



Portage County Board of Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes

449 South Meridian Street  
Ravenna, OH 44266  
<http://www.co.portage.oh.us>

Julie Gonzales, Acting Clerk  
330-297-3600

Tuesday, February 2, 2021

9:01 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
Sabrina Christian-Bennett	President	Present
Anthony J. Badalamenti	Vice President	Present (attending at 9:05AM)
Vicki A. Kline	Board Member	Present/Via Zoom Video Conference

## DISCUSSION

### County Administrator Position

Present: Director Janet Kovick and Director Todd Bragg

Commissioner Christian-Bennett has been approached by a director of his interest in the County Administrator position. She wonders if the Board is still interesting in pursuing in hiring for this position. Commissioner Kline is not sure at this point; she was not prepared to talk about this issue and did not realize it was on the agenda for discussion. Commissioner Christian-Bennet spoke to Chris Meduri and he suggested hiring full-time and separate from our director's. Commissioner Badalamenti indicated a need to hire a County Administrator, there is a big benefit for this position. Commissioner Christian-Bennett indicated that we are going to have to figure out how we are going to structure this position. The former County Administrator thought it was more than he anticipated. This position would have to be dedicated to the Board of Commissioners and that may be difficult to accomplish from our current directors.

Director Kovick indicated that there are 47 county administrators in the State; 33 are full-time and 14 part-time county administrators/clerk positions. Commissioner Christian-Bennett suggested having a discussion with a couple of county administrators in the surrounding counties such as Ashtabula, Geauga and Stark to see how they interact with their commissioners and their job duties. The Board agreed to schedule these discussions within the next couple months.

Director Kovick indicated as of last Thursday there were nine interested applicants for the Water Resources Department Director position, two completed the full application process, one met the criteria. Director Kovick will forward copies of their application for review.

Director Townend is in a previously scheduled meeting. The Board of Commissioners agreed to recess until she was available.

Recessed: 9:21 AM

Reconvened: 9:50 AM

### **County Facilities Needs**

Present: Budget & Finance Director Bragg, Internal Services Director Townend, Facilities Manager Shannon Kautzman, Dick Bonner, Airport Board

### **Airport**

Director Bragg indicated that the Airport has financially gotten worse each year. Due to the damaged hanger years ago, the revenues are no longer sufficient for the minimal amount. The funds for routine maintenance have never really been available. Director Bragg indicated that Nanway Parkway needs replaced, but the County Engineer never had additional funding. There is always the question as if it is a private, township or county road; then nothing ever gets repaired. The previous boards never had been reluctant on supplying funding for the Airport. It would be nice to get the Airport at a cost neutral position; this has not been accomplished in about six years. Each year they have been coming to the Board for additional funding and it keeps growing every year.

Commissioner Christian-Bennett indicated that if you do not repair your capital improvements, they will cost more each year. The volunteers at the Airport have done an outstanding job in trying to keep up the maintenance of this facility. