that requests to establish a new fund for the Jail Opioid Remediation Grant Fund to track grant funds for a new Jail Treatment Coordinator.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to approve and execute Resolution #26-023 Requesting to Establish a New Fund called the Jail Opioid Remediation Grant Fund that will be used to account for the expenditure of funds for a new Jail Treatment Coordinator.

Board of County Commissioners, Geauga County, Ohio

Date: February 3, 2026

Resolution: #26-023

RESOLUTION REQUESTING TO ESTABLISH A NEW FUND

WHEREAS, the Geauga County Commissioners are requesting that a new fund be established for the Sheriff and called the Jail Opioid Remediation Grant Fund; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of this new fund is for the deposit of all monies received from the Jail Opioid Remediation Grant and Other Revenue for the appropriate expenditure and distribution of those funds by the Sheriff; and

WHEREAS, the fund will include revenue accounts including but not limited to those which will hold State grant payment income, Other Revenue and Transfer In; and

WHEREAS, the accounts will include standard expense accounts including but not limited to those for salary and other; and

Commissioners' Journal
February 3, 2026

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of County Commissioners does hereby request the Geauga County Auditor establish a new fund for the Sheriff, entitled: Jail Opioid Remediation Grant Fund.

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

DEPARTMENT ON AGING – CONTRACT AGREEMENT – SCHRAFF THOMAS LAW LLC – LEGAL SERVICES TO OLDER ADULTS

Director Jessica Boalt asked the Board to execute the Contract Agreement with Schraff Thomas Law, LLC for legal services to older Adults.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to approve and execute the Contract Agreement with Schraff Thomas Law, LLC for Legal Services to Older Adults to counsel, advise and represent clients that are Geauga County residents age 60 and older for a five-year period, January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2030 for up to seven hundred ninety-eight (798) hours per year for a total not to exceed amount of \$428,007.30.

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

DEPARTMENT ON AGING – RELEASE BID BOND – SCHRAFF THOMAS LAW, LLC – LEGAL SERVICES FOR OLDER ADULTS

Ms. Boalt asked the Board to approve releasing the Bid Bond as it is not necessary to be held for this project.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to release the Bid Bond submitted by Schraff Thomas Law, LLC for the Legal Services for Older Adults, as it is no longer required to be held for this project.

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

DEPARTMENT ON AGING – AUTHORIZE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE CONTRACT AGREEMENT – HZW ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS, LLC – PHASE 1 ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP LIENS AND ACTIVITY AND LAND USE LIMITATIONS RECORDS – 12701 RAVENWOOD DRIVE, CLARIDON TOWNSHIP

Ms. Boalt asked the Board to approve a contract agreement with HZW Environmental Consultants for a Phase 1 environmental site assessment and environmental cleanup liens and activity and land use limitations records for property located at 12701 Ravenwood. Ms. Boalt explained that this was part of the process in the purchase of the property. Ms. Brakey explained that it is mainly related due to an above ground storage tank on the property and is modest cost to ensure we are making a good investment using taxpayer dollars.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to approve and authorize Amy S. Bevan, County Administrator, to execute the Contract Agreement with HZW Environmental Consultants, LLC to conduct a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and Environmental Cleanup Liens and Activity and Land Use Limitations Records Search of PP No. 13-705027 located at 12701 Ravenwood Drive, Claridon Township in an amount not to exceed \$2,875.00, pending Prosecutor approval and certification by the Auditor.

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

Commissioners' Journal
February 3, 2026

DEPARTMENT ON AGING – WAIVE 200 HOUR MAXIMUM VACATION ACCRUAL –
JEANNE MOLZON, RECREATION AND EDUCATION ASSISTANT

Ms. Boalt asked the Board to waive the maximum vacation accrual for Ms. Molzon, as her public service started before her employment with the department and due to staff shortage at the senior center, she was unable to take time off. With a recent employment milestone, Ms. Molzon received additional hours that she has been unable to take.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to waive the 200-hour maximum vacation accrual for Jeanne Molzon, Recreation and Education Assistant, for a period of two-months, effective January 19, 2026 (Payroll #26-03) through March 28, 2026 (Payroll #26-07).

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES – CERTIFICATION REQUEST TO AUDITOR,
REQUEST TO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, QUARTERLY USE OF COUNTY CREDIT
CARDS – GEAUGA CREDIT UNION VISA, QUARTERS 1,2,3 AND 4 – YEAR 2026

Director Nicholas Gorris asked the Board to approve the quarterly use of county credit cards for their Geauga Credit Union Visa. When this was initially done, it was only for the first quarter to allow them to get through the beginning of the year and to get ample funds in place.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to approve and execute the Certification Request to County Auditor, Request to the Board of Commissioners, Quarterly Use of County Credit Cards for the Geauga Credit Union Visa, for Quarters 1, 2, 3 and 4 for the Year 2026.

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE – CHANGE ORDER #1, INCREASE CONTRACT – KASH
MOVING CORP

Ms. Bevan asked the Board to approve Change Order #1 with Kash Moving Corp, which is an increase in the contract to move some additional items from 470 to the Courthouse that were not included in the original move.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to approve and execute Change Order #1, increasing the Contract with Kash Moving Corp for additional items to be moved for courthouse employees, in the amount of \$1,850.00 and extending the date of completion through February 25, 2026, for a new not to exceed amount of \$27,330.00.

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE – RESOLUTION HONORING ROTARY CLUB OF BURTON-
MIDDLEFIELD ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. Dvorak asked the Board to approve a resolution for the Rotary Club of Burton-Middlefield on the occasion of its 75th Anniversary. Ms. Brakey noted that it was interesting seeing all the projects that they have supported over the years.

Mr. Dvorak noted that he had joined the Rotary in 2007, explaining that they did pancakes in the old Berkshire School from 1951 for about 59 years and would raise between \$25-35,000.00 to disburse within the community. The big event now is the Maple Splash event, that includes a pick-up truck that is donated from Preston and is then raffled off with other prizes. During COVID, he helped start a Jeep Invasion event that they raised funds for Veterans, and the Amish Dare program. Mr. Dvorak brought up the special needs fishing event at Walter C. Best Park, and said he is happy to be a part of the Rotary.

Commissioners' Journal
February 3, 2026

Ms. Blair read the following resolution:

Board of County Commissioners, Geauga County, Ohio

Resolution: 26-020

Date: February 3, 2026

**A RESOLUTION HONORING THE ROTARY CLUB OF BURTON-MIDDLEFIELD
ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY**

WHEREAS, on February 23, 1905, Paul Harris, a Chicago attorney, formed the Rotary Club of Chicago with a vision that a diverse group of professionals could meet and exchange ideas. The number of clubs quickly grew across the country; in 1912 the name was changed to Rotary International to reflect its international presence, and by July 1925 there were more than 2,000 clubs across six continents, united by a dedication to community service, best expressed in the motto "Service Above Self"; and

WHEREAS, on April 23, 1951, the Rotary Club of Burton-Middlefield was established and began its mission to provide services to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders; and

WHEREAS, through fundraising efforts such as the Maple Splash Raffle and the Jeep Invasion, the Rotary Club of Burton-Middlefield supports numerous local community projects and programs including public bicycle racks in Middlefield, AED units, lock boxes for seniors, the Geauga County Sheriff's K-9 Unit, the Geauga Park District binocular program, Geauga Faith Rescue Mission, the Amish D.A.R.E. program, the Special Needs Fishing Derby, and volunteer support for local pancake breakfasts, fish fry events, and partnerships with local chambers of commerce; and

WHEREAS, the Rotary Club of Burton-Middlefield extends its service beyond Geauga County through domestic and international humanitarian efforts, including Disaster Aide USA and the Gift of Life Haiti project, as well as initiatives supporting communities in Haiti, Argentina, Ghana, and India, helping to improve lives and strengthen communities around the world; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Geauga County Board of Commissioners do hereby recognize and honor the Rotary Club of Burton-Middlefield on its 75th anniversary and commend the club for its longstanding commitment and dedication to serving the residents in our community and throughout the world.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution becomes part of the permanent record of the Board of Commissioners of Geauga County, Ohio.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to approve and execute Resolution #26-020 Honoring Rotary Club of Burton – Middlefield on the occasion of its 75th Anniversary.

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

**COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE – RESOLUTION TO DESIGNATE THE OFFICIAL
REPRESENTATIVE AND ALTERNATE FOR THE PURPOSE OF VOTING AT MEETINGS
OF THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF OHIO IN 2026**

Ms. Blair asked the Board to approve the resolution designating for CCAO the voting representative and alternate for the year 2026.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to approve and execute Resolution #26-021 to Designate the Official Representative and Alternate for the purpose of voting at meetings of the County Commissioners Association of Ohio in 2026, including James W. Dvorak, Official Representative and Carolyn Brakey as Alternate.

Commissioners' Journal
February 3, 2026

Board of County Commissioners, Geauga County, Ohio

Date: February 3, 2026
Resolution: #26-021

**RESOLUTION TO DESIGNATE THE OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE AND
ALTERNATE FOR THE PURPOSE OF VOTING AT MEETINGS OF THE
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' ASSOCIATION OF OHIO IN 2026**

WHEREAS, Article IV, Section 6, of the Code of Regulations of the County Commissioners' Association of Ohio requires each member county to, for the purpose of voting at any annual or special meeting of the Association, designate an Official Representative and Alternate; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the Official Representative and Alternate for a county organized under the statutory form of county government shall be by resolution of the board of county commissioners; and

WHEREAS, in designating the Official Representative and Alternate only a member of the board of county commissioners is eligible to be designated as the Official Representative and Alternate;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that James W. Dvorak is designated as the Official Voting Representative of Geauga County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Carolyn Brakey is designated as the Alternate Voting Representative of Geauga County.

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE – PLANNING COMMISSION ALTERNATES

The Commissioner's Office is requesting the Board appoint their alternates to the Planning Commission for the Year 2026.

James W. Dvorak stated that he appoints Dave Fabig to serve as his Alternate.

Carolyn Brakey stated that she appoints Dane Davis to serve as her Alternate.

Ralph Spidalieri stated that he appoints Walter Claypool to serve as his Alternate.

**COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE – RESOLUTION TO RATIFY AN AMENDMENT TO
ARTICLE IX OF THE CODE OF REGULATIONS OF THE NORTHEAST OHIO
AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY (NOACA)**

Ms. Brakey said that at recent meetings, residents have come and expressed their feelings about NOACA. While she understands many of their concerns, she believes that they have been misled about the changes to NOACA's Code of Regulations. Under the existing structure, how each county can utilize its allocated Board seats requires majority vote by the Board of Directors, and then must be approved and ratified by all the counties. Ms. Brakey went on to explain that a county can be blocked by doing what they feel is best for that county by another county. This change will allow a county to make changes to their own seats, giving local control while maintaining regional safeguards.

Ms. Brakey went on to explain that NOACA's legal counsel does not feel county ratification of Article IX is required. However, one component of the lawsuit from Mr. Claypool against Mr. Dvorak, NOACA and herself is regarding amendments to Article IX. This is a safeguard, not a concession, responding to a claim that lacks merit. Ms. Brakey noted that she had reviewed prior years' minutes and found that both Mr. Claypool and Commissioner Spidalieri had previously advocated for amending NOACA's bylaws so that Geauga County's representation would consist of two Commissioners and the County Engineer, rather than the three Commissioners currently seated. Ms. Brakey observed that the structure now being opposed is the same one those

Commissioners' Journal
February 3, 2026

individuals had previously championed.

Commissioner Spidalieri expressed that this has been an ongoing issue with NOACA over having four seats and having our Engineer in a seat. Mr. Spidalieri continued, questioning how NOACA did this without ratification by the counties, and who from Geauga County requested NOACA to do this for our county. Mr. Spidalieri noted the three weeks of residents that have come before this Board, and that at the end of the day, this action continues to allow NOACA to have more control over Geauga County.

There was discussion about over the years they had the Engineer as an alternate, and now this removes a Board of Commissioners member from the three seats and put the Engineer in that position. The Board discussed alternates over the years and who was in them, and why those alternates may have been put into those seats at the time.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and execute Resolution #26-022 to Ratify an Amendment to Article IX of the Code of Regulations of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA).

Board of County Commissioners, Geauga County, Ohio

Date: February 3, 2026

Resolution: #26-022

RESOLUTION TO RATIFY AN AMENDMENT TO
ARTICLE IX OF THE CODE OF REGULATIONS OF
THE NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY (NOACA)

WHEREAS, the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the counties of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina and the City of Cleveland and the areawide water quality management agency for the same region; and

WHEREAS, the process for amending NOACA's Code of Regulations is set forth in Article IX (Amendments); and

WHEREAS, on January 9, 2026, the NOACA Board of Directors adopted Resolution 2026-001, which amended Article IX of the Code of Regulations to create a limited exemption to the requirement of county ratification for the list of members in Section 4.2; and

WHEREAS, this amendment provides member counties greater discretion over their respective Board representation; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Geauga County and NOACA both maintain that ratification of amendments to Article IX is not required; however, at its January 23, 2026 organizational meeting, the NOACA Board of Directors unanimously adopted a motion requesting county ratification of the Article IX amendment in response to pending litigation initiated by a former Geauga County alternate member against NOACA and certain members of the Board of County Commissioners of Geauga County; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the position that ratification of amendments to Article IX is unnecessary, the Board of County Commissioners of Geauga County elects to ratify the amendment solely in an abundance of caution and without conceding that such ratification is required; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners of Geauga County hereby ratifies the amendments to Article IX of the NOACA Code of Regulations as adopted by the NOACA Board of Directors on January 9, 2026; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this ratification is intended to be precautionary only and shall not be construed as an acknowledgment that ratification of amendments to Article IX is legally required under the NOACA Code of Regulations; and

Commissioners' Journal
February 3, 2026

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to NOACA indicating such approval and adoption of the amendment to the Code of Regulations by the Geauga County Board of Commissioners; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution becomes part of the permanent record of the Board of Commissioners of Geauga County, Ohio.

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	No
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

BOARD DISCUSSION:

Compensation and Supplementals

Mr. Gorton came before the Board and explained that traditionally when the Board takes action to approve an increase it includes two motions. Mr. Gorton noted that one action is to approve the increase and the second for the supplementals to the departments in the General Fund to fund that increase. Mr. Gorton explained this was the first time the Board took action in December and asked the Board to hold off on that motion for supplementals due to moving parts with the closeout of the year and the budget. During a normal budget season, we make adjustments until the cash carryover is known, and what adjustments the Board would choose to make, but with no unfunded requests in the budget. Mr. Gorton asked the Board to approve the motion for those supplementals in preparation for next week's financials. A few departments will be exempt as some of those have had increases included in their budgets. There was a brief discussion about communication in the future regarding approved increases.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to approve a three percent (3%) supplemental increase within the payroll funds of each County Office and Department within the General Fund to cover pay increases, excluding the Clerk of Courts, Coroner, Probate and Juvenile Court, Prosecutor, Recorder Sheriff's Office and Veterans as those Departments have provided pay increases within their existing budgeted appropriations. Those departments outside of the General Fund will be responsible for processing the necessary supplemental appropriations regarding the increase.

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

Board of Mental Health and Recovery Services Board Member Vacancy

Clerk Christine Blair explained that the Commissioners' Office had been made aware that a Mental Health Board member had resigned from a Commissioner appointed seat and has been appointed by the State. Ms. Blair asked the Board for direction, as the application will need to be adjusted to ensure that the commissioner appointed seats meet requirements. A few current members will be termed out in June. The current seat that is vacant will need to be a consumer of addiction recovery services, so they would need to be in recovery for addiction.

The Board recommended sending out a press release for the current vacant seat and then do another revised version for the next seats that will open in June.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Shipitilo, Russell Township, explained that he had previously asked the question about only \$1.7 million of the \$15 million surplus going back to the taxpayers. Briefly mentioned the qualified and non-qualified levy options and encouraged the Board to investigate other ways to reduce property taxes. Mr. Shippitilo stated that he has recently learned about NOACA and feels they are woke and that the Board needs to hear that the residents say they want nothing to do with a woke organization.

Diane Jones, Auburn Township, asked about the Kash Moving change order on the agenda and what it was for. Ms. Bevan explained that the agreement was to move those employees from one location to the other and this change order was for additional items. Ms. Jones asked if that cost was being added into the courthouse costs. Mr. Gorton added that he was not sure if it was being

Commissioners' Journal
February 3, 2026

included in the cost, as it is a separate agreement; however, the funds for the agreement come out of the same fund, the capital improvement fund.

Gail Roussey, League of Women Voters, explained that they are working with the library and will be hold forums on property taxes and encourage everyone to attend.

Christine Stenzel, Munson Township, asked the Board if they had reviewed the proposal presented by Mr. Claypool and briefly mentioned the discussion regarding NOACA alternates, and that they could be doing so much more if we weren't talking about NOACA.

Newell Howard, South Russell Village, expressed that NOACA collects \$40 million in gas tax dollars every year, inquiring about how much is coming back to Geauga County, no one seems to know. Mr. Dvorak noted that the gas tax goes to the State of Ohio. Mr. Howard continued to argue the point that he wanted to know where he could get a copy of where the money is going, adding that seven years ago NOACA promised a transportation report for Geauga County and it has never been published, asking when we think we were going to see that report.

Steven Oluic, Hambden Township, expressed it was a great day having the students here today, and that it warms his heart to attend the US Military Academy. Mr. Oluic stated that we need to be careful with NOACA as it is taking on a life of its own, noting that they are getting into things that were not created to be a part of. Mr. Oluic asked if they could have a public meeting to discuss NOACA.

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE – EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

Roll Call Vote:	Commissioner Spidalieri	Aye
	Commissioner Brakey	Aye
	Commissioner Dvorak	Aye

The Board moved into Executive Session at 11:13 a.m. with Ms. Bevan and Deputy County Administrator Mark Jimison. The Board returned at 11:32 a.m. and as a result, no action was taken.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- a) A weekly report filed by the County Dog Warden of all dogs seized, impounded, redeemed or destroyed for the weeks ending January 21, 2026, and January 28, 2026, as required by O.R.C. 955.12.
- b) Prosecutor's Office - Delinquent Tax 2025 Report

OTHER

The Board reviewed upcoming events.

MEETINGS

Tue., 2/10 Planning Commission, 7:30 a.m., County Office Building, Room A334, Third Floor

Tue., 2/10 The Commissioners will hold session at 9:30 a.m.

Wed., 2/11 Tax Incentive Review Committee meetings, 9:00 a.m. Bainbridge, 10:00 a.m. Middlefield and 1:00 p.m. Chardon, Auditor's Office, Chardon, Ohio

Mon., 2/16 **County offices will be closed for general business due to the President's Day holiday. Twenty-four-hour operations will continue to operate as usual.**

Thu., 2/19 The Commissioners will hold session at 9:30 a.m.

Mon., 2/23 Family First Council, 1:30 p.m., County Office Building

Commissioners' Journal
February 3, 2026

Tue., 2/24 The Commissioners will hold session at 9:30 a.m.

BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to adjourn the meeting at 11:33 a.m.

Geauga County Board of Commissioners

James W. Dvorak

Carolyn Brakey, Esq.

Ralph Spidalieri

Christine Blair, Commissioners' Clerk

Commissioners' Journal
February 3, 2026

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK