



Tuesday, March 24, 2020

9:02 AM

Commissioners' Board Room

*The Commissioners' meeting minutes are summarized; Audio recordings and backup material are available.  
Please contact the Commissioners' Office for specific details.*

The Portage County Board of Commissioners' meeting came to order with the following members present:

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Kathleen Clyde	President	Present
Vicki A. Kline	Vice President	Present
Sabrina Christian-Bennett	Board Member	Present

**WATER RESOURCES**

Present: Gene Roberts

**Discussion:**

1. Mantua Village correspondence  
Village Council requested the Mayor to send a request to the Water Resources Department to operate their facilities because they are 'bleeding money'. It's costing the Village a considerable amount more than what the County was charging as the costs were based solely on cost and varied from month to month. Currently, the Village is getting charged somewhere around 1.8 to 2 times more. Envirolink is the name of the company they are currently using and they are charging market value for the services. After going through several months of getting Requests for Proposals, Envirolink was the only responder and the Village is asking for the Water Resources Department to return to help them. The issue becomes very compounded due to the Coronavirus because if the Department loses 2 employees, they will lose permit compliance without paying overtime.

Director Roberts suggests if the Village would like to enter into a long term agreement for 10 years (subject to fiscal appropriation each year), and the Board would be willing to hire 2 additional employees for the Water Resources Department, shared between all facilities (including Mantua), the County could service Mantua Village.

Director Roberts also noted in order to meet permit compliance at the wastewater plant, an employee needs to be there 20 hours per week, plus 5 days a week for ½ day and on the weekends, manual work must also be completed, so the Water Resources Department will be present 7 days per week. The same is true on the water side, as they need to be there every day because of chlorine residual and to ensure the plant is working as it should.

Director Roberts recommends staying with the plans and he realizes the major problem with Mantua Village is the age of their buried underground and they are aware of the problem because of the analysis, but he would like to offer their services to help but it cannot be done with the current staff. Commissioner Christian-Bennett pointed out this is a good option for the Village, especially if they cannot not operate financially, it's going to come back to the County regardless. Director Roberts explained the Ohio EPA has only once in the State of Ohio for a water plant, issued Findings and Orders to the County Commissioners and ordered them to take a plant over. If that occurs, Mantua Village would lose all control and the County would do what's best for the County's customers and the Village. Commissioner Christian-Bennett explained they are still interested in having the County take it over if it gets to that point, so it would be advantageous for the County to stay in the loop. Director Roberts noted the Water Resources Department agreed that if Mantua merged into Portage County, two employees would need to be hired.

Director Roberts presented recommended language for the correspondence and the e-mail to the Village and the Board agreed Director Roberts should move forward with the request.

## RESOLUTIONS:

### 1. Building closure to the public

Commissioner Clyde presented a limited access policy by department. The Portage County Administration Building will be closed to the public but will still continue to operate essential services. There are limited situations where an in-person appointment must be conducted and those situations are allowed under this plan. Commissioner Clyde encourages the public to conduct as much business as possible via phone, e-mail, and regular mail, but for the safety of the public and staff and in the spirit of following the important social distancing recommendations, the building will be locked to the public at this time until further notice.

Commissioner Christian-Bennett wanted to ensure that the public knows the building is closed to public access, but essential services are still available.

Commissioner Clyde noted there may be minor but not substantive edits to the attachment and the document will be shared with the media and placed on the Commissioners' website. Effective Date: March 25, 2020.

RESOLUTION No. 20-0185

RE: CLOSING THE PORTAGE COUNTY  
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING TO THE GENERAL  
PUBLIC AND AUTHORIZING ELECTED  
OFFICIALS AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS TO  
ADOPT ON AN AS NEEDED BASIS LIMITED  
ACCESS POLICES FOR THE PROVISION OF  
CERTAIN ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AT THE  
PORTAGE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION  
BUILDING

It was moved by Vicki A. Kline, seconded Sabrina Christian-Bennett by that the following resolution be adopted:

**WHEREAS,** the Governor of the State of Ohio has previously issued Executive Order 2020-01D Declaring a State of Emergency for the entire state "to protect the well-being of the citizens of Ohio from the dangerous effects of COVID-19" which includes that all "citizens are urged to heed the advice of the Department of Health and other emergency officials regarding this public health emergency in order to protect their health and safety \* \* \* "

**WHEREAS,** this Board recently adopted Resolution No. 20-0182 "Local emergency proclamation to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Portage County from the effects of Coronavirus Disease 2020."

**RESOLVED,** by the Board of Portage County Commissioners that the Portage County Administration Building located at 449 South Meridian Street, Ravenna, Ohio shall be closed to the general public beginning March 25, 2020 and during this public health emergency, unless others resolved by this Board.

**RESOLVED,** that the Board of Portage County Commissioners recognizes that certain governmental functions provided at the Portage County Administration Building may continue to be necessary and accessible in limited and reasonable ways during this public health emergency.

**RESOLVED,** that the Board of Portage County Commissioners hereby authorizes the elected officials and appointed officials situated in the Portage County Administration Building, and on an as needed basis, to adopt limited access policies for the provision of certain necessary government functions at the Portage County Administration Building, which shall go into immediate effect upon the determination of said elected officials and appointed officials.

**RESOLVED,** these limited access policies will be reviewable and subject to modification by this Board if determined necessary, and also in the event of any possible future orders and directives of the Governor of the State of Ohio and the Director of the Ohio Department of Health.

**RESOLVED,** that the Board of Commissioners finds and determines that all formal actions of this Board concerning and relating to the adoption of this resolution were taken in an open meeting of this Board and that all deliberations of this Board that resulted in those formal actions were in meeting open to the public in compliance with the law including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Kathleen Clyde, Yea;

Vicki A. Kline, Yea;

Sabrina Christian-Bennett, Yea;

**Portage County Administration Building  
COVID-19 Limited Access Plans by Department/Office**

**Effective March 25, 2020 until further notice**

**Portage County Job & Family Services**

Portage County Job and Family Services will continue to provide essential services to the Portage County residents. Those essential services include Food Assistance aka SNAP, cash assistance, child care subsidy, Medicaid, Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) emergency assistance, Child Support financial assistance to children and modifications of orders for obligors, Child and Adult Protective Services, youth case management, Non-Emergency Transportation (NET) to medical appointments and residential services to children in PCJFS custody.

We will be expedient in processing public assistance applications so that individuals can receive those benefits to which they are entitled. We will continue to investigate child and elder abuse and neglect cases and those calls should continue to be made to 330-296-2273 (CARE). We will continue to address the safety and wellbeing of the children entrusted in our care. We will not be taking negative action on public assistance and child support cases at this time. Work Experience Participants (WEP) will not be sanctioned from benefits for non-participation at worksites.

Attached is a flyer showing how our services can be accessed from home. While all of our building locations will be closed to the public effective Wednesday, March 25, 2020, information, applications and postage paid envelopes will be available at the doors of the County Administration Building and can be dropped off in the drop box in the parking lot or mailed back in. Mail will be picked up on a daily basis from the drop box. Clients will receive mailed notices of benefit determination. JFS clients can also contact our main number at 330-297-3750 to speak to a JFS representative. For those that do not want to wait on hold and need to follow up or get information on securing one of the essential services can also email JFS at [Portage\\_PA@JFS.ohio.gov](mailto:Portage_PA@JFS.ohio.gov).

**Board of Elections**

To best serve the citizens of Portage County we will maintain regular office hours Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. We encourage the public to call, (330) 297-3511, or email, [portage@ohiosos.gov](mailto:portage@ohiosos.gov), us for basic services such as obtaining an absentee ballot application. For those who require in-person assistance, please call our office to make an appointment during our regular hours of operation at (330) 297-3511. In addition, a Board of Elections Depository will be placed directly outside the main doors of the Administration Building where individuals may securely drop off absentee ballot applications during regular business hours without entering the building. A notice will be placed on the main door of the Portage County Administration Building with our phone number, so citizens may call us from that location.

**Internal Services**

- Contractors coming to the building for any necessary repair purposes will be instructed to call when they arrive and staff will meet them.
- Mail and other deliveries will continue to come to the dock and will be processed. Vehicle deliveries will be done by appointment.
- Bids shall be mailed and bid openings will be done through live webstream.

**Portage County Land Reutilization Corporation**

Members of the public are encouraged to contact the Portage County Land Reutilization Corporation (Land Bank) either through email at [dmorganti@polandbank.org](mailto:dmorganti@polandbank.org) or by phone at 330-839-7199. All inquiries from the public will be responded to in a timely manner.

**Portage County Engineer - Tax Map Division**

If a hard copy of a certified tax map is needed, email [L.Froelich@portageco.com](mailto:L.Froelich@portageco.com) or call 330-297-3598, send a check, and the map could be mailed. Most survey information and archives are now on line. Any surveyor who must come in for a document not available online, could call for an appointment. Current tax maps can be scanned and emailed by request. Documents for Tax Map can be placed in the lock box outside the administration building.

**Portage County Building Department**

Permit Applications and construction drawings should be mailed or dropped off on the table inside the building department outer door. Field inspections may continue, depending on the circumstances. Please check the building department website for details.

**Water, Sewer, and Recycling Billing**

Customers can continue to mail in payments, pay via credit card online, or use the drop box in the administration building parking lot. Late fees will be waived through April 30<sup>th</sup>. County Water, sewer, and recycling services will not be suspended for non-payment or other billing issues.

**Treasurer's Office**

The following operational changes will be in effect beginning on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 and running through at least the close of business on Friday, March 27, 2020:

**Tax Payments.** During this period, the Treasurer's Office will not accept in-person tax payments. While payments by mail will continue to be processed, taxpayers are encouraged to utilize online and phone payment options available at [co.portage.oh.us/treasurers-](http://co.portage.oh.us/treasurers-)

office/pages/payment-options. Taxpayers are also encouraged to use drop box for tax payments, located outside the Portage County Administration Building.

**Payment Plans.** No new delinquent tax payment plans will be offered during this time. Taxpayers on existing delinquent tax payment plans may continue to make payments, consistent with the recommendation above.

**Foreclosures.** During this period, the Treasurer's Office is suspending further foreclosure action on occupied structures (owner-occupied/rentals). Foreclosure actions on unoccupied/ unimproved properties will continue.

**Pay-Ins.** In the interest of minimizing public contact, and after consultation with the Prosecutor's Office as to legal requirements, the Treasurer's Office will only accept pay-ins by cash and check from other County offices and departments once per week during this period. Offices should coordinate with the Treasurer's Office staff as to when to make pay-ins of that variety. Electronic pay-ins will continue as normal.

Taxpayers and other stakeholders are encouraged to monitor the Treasurer's Office Facebook Page ([www.facebook.com/PortageTreasurer](https://www.facebook.com/PortageTreasurer)) and website ([co.portage.oh.us/treasurer-brad-cromes-cgfm](https://co.portage.oh.us/treasurer-brad-cromes-cgfm)) for updates. Additional information is also available by phone at 330-297-3586 during regular business hours, Monday – Friday, 8am – 4:30pm.

#### Human Resources

All job postings are listed on the Portage County website with specific application instructions. The employment application is also on the website. When applying for a position, an application can be faxed, emailed or mailed into our department, unless there are specific application instructions listed on the job posting. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, our department will only be accepting applications via fax, email or mail until further notice.

#### Clerk of Courts – Auto Title Division

The general public may access the employees of the Auto-Title division by the following:

- Telephone; 330-297-3450 Clerks will be able to assist the public with any questions or concerns
- Mail processing; The public will call for instructions on what the procedure is for obtaining title by mail
- Appointment (if necessary); call 330-297-3450 to set up an appointment in the case of an emergency

Dealers will continue to have their work processed. To drop off or pick up work, they will need to call the office to make arrangements to meet an Auto-Title employee at either an entrance to exchange the work.

#### Regional Planning Commission

The Regional Planning Commission office remains accessible by phone at (330) 297-3613 or email. Coordination is underway with the County Auditor, Recorder, and Tax Map department to transfer necessary documents for the public internally.

