September 17, 2026

MINUTES

Staff and Commissioners recited the pledge at 9:00. Purchase orders and bills were reviewed and signed. Pending issues were discussed with the following resolutions approved and signed:

V116-205 Minutes of September 15, 2026
1st-Rush 2nd-Sherman Roll Call: Rush-yes Sherman-yes
V116-206 Ditch Maintenance, Rescind V116-199/200
1st-Sherman 2nd-Rush Roll Call: Rush-yes Sherman-yes
V116-207 Ditch Maintenance, Reimbursement of Funds
1st-Rush 2nd-Sherman Roll Call: Sherman-yes Rush-yes
V116-208 Ditch Maintenance, Reimbursement of Funds
1st-Sherman 2nd-Rush Roll Call: Sherman-yes Rush-yes
V116-209 Transfer of Funds
1st-Rush 2nd-Sherman Roll Call: Rush-yes Sherman-yes
V116-210 Re-allocation of Funds
1st-Sherman 2nd-Rush Roll Call: Sherman-yes Rush – yes
V116-211 Payment of Bills
1st-Rush 2nd-Sherman Roll Call: Sherman-yes Rush-yes

Commissioner Updates:

- Commissioner Rush attended the Board of Developmental Disabilities meeting, where the 2027 budget is currently under review. The board anticipates approving the budget at its October meeting.
- Commissioner Rush also attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Black's Shady Knolls Orchard. He noted that it is a beautiful facility and that the event was well attended, with a large crowd and several proclamations presented. He congratulated the owners on a successful event and their continued success.

- Commissioner Striker toured the Oaklief Building with Richard Lawson, Maintenance Supervisor, and met with two commercial HVAC representatives to inspect the roof and rooftop HVAC unit. It was noted that the existing HVAC unit is approximately 29 years old. Mr. Lawson will obtain bids for replacement of both the roof and the rooftop unit, and the anticipated costs should be included in the 2027 budget planning process.
- Commissioner Striker also noted the presence of a tower located on the roof and recommended consulting with IT for the departments that will be occupying the space to determine whether the tower remains necessary. If it is no longer needed, it was suggested that the tower be removed. The crane required for installation of the new rooftop unit could also be utilized to remove the tower, potentially reducing costs. The HVAC representatives indicated that a new rooftop unit can be custom-built to fit the existing base, which would provide cost savings. They further advised that modifications to the existing zoning configuration are not recommended.

Proposed Policy Updates:

Katey Henson with the Prosecutor's office discussed proposed revisions to the County's vacation policy for the Commissioner's to present at the upcoming department head meeting. The proposed policy change would enable employees to reach higher vacation accrual levels earlier in their tenure and use accrued vacation time after four months of employment, effective January 1, 2027, to provide consistency across departments.

Keith Severns, EMA Director, monthly update:

- EMA operations continue to run smoothly. The county has been fortunate to avoid significant flooding, as recent storms have largely tracked north or south of the area.
- EMA responded to two incidents since the last meeting:
    - A report of brackish water and soil contamination concerns near a campground was investigated and traced to a muck area, where high water levels flushed material into the river.
    - An over-irrigation incident involving liquid manure runoff from agricultural land reached the Scioto River, resulting in fish kills. EMA is awaiting follow-up information from ODNR regarding the extent of the impact.
- EMA continues to work with the Health Department on a shared-position agreement and is hopeful the contract will be finalized soon.

LEPC Update:

- LEPC activities remain on track, and all required responsibilities are being completed.

Loss Control Update:

- Loss control activity has been minimal, with a few claims recently closed, which is a positive development for the county.

Durez Facility Closure:

- Director Severns noted that the closure of the Durez facility is expected to be a lengthy process due to the volume of chemicals remaining on site. A primary concern is ensuring that all chemicals and hazardous materials are properly removed and that nothing is left behind when the facility is vacated.

OSU Extension Quarterly Update:

- OSU Extension is in the process of relocating to the North Annex.
    - A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new office space is scheduled for next Friday.
    - A public open house is being planned within the next several months.
- The Hardin County Fair was reported as successful.
- Discussion was held regarding the refrigerator remaining in the former office space.
    - OSU Extension requested permission to relocate the refrigerator to the Junior Fair Board Office, as the current refrigerator has failed.

Agriculture and Farm Transition Programs:

- The 2026 growing season has been favorable, and insect trapping efforts continue throughout the county.
- OSU Extension is introducing a Farm Transition Planning Program scheduled for January 19 and January 26, 2027 at the Forbing Center. The program is designed to assist farm families with transitioning operations to the next generation.
    - Topics include communication strategies for difficult family discussions, succession planning, insurance considerations, and long-term care planning.
    - A farm transition attorney will participate in presentations.
    - The program is being offered in collaboration with Ag Credit and Renae Sherman.
- Extension staff noted that successfully transitioning a farm often requires long-term planning, sometimes up to ten years. A follow-up program is planned approximately six months later to address additional questions and provide resources to help connect participants with attorneys and professionals experienced in farm succession planning. Staff noted the lack of Hardin County attorneys specializing in farm transition planning and identified it as a community need.
- Commissioner Rush suggested including information on alternative energy opportunities, such as solar and wind development. Discussion included considerations for landowners, trusts, estate planning, and how alternative energy options may fit into long-term farm planning.

4-H Program Update:

- The annual 4-H Awards Banquet is scheduled for September 27 at the Community Building on the Fairgrounds. The event will include a dinner and recognition of youth receiving project and achievement awards.

- Hardin County is piloting a new Clover Program, modeled after achievement-based advancement systems. Youth may progress through levels including White, Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Emerald Clover. Achievement levels are cumulative and intended to recognize long-term participation and development.
- School enrichment programming will resume in October.
- As part of a post-Ph.D. professional goal, Extension staff are considering a Hardin County Agriculture Bus Tour. The program would highlight the diversity of agriculture throughout the county. The objective is to educate participants about the many sectors and career opportunities within agriculture and increase awareness of the county's agricultural industry. These opportunities are designed to expose youth to a variety of careers, industries, and future opportunities available within Hardin County. The goal is to encourage young people to remain engaged in and contribute to the local community.

Leadership Hardin Presentation

- Commissioners Rush and Striker attended and spoke to the Hardin Leadership Group during its meeting at the Veterans Hall.

Representatives from Garmann Miller and Drylane Construction dropped in to discuss preliminary concepts and planning options for the proposed new Junior Fair Building.

_____, YES/NO
President of the Board-Joseph C. Sherman

_____, YES/NO
Fred M. Rush

_____, YES/NO
Timothy L. Striker

Attest_____
Deputy Clerk of the Board

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