

Commissioners' Journal
March 10, 2026

The Geauga County Board of Commissioners met in session on March 10, 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. by leading the Board and audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

*Commissioner Spidalieri was absent from today's meeting.

Commissioner Dvorak read the following prayer:

A morning prayer

All powerful and eternal God, splendor of true light and never-ending day: at this return of the morning hour, chase away the sins of mankind and fill our minds with the glory of your coming. Through Christ, our Lord.

Amen

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one signed the sheet to comment about items on today's agenda.

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 March 9, 2026:

Water Resources:

Approved and executed the Service Contract Agreement with Cummins Incorporated d.b.a. Cummins Sales and Services to perform generator repairs, as needed for Wastewater and Water locations with Cummins generators for a one-year period, to be effective March 9, 2026, in an amount not to exceed \$10,000.00 (\$8,000.00 Wastewater, \$2,000.00 Water).

Liquor License:

Concurred with the Auburn Township Trustees in not requesting a hearing on the Liquor License being requested by White Barn Brands, LLC The Mercantile located at 17720 Ravenna Road, Auburn, Ohio (OCT NEW 10013276-1).

APPROVE FINANCIALS

Budget and Finance Manager Adrian Gorton explained the financials for today as including Supplemental Appropriations in the General Fund from ADP to increase their Contract Services account so they can hire outside legal services; Encumbrance decrease from Water Resources to reduce a contract with NPM Holdings LLC that had been inadvertently increased beyond the competitive bidding threshold; Travel requests for the Common Pleas Court; a payment for ADP to Image Access, Incorporated for the Opus Book eye book scanner in the amount of \$58,782.00; a payment for the Commissioners' Office to Infinity Construction Company for pay request #30 of the Courthouse Expansion project in the amount of \$406,967.97; and a payment for the Engineer's Office to Concord Road Equipment to outfit a new vehicle chassis with all the equipment required for a new plow truck including the bed, plow and hydraulics in the amount of \$140,993.15.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and execute Resolution #26-040 itemizing the financials for the meeting of March 10, 2026.

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

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE – REJECT PROPOSALS – PREPARATION OF GEAUGA COUNTY COST ALLOCATION PLAN

Mr. Gorton asked to reject the proposals submitted by MGT and Maximus for the preparation of Geauga County Cost Allocation Plan. It was noted that the error in the specifications allowed for email submission.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to reject the proposals submitted by MGT and Maximus for the Preparation of a Geauga County Cost Allocation Plan, due to an error in the specifications regarding submission.

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

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE – RE-ADVERTISE – COMPETITIVE SEALED PROPOSALS – PREPARATION OF GEAUGA COUNTY COST ALLOCATION PLAN

Mr. Gorton asked the Board to re-advertise Competitive Sealed Proposals for the Preparation of a Geauga County Cost Allocation Plan.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to grant permission to re-advertise to accept Competitive Sealed Proposals for the Preparation of a Geauga County Cost Allocation Plan to be held on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 2:45 p.m. Notice of this Competitive Sealed Proposal will be advertised on March 12, 2026, March 19, 2026, and on the county website.

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

DISCUSSION – INFINITY CONSTRUCTION – REDUCTION IN RETAINAGE – COURTHOUSE EXPANSION PROJECT

Brett Bestgen, Senior Project Manager, Infinity Construction, explained that they would like to reduce the retainage on the project from five percent to two percent. The current retainage is around \$900,000.00; reducing it to two percent would bring the amount down to around \$375,000.00. Pay request #30 will be a standard pay request, and #31 would be a retainage reduction. Mr. Bestgen briefly discussed the remaining pieces of the project that need to be completed. Ms. Bevan explained that they initially held daily meetings, which have since been reduced to twice a week, and stated that she supports this process.

AUDITOR'S OFFICE – OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE, ENGAGEMENT SERVICES WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES (LGS) 2025 GAAP CONVERSION – YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2025

Chief Operations Officer Pam McMahan asked the Board to approve an engagement with the Ohio Auditor of State's Local Government Services (LGS) for the 2025 GAAP conversion. Commissioner Brakey asked if the county was required by law to do the conversion. Ms. McMahan replied that it requires a standard accounting principle, and assists with the bond rating. It combines data from all departments, which is reviewed to prepare a report for the State Auditor, followed by a more detailed review.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and authorize the President of the Board to execute the Ohio Auditor of State, for the engagement of services with Local Government Services (LGS) for the 2025 GAAP conversion for the year ending December 31, 2025, in an amount not to exceed \$56,000.00.

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

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RECORDER'S OFFICE – DOCROUTER PLUS USER AGREEMENT – ERECORDING PARTNERS NETWORK, LLC

Recorder Celesta Mullins asked the Board to approve the DocRouter Plus agreement that allows documents to be electronically transmitted between departments, pending security analysis by ADP. Ms. Mullins stated that there is no cost to the county and that the agreement will assist the county in complying with the electronic recording requirements enacted by Senate Bill 94. Ms. Mullins explained that the customers, mainly banks, are charged the fee for the service. Ms. Mullins explained that the Prosecutor's Office has been working on the terms of this agreement for almost a year.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and execute the DocRouter Plus User Agreement between the eRecording Partners Network, LLC and the Geauga County Board of Commissioners that will allow certain documents to be electronically transmitted by the County to one or more departments or offices within the County for recording purposes, pending ADP completing their security analysis.

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

MAINTENANCE – SERVICE CONTRACT AGREEMENT – JAMES W. ROSS INCORPORATED D.B.A. SWIFT FIRST AID

Contract Coordinator Liz Rubino asked the Board to approve the service contract with Swift First Aid. Mr. Dvorak asked how often the supplies are checked. Director Rob Weigle stated that they regularly check and restock the cabinets. Ms. Brakey inquired about the cost of \$15,000.00, noting that bandages alone would not account for that amount. Ms. Rubino noted that the Automatic External Defibrillators (AED) are now included, and the new Courthouse has AEDs and first-aid cabinets on each floor.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and execute a service Contract Agreement with James W. Ross Incorporated d.b.a. Swift First Aid to supply the Geauga County Offices with First Aid supplies for a three-year period in an amount not to exceed \$15,000.00.

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

WATER RESOURCES – PULLED

This item was on the agenda, but was pulled due to Commissioner Spidalieri being absent from today's meeting. It will be back before the Board next week.

The Department of Water Resources is requesting the Board approve and authorize Ralph Spidalieri, authorized representative, to execute the Ohio Water Development Authority Fund Payment Request #12 for the McFarland Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements Project for technical services by HDR Engineering, Incorporated in the amount of \$47,736.39.

DEPARTMENT ON AGING – LETTER OF SUPPORT – FY2027 COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING – WEST GEAUGA SENIOR CENTER RENOVATION PROJECT

Director Jessica Boalt asked for a letter of support for FY2027 Community Project funding for a renovation project at the West Geauga Senior Center. Ms. Boalt briefly described the renovation project.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and execute a Letter of Support for a request for support for the FY2027 Community Project Funding for the West Geauga Senior Center Renovation project.

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

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DOG WARDEN – LETTER OF SUPPORT AND RECOMMENDATION – FEDERAL AND STATE GRANT FUNDING – CONSTRUCTION OF NEW DOG SHELTER

Dog Warden Matt Granito asked for a letter of support for federal and state grant funding for the construction of a new dog shelter. Mr. Granito briefly explained some of the plans that would be included in the new shelter.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and execute a Letter of Support and Recommendation for federal and state grant funding for the construction of a new dog shelter.

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

BURTON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT – LETTER OF SUPPORT – CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING FUNDING REQUEST – REMODEL AND EXPANSION OF HISTORIC FIRE STATION – IMPROVE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IN VILLAGE OF BURTON

Burton Fire Chief Brian Davidson, along with Lieutenant Austin Grube, asked the Board for a letter of support for congressionally directed spending for the remodeling and expansion of the historic fire station and improvements to water infrastructure in the village. Mr. Grube explained that the station was built in 1890 as a theater and later transformed into a firehouse. Mr. Grube briefly described their difficulty meeting NFPA standards, so the plan is to add 11,000 square feet for apparatus and training and then remodel the original section, noting that they will still be able to hold pancake breakfasts.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and execute a Letter of Support for a Congressionally Directed Spending funding request for the remodeling and expansion of its historic fire station and to improve water infrastructure within the Village of Burton.

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

CITY OF AURORA – LETTER OF SUPPORT – FUNDING REQUEST – CITY OF AURORA’S AURORA PARK – GEAUGA LAKE PHASE 2A

Director of Parks and Recreation Laura Holman for the City of Aurora asked for a letter of support for Aurora Park at Geauga Lake Phase 2A and described some of the proposed uses of the funding.

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve and execute a Letter of Support for a funding request regarding the City of Aurora’s Aurora Park at Geauga Lake Phase 2A.

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

APIARIST – MARK DINISHAK

Gauga County Apiarist Mark Dinishak set some equipment down to talk about what he does, calling it beekeeping “at a glance.” Mr. Dinishak stated that he has been keeping bees since 1975. There had not been an inspector to get queen certifications completed, so he reached out to the state This is his third year inspecting bees for the county. Inspections are regulated under ORC 909 and every hive in the county should be inspected. However, only about 10 percent are currently being inspected because it would be a full-time job. Mr. Dinishak stated that H.B. 96 changed beekeeping, and those changes moved registration online and have negatively affected the Amish community. Mr. Dinishak stated that he has goals for this year: better communication, best inspection practices, and more registrations, which are now free. Inspections are based on registration, and so anyone who sells bees, queens, or equipment needs to be inspected to ensure they are not transmitting disease, thereby helping to reduce the threat of losing our bees. Mr. Dinishak is working with the Department of Agriculture on ways to

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improve communication. Mr. Dinishak noted that Hamilton County lost 80 percent of its bees due to disease. Most of the diseases are bacterial. Bees are unique in that we can't leash them or fence them in; we cannot control where they go, we just hope they come back.

Mr. Dvorak asked if someone needed to be registered to sell honey in their front yard. Mr. Dinishak stated that honey has really nothing to do with inspections. The state of Ohio has rules, but apiary regulation falls under plant health, not food products. Inspectors also look at the temperament of the bees and are concerned about aggressive bees. There are no surprise visits and no photographs of the property. Equipment is cleaned with alcohol, and inspectors follow rules that must be followed on the types of gloves and equipment used, so they do not transmit disease and cause the loss of a hive.

Mr. Dinishak is looking for a place where he can set up hives and offer hands-on beekeeping experiences. Ms. Brakey asked how someone interested in beekeeping can get started. Mr. Dinishak stated that there is a Geauga beekeeping club that has about 80 members. He said that when there are new beekeepers, he works with them during inspections. Mr. Dinishak expressed that in the past, the Apiary Inspector looked like a State Highway Patrol officer, and in the last year and a half, that has changed, and he is receiving calls for inspections and requests for assistance with bees.

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE – CANCEL REGULAR SESSION – TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak, to cancel the regular session scheduled for Tuesday, March 24, 2026.

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

COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE – CHANGE REGULAR SESSION – MOVE TO JUDGE PASCHKE'S COURTROOM, 2ND FLOOR, START AT 10:00 A.M. – NEW GEAUGA COUNTY COURTHOUSE EXPANSION – HOLD RIBBON CUTTING – CONCLUDE AT HERITAGE HOUSE ON CHARDON SQUARE

Motion: by Commissioner Brakey, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to approve a change to the regular session scheduled for Tuesday, April 7, 2026, changing the start time from 9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and the location from 12611 Ravenwood Drive, Room B303, to be held in Judge Paschke's Courtroom, on the 2nd floor of the new Geauga County Courthouse Expansion, in Chardon, it will include the Ribbon Cutting, of the new Courthouse Expansion and then move to conclude at the Heritage House on Chardon Square.

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

BOARD DISCUSSION

2027 Tax Budget Letter: Ms. Bevan worked with Mr. Gorton on the letter and stated that staff would send the letter unless the Board had questions. Mr. Gorton noted that the letter includes language about adjusting hearing dates and times if necessary.

Cyber Fraud Internal Controls Policy: Ms. Bevan explained that training was held last week with individuals who handle financial matters and it was recommended that a desktop-type procedure be put into place to prevent errors and fraud. Ms. Bevan suggested that staff develop a policy for inclusion in the manual, because the training indicated that employees could be liable for any mistakes.

Ribbon Cutting and Open House: Ms. Bevan stated that they have been working on this with Courthouse staff. The meeting will be streamed, but additional walk-throughs are needed to finalize the details. Max Yost showed examples of the invitations that have been sent to judges and representatives, asking them to make remarks and be part of the program. Because this is a historic event, they are requesting RSVPs to get a head count on who might be attending. The City of Chardon has been very helpful by allowing the County to use the Heritage House. The

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Chardon High School band will play, and the class officers will be attending. Ms. Bevan thanked the Board for its patience as they worked on the final details.

Fair – Bell Building and Merchant Hall II: Ms. Bevan explained that the contract has been received for the Bell Building and recommended returning to only the Bell Building, going back to basics, and using old displays that haven't been used for several years. Mr. Dvorak mentioned the Merchant Hall II building and noted that any table at the fair would need to be staffed.

Opioid Settlement Grant Cycle 1: Clerk Christine Blair explained that four proposals have been received and Ms. Lakomiak requested directions on how the Board wishes to proceed so the Board can make a decision. Ms. Brakey and Mr. Dvorak both requested a rubric and recommendation from Ms. Lakomiak that rank and outline the proposals so the Board can review them and award the funds. Mr. Gorton has put the funds in place so that, once the awards are made, the funds can be distributed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Newell Howard of South Russell Village expressed concern that only about fifteen minutes of the previous week's two-hour meeting was available and asked whether the issue would be corrected for today's meeting. Mr. Howard asked again about Grace Gallucci from NOACA coming to Geauga County to explain who receives the money.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- a) A weekly report filed by the County Dog Warden of all dogs seized, impounded, redeemed or destroyed for the week ending February 25, 2026, as required by O.R.C. 955.12.
- b) A monthly report filed by the Geauga County Sheriff's Office of an account of expenses for Prisoner Transport for the month ending February 2026, as required by O.R.C. 325.07.

OTHER

The Board reviewed upcoming events.

MEETINGS

Mon., 3/16 Family First Council, 1:30 p.m., County Office Building

Tue., 3/17 The Commissioners will hold session at 9:30 a.m.

Wed., 3/25 Board of Revision, 9:00 a.m. Auditor's Appraisal Conference Room

Tue., 3/31 The Commissioners will hold session at 9:30 a.m.

Tue., 4/7 The Commissioners will hold session at 10:00 a.m. in Judge Paschke's Courtroom, Chardon, that will include the Ribbon Cutting on the new Courthouse Expansion and conclude at the Heritage House (pending action above)

BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Motion: by Commissioner Dvorak, seconded by Commissioner Brakey to adjourn the meeting at 10:27 a.m.

Gauga County Board of Commissioners

James W. Dvorak

Carolyn Brakey, Esq.

Ralph Spidalieri

Christine Blair, Commissioners' Clerk

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