September 24, 2026

MINUTES

Commissioner Sherman was absent. 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:

V116-219	Minutes of September 22, 2026:	
1st-Rush	2nd-Striker	Roll Call: Rush-yes, Striker-yes, Sherman-absent
V116-220	Ditch Maintenance payment of bills	
1st-Striker	2nd-Rush	Roll Call: Striker-yes, Rush-yes
V116-221	Ditch maintenance	
1st-Rush	2nd-Striker	Roll Call: Striker-yes, Rush-yes
V116-222	Vacate Lynn Twp redo/fix clerical errors	
1st-Rush	2nd-Striker	Roll Call: Rush-yes, Striker-yes
V116-223	Transfer of Funds, Engineer	
1st-Rush	2nd-Striker	Roll Call: Rush-yes, Striker-yes
V116-224	Bills	
1st-Striker	2nd-Rush	Roll Call: Striker-yes, Rush-yes
Signed:	Agreement for museum and ONU for October 31st.	
1st-Rush	2nd-Striker	Roll Call: Rush-yes, Striker-yes

Commissioner Rush attended the Health Board meeting on Tuesday. They are still working through MOU issues. He will be attending the Area 8 meeting today in Wapak.

Commissioner Striker and Maintenance personnel went to Oaklief to assess what is needed for the building before offices start moving in.

Tomorrow the Commissioners will be attending the Auditors District meeting and then the ribbon cutting for OSU extension's new office.

Dionne Staley - Health District Updates

Conference Update

- Dionne reported that the conference was very informative and provided valuable information and resources for health departments.
- At conference it was announced that they will provide member agencies with two complimentary AI system licenses for two years.
- Dionne stated the Health District is excited about the opportunity and believes the system could be beneficial to operations.
- She noted that the Health District will need to establish an AI policy before implementing the technology.
- Discussions with other health departments revealed they are utilizing AI for:
    - Food program education
    - Public outreach materials
    - Video creation
- Additional services being offered include cybersecurity training and other support programs for member agencies.
- Dionne stated the Health District is looking forward to utilizing these new resources over the coming year.

Financial Report

- Dionne reported that the order of accounts on the financial statement has been revised.
- Account numbers have been updated to reflect the Auditor's new numbering system.
- Salary expenditures currently appear high because the report reflects three months of additional payroll expenses.
- The Health District is projected to exceed the salary budget by approximately $10,000 due to two unanticipated employee payouts.
- A Finance Committee meeting is being planned for next month to discuss:
    - Environmental Health fee schedules for 2027
    - Long-range budget planning

    - Township funding requests
    - Wage and salary considerations
- Dionne stated she would like budget discussions with local governments to begin earlier so townships have additional time to plan before setting budgets in November and December.
- Potential website redevelopment costs will also need to be considered during budget discussions.

Community Health Assessment & Accreditation

- Dionne reviewed upcoming Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan requirements due in 2028.
- She reported the previous assessment process cost approximately $55,000 to $59,000, with only about $23,000 received in donations, leaving the balance to be covered by the Health District.
- Current estimates for a full-service assessment and improvement plan are approximately $50,000.
- Due to staffing limitations, completing a significant portion of the work internally is not feasible.
- The Health District is exploring partnerships with college interns to assist with portions of the project and help reduce costs.
- Dr. Fritz is working with OhioHealth to seek additional financial support.
- Dionne reported that approximately $44,000 will need to be budgeted for accreditation-related expenses.
- Although the original accreditation deadline was November 27, the agency intends to utilize the available two-year extension period.
- She noted that the upcoming Finance Committee meeting will likely exceed the standard 45-minute timeframe due to the number of topics requiring discussion.

Board Discussion

- Commissioner Rush asked for clarification regarding differences between projected and actual revenue received from townships and municipalities.
- Dionne explained that the Health District receives only two annual payments and that the next financial report should reflect the full amount after receiving the August payment.

Employee Compensation Discussion

- Dionne stated that wage increases are typically evaluated at year-end or during the first quarter of the year.
- Employees have not received raises in 2025 or 2026.
- Wage increases will be discussed at the upcoming Finance Committee meeting.
- The Health District is also reviewing its wage scale structure.
- Current policy prevents employees at the top of their wage scale from receiving merit increases.
- The last merit increases were awarded in 2023.
- Commissioner Striker stated that employees cannot continue going year after year without receiving raises.
- Dionne acknowledged employee frustrations, noting that workloads have continued to increase while wages have remained unchanged.
- Commissioner Rush thanked Dionne and Health District staff for their continued hard work and dedication.

City of Kenton Update

Present: Mayor Lynn Webb and Safety Service Director Cindy Murray

General Updates

- Commissioner Rush asked how things were progressing within the City.
- Mayor Lynn responded that projects and initiatives are continuing to move forward.

Infrastructure & Street Projects

- Cindy reported that the City recently submitted the **EPA Sewer Application** for the second phase of the Detroit Street and Columbus Street project.
- The City is preparing to bid the **Columbus Street and Franklin Street** improvements.

- Regarding the proposed railroad-area roundabout, Cindy stated that construction is expected to be delayed until early next year.
- Lynn noted there have been few recent updates on the project.

Roundabout Discussion

- Commissioner Rush asked what impact train traffic would have on the proposed roundabout.
- City officials stated motorists may occasionally be delayed within the roundabout area while trains pass, but the impact is not expected to be significantly different from existing traffic conditions.
- Lynn noted that the roundabout has received considerable attention due to media coverage.
- Commissioner Striker commented that ODOT has likely conducted extensive studies on the project.
- Lynn stated the City remains confident the roundabout will not create significant traffic issues.
- She noted that several roundabouts across Ohio are located near railroad crossings and that Kenton's proposed roundabout will be situated farther from the tracks than comparable examples in other communities.

LifeWorks Building Drainage Concerns

- Commissioner Striker reported recurring drainage issues around the LifeWorks building and noted the problem has existed for several years.
- He stated that the area lacks adequate curbs and stormwater infrastructure, causing runoff to collect around and enter the building.
- A catch basin has been installed, but a long-term solution is still needed.
- Commissioner Striker asked what would be required to connect a pump or drainage system into the City's stormwater infrastructure.
- Commissioner Rush observed that the lack of curb improvements along Decatur Street may be contributing to the problem and asked if as good neighbors the city would consider putting in a curb.
- Mayor Lynn stated the City is willing to consider curb improvements and is currently evaluating potential solutions and associated costs.
- she encouraged collaboration with Hardin County Engineer Luke Underwood and Trent Bass to evaluate drainage flow and identify the best long-term solution.
- Lynn noted that both individuals have previously assisted with drainage planning for athletic facilities, school projects, and other community developments.
- Commissioner Striker agreed that determining where the water should be redirected is an important first step toward resolving the issue.

Oaklief Parking Lot

- Commissioner Striker raised concerns regarding the Oaklief parking lot and nearby trees.
- Cindy stated the issue has been added to her project list for review.
- Commissioner Rush noted that the Board of Elections' move to Oaklief should help improve parking availability and traffic flow, particularly during early voting periods.

County Building Department Discussion

- Lynn initiated discussion regarding the potential creation of a countywide building department.
- She stated that as Kenton and other municipalities continue pursuing housing and downtown development projects, communities should begin evaluating future building inspection and code enforcement needs.
- Lynn questioned whether continuing to rely on building departments in neighboring counties is the best long-term solution.
- She suggested exploring a collaborative approach involving municipalities and the County to determine the feasibility of establishing local building inspection services.
- Lynn emphasized that any future effort would require partnership and shared responsibility rather than placing the full financial burden on a single entity.
- She noted that communities throughout the county are facing aging infrastructure challenges and must invest strategically for future growth and development.
- Lynn stated that grant funding opportunities are not as readily available as they were in past decades, making local planning increasingly important.
- She proposed beginning preliminary discussions to evaluate:

- Potential benefits of a county building department.
- Staffing and operational requirements.
- Funding options and partnerships.
- Long-term impacts on future growth and development.

Regional Collaboration Discussion

- Commissioner Striker referenced previous discussions regarding regionalization and revitalization efforts.
- He noted that recent conversations concerning Root Addition have been productive and that positive community feedback has been received.
- Lynn acknowledged that communities often resist change because of historic practices but emphasized the importance of planning for future generations.
- She stated that local leaders have a responsibility to be good stewards of community resources and to create sustainable solutions rather than continually addressing emergencies.
- Lynn expressed interest in continuing discussions with County leadership and staff regarding potential first steps toward establishing local building inspection services.
- She stated that Hardin County should not have to rely indefinitely on outside counties for those services and encouraged all parties to work together to position the community for future success.
- Lynn concluded by noting that long-term planning can be difficult when organizations are primarily focused on addressing immediate needs and challenges.

Hardin County Job & Family Services Update-Director Julie Gossard

Human Resources Update

Recruitment

- Arielle Ciufo accepted a conditional offer for a Children Services Intake position and is awaiting completion of the background check process.
- Allison Sciranka accepted a conditional offer for a Children Services Intake position and is awaiting completion of the background check process.

Current Vacancies

- One Ongoing SSW2 position remains vacant.
- The agency is evaluating the possibility of combining a Foster Care Recruitment position with another position.

Public Assistance Report

SNAP Program

- The SNAP error rate was reported at 5.11% for the previous month.
- As of September 23, 2026, the SNAP error rate was 5.22%, and the agency reported continued positive performance.

SNAP Administrative Funding

- Director Gossard reported that on September 15, 2026, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) issued a draft Fiscal Administrative Procedure Letter (FAPL) outlining the distribution of $10 million in State General Revenue Fund (GRF) monies to support county SNAP administration.
- The funding was authorized through House Bill 730 to offset anticipated reductions in federal SNAP administrative reimbursement beginning October 1, 2026.
- Under the funding formula, counties receive either their calculated loss amount or $144,174.84, whichever is less. Hardin County is expected to receive **$105,581.01**.
- Director Gossard noted that the allocation methodology benefits many smaller counties, while some larger counties receive less than their projected losses, and that this is a one-time funding allocation.

OhioMeansJobs (OMJ) Report

CCMEP Success Story

- A CCMEP participant successfully completed a first work experience assignment and received positive feedback from the worksite supervisor.
- On September 1, the participant began a second work experience assignment at the same worksite to continue developing skills.

- The participant has demonstrated strong potential for future employment at the worksite.
- Agency staff reported the participant has gained confidence, developed positive workplace relationships, and benefited from mentoring provided by worksite supervisors.

Outreach Activities Director Gossard reported that OhioMeansJobs has begun the **3E Initiative (Employment, Enlistment, and Enrollment)** with local high school seniors to discuss plans after graduation. Outreach dates included:

- September 16 - Upper Scioto Valley (USV)
- September 17 - Ada and Hardin Northern
- September 18 - Kenton and Ridgemont
- Riverdale (Date TBD)
- Hardin Community School (Date TBD)

Additional outreach activities include:

- September 30 - Career Day for Hardin County seventh-grade students at Ridgemont.
- November 18 - Hardin County Career Expo, with pre-expo preparation sessions scheduled at each school earlier in November.

Executive Session

Commissioner Striker moved to go into executive session at 10:35 per ORC 121.22 (G)(1) to discuss certain personnel matters. Commissioner Rush seconded the motion. Roll Call: Striker-yes, Rush-yes. Commissioner Striker announced the end of executive session at 10:40. No action was taken.

Commissioners and Staff toured the safety Center, then attended the Sheriff's District meeting held at the Memorial Park Golf Course Club House.

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

_____, YES/NO
Fred M. Rush

_____, YES/NO
Timothy L. Striker

Attest_____
Clerk of the Board

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