#### County Auditor

The Auditor's office remains accessible by phone at (330) 297-3561 or email.

The following procedure will be adopted for deed transfer and document recordings:

- > MAIL DOCUMENTS TO RECORDERS OR PLACE IN DROP BOX AT RECORDERS OFFICE FOR DEEDS, MORTGAGES ETC.
- > DEEDS, CONVEYANCE FORMS, CHECKS FOR AUDITORS & RECORDERS MUST BE PLACED IN ENVELOPE WITH CONTACT INFORMATION.
- > RECORDERS TO CHECK OUT THE CONTENTS OF ENVELOPE FIRST.
- > RECORDERS TAKES ENVELOPE TO TAX MAP.
- > TAX MAP WILL DO THEIR PROCESS.
- > TAX MAP TAKES ENVELOPE TO AUDITORS.
- > AUDITORS WILL DO THEIR PROCESS.
- > AUDITORS TAKE ENVELOPE TO RECORDERS FOR THE FINAL PROCESS.
- > IF A CORRECTION IS NEEDED RECORDERS, TAX MAP OR AUDITORS WILL CONTACT THE SENDER AND MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO RETURN.

#### County Recorder

The records room will be open from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM each day. Persons who need access to the records room will need to contact the Recorder's Office at (330) 297-3553 to gain access to the building. The Recorder will limit the number of people allowed in the room. Employees will be available to make requested copies but will not be available to assist in any other way.

Documents that need to be recorded, but that do not require land transfer, will be placed in a drop off box at the Recorder's Office. Documents that transfer land title will also need dropped off in the drop off box, but the Recorder's Office, the Tax Map Department and the Auditor's Office will work together to put each document through the steps that are required to transfer the property.

We are requesting that documents be mailed in when possible.

We are requesting to call with any questions or to request a copy of a document.

#### Veterans Services

Veterans Services staff remain accessible by phone and email, and in person by appointment when necessary. The main phone number is (330) 297-3545. Emergency financial assistance benefits can still be accessed by appointment. Vans will continue to operate transporting veterans from the administration building to medical centers.

Women Infants and Children Program

Staff is stationed at the front door and there is a sign posted for participants to call the clinic when they arrive and not enter the building.

Board of Commissioners

We continue to be accessible through email and phone. Contact information can be found on our website here:  
<https://www.co.portage.oh.us/portage-county-board-commissioners>. Meetings will be livestreamed from our website.

## 2. Web conferencing for future BOC meetings

Commissioner Clyde reported that under the recent Attorney General's Opinion, in consultation with the Portage County Prosecutor's Office and as other public bodies are doing around the state in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Information Technology Services (ITS) is working on an option for the Board of Commissioners to web conference in from home via Skype Business for their Official Meetings. Commissioner Clyde is hopeful this mechanism will be up and running by Thursday as it's better for everyone to stay home.

Commissioner Clyde noted nothing would change except the Board wouldn't physically be in attendance at the meetings.

Commissioner Clyde moved to affirm and approve the direction taken by the President of this Board including affirming and approving that based upon the present situation created by COVID-19, and during this situation, that public meetings of this Board will be via video conference open to the public by way of live streaming at:  
<https://www.co.portage.oh.us/portage-county-board-commissioners/pages/meeting-live-stream-commissioners> in lieu of public gathering in the Commissioners' Board Meeting Room, seconded by Commissioner Kline. Roll call vote: Commissioner Clyde, Aye; Commissioner Kline, Aye; Commissioner Christian-Bennett, Aye;

Commissioner Christian-Bennett received a text message from David Yost's Office, indicating the legislators are meeting Tuesday through Thursday to put a measure in place to handle Sunshine and the Open Meeting Laws. They should have the measure in place at the very least this week.

**RESOLUTION NO. 20-0186**

**RE: VIDEO CONFERENCING FOR FUTURE COMMISSIONERS' MEETINGS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.**

It was moved by Kathleen Clyde, seconded by Vicki A. Kline that the following resolution be adopted:

**WHEREAS,**

under the recent Attorney General's Opinion, in consultation with the Portage County Prosecutor's Office and as other public bodies are doing around the state in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Information Technology Services (ITS) is working on an option for the Board of Commissioners and invited attendees to video conference in from home for their Official Meetings; now therefore be it

RESOLVED,

to affirm and approve the action taken by the President of this Board including affirming and approving that based upon the present situation created by COVID-19, and during this situation, that public meetings of this Board will be via video conference open to the public by way of live streaming at:

[https://www.co.portage.oh.us/portage-county-board-](https://www.co.portage.oh.us/portage-county-board-commissioners/pages/meeting-live-stream-commissioners)

[commissioners/pages/meeting-live-stream-commissioners](https://www.co.portage.oh.us/portage-county-board-commissioners/pages/meeting-live-stream-commissioners) in lieu of public gathering in the Commissioners' Board Meeting Room until further notice; and be it further

RESOLVED,

that the Board of Commissioners finds and determines that all formal actions of this Board concerning and relating to the adoption of this resolution were taken in an open meeting of this Board and that all deliberations of this Board that resulted in those formal actions were in meetings open to the public in compliance with the law including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Roll call vote as follows:

Kathleen Clyde, Yea;

Vicki A. Kline, Yea;

Sabrina Christian-Bennett, Yea;



**DAVE YOST**  
OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

March 13, 2020

Dear Local Official:

The Ohio Attorney General's Office has received numerous questions regarding the applicability of Ohio's Open Meetings Act (OMA) during this time of a COVID-19 declared emergency. Under this very limited fact pattern, there may be a basis for local public bodies to use electronic means to meet and comply with the law. You should discuss this matter with your legal counsel before making any decisions.

Ohio's OMA requires public bodies to take official action and conduct all deliberations upon official business in public meetings that are open to the public at all times. R.C. 121.22. When recently asked, I pointed out that the OMA does not contain an exception to the "in person" requirement during the time of a declared emergency. R.C. 121.22(C).

The OMA provides very few exceptions to this requirement. [See e.g., R.C. 3333.02 (applying to the Ohio Board of Regents) and R.C. 3316.05(K) (applying to members of a school district financial planning and supervision commission, if provisions are made for public attendance at any location involved in the teleconference).]

Yesterday, Dr. Amy Acton, Director of the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), issued an Order targeted at preventing the spread of COVID-19, a highly communicable disease. Dr. Acton issued this Order pursuant to the authority granted to her by Ohio Revised Code Section 3703.13. In relevant portion, that statute gives ODH supervisory authority over "all matters relating to the preservation of the life and health of the people". R.C. 3703.13. It further provides that ODH shall "have *ultimate authority* in matters of quarantine and isolation". *Id.* Dr. Acton and Governor Mike DeWine held a press conference at which they detailed the COVID-19 epidemic in Ohio, the continued spread of this as-yet incurable virus, and how we as Ohioans can best stop it in its tracks. The Order issued by Dr. Acton addresses all of these critical points.

Dr. Acton's Order primarily addresses "mass gatherings", which it defines as "any event that brings together one hundred or more persons in a single room or single space at the same time". It is possible that a meeting that must be public under the OMA qualifies as a "mass gathering" subject to the Order. Thus, on its face, the Order could prevent a public body from holding a meeting necessary for the continuation of governmental operations. But even if it does not, the Order is not so limited such that it only provides guidance as to mass gatherings. Specifically, it also states:

"Regardless of whether an event or gathering falls within the definition of mass gathering, all persons are urged to maintain social distancing (approximately



six feet away from other people) whenever possible and to continue to wash hands, utilize hand sanitizer and practice proper respiratory etiquette (coughing into Elbow, etc.)."

To summarize, ODH with ultimate authority over issues of isolation and quarantine is currently forbidding mass gatherings and advising social distancing at all others. At the press conference both Dr. Acton and Governor DeWine took their advice one step further. In the interest of stopping the spread of this highly communicable disease, both urged Ohioans to stay home and avoid unnecessary contact with one another. Thus, we are now presented with a situation in which a public body might not be able to comply with both the terms of the Order and the Open Meetings Act. Stopping the business of government is not an option, and we must now reconcile the two.

To do so, it is necessary to consider the applicability of the OMA's "in person" requirement in the context of Dr. Acton's Order and the rapidly developing information about the spread of COVID-19. As we must always do when faced with the application of two different—and in this situation, somewhat competing—statutes, we must give effect to both. That is, we must give effect to the OMA's "in person" requirement, while also recognizing and complying with Dr. Acton's "ultimate authority" over matters of isolation to stop the spread of a highly infectious disease. That task is possible here.

In this limited circumstance, where the Governor has declared a state of emergency and the Director of the Ohio Department of Health is limiting gatherings so as to prevent the spread of COVID-19, but the business of government must continue, it is reasonable to read the OMA's "in person" requirement as permitting a member of a public body to appear at a public meeting via teleconference. This interpretation gives effect to both R.C. 121.22 and R.C. 3701.13. It is also consistent with the United States Centers for Disease Control's recent guidance, issued in response to the national COVID-19 epidemic, to use videoconferencing for meetings when possible. See, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/workplace-school-and-home-guidance.pdf>.

Of course, if a member of a public body chooses to appear via teleconference or telephone, it is imperative that all other requirements of the OMA be fulfilled. A quorum must still be present, whether in person, on the phone, or in some combination thereof. In the event that a member appearing telephonically is cut off, the public body should cease all discussions and deliberations until the member can be reconnected.

Further, even in this time of a public health crisis, public access to the business of Ohio's public bodies is still vital. It is also still required by the OMA. Although the OMA does not specifically dictate how a meeting is made "open" to the public, in the interest of complying with both Dr. Acton's Order and the OMA a meeting could be made "open" to the public by live-streaming it through the Internet or on television. If a public body gives the public access to a meeting electronically and the members of the body appear telephonically, the body must still ensure that

the public is able to hear the discussions and deliberations of *all* of the members, even those who are present via telephonic means. Finally, all other requirements of the OMA will apply, including those that govern notice, executive session, and the taking of meeting minutes.

The practices outlined above would likely satisfy the requirements of the OMA. They are also consistent with the spirit of R.C. 5502.24(B), which provides that if, due to a declared emergency, it becomes "imprudent, inexpedient, or impossible to conduct the affairs of a local government at the regular or usual place," the governing body may meet at a previously designated alternate location and dispense with legal requirements that qualify as "time-consuming procedures and formalities". During a declared emergency, certain OMA requirements could fall within that category.

As a final word of unsolicited, non-legal advice; please note that the procedure outlined in this letter is meant to address the unique situation with that all of Ohio is dealing with. Now is not the time to rely on this guidance in order to enact legislation unrelated to the instant emergency that is better reserved for the normal operations of government (e.g. to pass a new tax or enact a new regulatory scheme). It is also important that county prosecutors, local law directors, and city attorneys independently research whether there is any case law in their respective jurisdiction that would specifically prohibit the procedure that I have outlined here. This office does not represent local governments, and this letter is offered as guidance regarding our reading of the law.

This Office's Sunshine Law Manual addresses the modified duties of a public body during a declared emergency. See, Ohio Attorney General's 2020 Sunshine Law Manual, at pgs. 107-109. Further, my Office's Public Records Unit remains available for consultation.

Sincerely,



Dave Yost  
Ohio Attorney General



**MIKE DEWINE**

GOVERNOR  
STATE OF OHIO

Executive Order 2020-01D

Declaring a State of Emergency

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death, is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which is a new strain of coronavirus that had not been previously identified in humans and can easily spread from person to person. The virus is spread between individuals who are in close contact with each other (within about six feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that individuals can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or eyes; and

WHEREAS, currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) lists over 79 countries with confirmed cases of COVID-19. The CDC reports over 98,000 diagnosed cases worldwide with 3,380 deaths reported worldwide. The CDC has announced 164 confirmed and presumptive positive cases, with eleven deaths reported from the disease in the United States; and

WHEREAS, on January 23, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health issued a Director's Journal Entry making COVID-19 a Class A reportable disease in Ohio; and

WHEREAS, on January 28, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health hosted the first statewide call with local health departments and healthcare providers regarding COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2020, the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern; and

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2020, Health and Human Services Secretary, Alex M. Azar II, declared a public health emergency for the United States to aid the nation's healthcare community in responding to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on February 1, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health issued a statewide Health Alert Network to provide local health departments and healthcare providers with updated guidance for COVID-19 and revised Person Under Investigation (PUI) criteria; and

WHEREAS, on February 3, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health trained over 140 personnel to staff a call center for COVID-19; in the event it was needed; and

WHEREAS, on February 5, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health began updating and notifying the media of the number of PUIs in Ohio every Tuesday and Thursday; and

WHEREAS, on February 6, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health updated all agency assistant directors and chiefs of staff on COVID-19 preparedness and status during the Governor's cabinet meeting; and

WHEREAS, on February 7, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Emergency Management Agency met to conduct advance planning for COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on February 13, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health conducted a Pandemic Tabletop Exercise with State agencies to review responsive actions should there be a pandemic in Ohio; and

WHEREAS, on February 14, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health held a conference call with health professionals across the state. The purpose of the call was to inform and engage the healthcare community in Ohio. Presentations were provided by the Department of Health, Hamilton County Public Health, and the Ohio State University; and

WHEREAS, on February 27, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Emergency Management Agency briefed the directors of State agencies during the Governor's cabinet meeting regarding preparedness and the potential activation of the Emergency Operations Center; and

WHEREAS, on February 28, 2020, the "Governor DeWine, Health Director Update COVID-19 Prevention and Preparedness Plan" was sent to a broad range of associations representing healthcare, dental, long-term care, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, business, public transit, faith-based organizations, non-profit organizations, and local governments; and

WHEREAS, on March 2, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health activated a Joint Information Center to coordinate COVID-19 communications; and

WHEREAS, on March 5, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health hosted the Governor's Summit on COVID-19 Preparedness, a meeting with the Governor, cabinet agency directors, local health department commissioners, and their staff; and

WHEREAS, on March 6, 2020, the Ohio Department of Health opened a call center to answer questions from the public regarding COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 09, 2020, testing by the Department of Health confirmed that three (3) patients were positive for COVID-19 in the State of Ohio, creating a potentially dangerous condition which may affect the health, safety and welfare of citizens of Ohio; and

WHEREAS, on March 09, 2020, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency activated the Emergency Operations Center; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code section 5502.22, this Executive Order is necessary to authorize previously-alerted state departments and agencies to prepare to respond to this public health emergency as needed;

NOW THEREFORE, I, Mike DeWine, Governor of the State of Ohio, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution, the laws of this State and in accordance with Section 5502.22 of the Ohio Revised Code do hereby order and direct that:

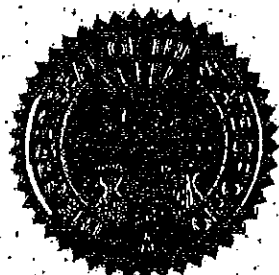
1. A state of emergency is declared for the entire State to protect the well-being of the citizens of the Ohio from the dangerous effects of COVID-19, to justify the authorization of personnel of State departments and agencies as are necessary, to coordinate the State response to COVID-19, and to assist in protecting the lives, safety, and health of the citizens of Ohio.
2. I hereby further request the Department of Administrative Services and other departments and agencies of the State to suspend purchasing and contracting requirements contained in Chapters 125 and 153 of the Revised Code, pursuant to Section 125.061 of the Revised Code, during the period of the emergency for the Ohio Emergency Management Agency and any other State agency participating in emergency assistance under this declaration, in order to procure any necessary resources or supplies to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Ohio.
3. After consultation with the appropriate medical experts, the Department of Health shall create and require the use of diagnostic and treatment guidelines and provide those guidelines to health care providers, institutions and providers.
4. The Department of Health issue guidelines for private businesses regarding appropriate work and travel restrictions, if necessary.
5. State agencies shall develop and implement procedures, including suspending or adopting temporary rules within an agency's authority, consistent with recommendations from the Department of Health designed to prevent or alleviate this public health threat.
6. This Proclamation does not require the implementation of the Department of Administrative Services Directive HR-D-11. Accordingly, State employees' obligations to travel to and from work is not to be limited as a result of this proclamation.
7. All citizens are urged to heed the advice of the Department of Health and other emergency officials regarding this public health emergency in order to protect their health and safety.

8. Persons who believe that they have been subjected to excessive prices for essential consumer goods during this public health emergency should contact the office of the Ohio Attorney General at 800-282-0515.

I signed this Executive Order on March 09, 2020, in Columbus, Ohio, and it shall take effect immediately and remain in full force and effect until the emergency no longer exists, such time to be determined by the Director of Health and the Executive Director of the Emergency Management Agency in consultation with the Governor, who will coordinate State response efforts and terminate the emergency upon the recommendation of appropriate officials of the other responding State departments and agencies.

  
Mike DeWine, Governor

ATTEST:

  
Frank LaRose, Secretary of State

3. Granting additional emergency authority to department directors.

Commissioner Clyde explained she wanted to be careful with increased email communication that the Board is not acting or making decisions until its public meetings. This resolution is drafted so that Directors will have leeway to take necessary action and then come to the Board's next meeting to report on that action.

**RESOLUTION No. 20-0187      -      RE:    AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTORS OF THE  
DEPARTMENTS UNDER THE AUTHORITY  
OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS TO BE ABLE TO TAKE  
NECESSARY ACTION FOR THE HEALTH,  
SAFETY, AND WELFARE OF EMPLOYEES  
UNDER THE DIRECTOR'S AUTHORITY**

It was moved by Vicki A. Kline, seconded by Sabrina Christian-Bennett that the following resolution be adopted:

**WHEREAS**, this Board recently adopted Resolution No. 20-0182 "Local emergency proclamation to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Portage County from the effects of Coronavirus Disease 2020."

**WHEREAS**, during this present public health emergency, situations may arise in which the directors of the departments under the Board's authority may need to take action necessary for the health, safety, and welfare of the employees under the director's authority prior to the next regularly scheduled public meeting of the Board.

**RESOLVED**, that during this present emergency the directors of the departments under the Board's authority are hereby authorized to take necessary action to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the employees under the director's authority during the time periods between the regularly scheduled meetings of the Board, and shall immediately notify the Clerk of any such action, and shall report such action to this Board at the very next regularly scheduled meeting.

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Portage County Commissioners shall review any and all such action taken by any director in accordance with this Resolution and the Board shall either ratify such action or modify such action as this Board deems appropriate.

**RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners finds and determines that all formal actions of this Board concerning and relating to the adoption of this resolution were taken in an open meeting of this Board and that all deliberations of this Board that resulted in those formal actions were in meeting open to the public in compliance with the law including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Roll call vote as follows:

Kathleen Clyde, Yea;

Vicki A. Kline, Yea;

Sabrina Christian-Bennett, Yea;

**Motion To:** Adjourn the Official Meeting of March 24, 2020 at 9:24 AM

**RESULT:** ADOPTED

**MOVED:** Sabrina Christian-Bennett

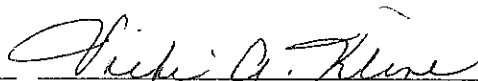
**SECONDED:** Vicki A. Kline

**AYES:** Sabrina Christian-Bennett, Vicki A. Kline, Kathleen Clyde

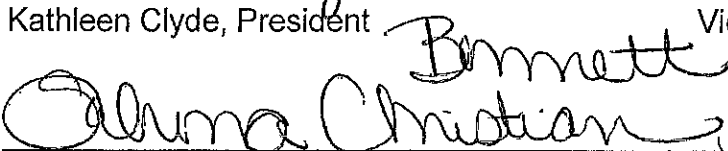
We do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct record of the Portage County Board of Commissioners' meeting.



Kathleen Clyde, President



Vicki A. Kline, Vice President



Sabrina Christian-Bennett, Board Member



Amy Hutchinson, Clerk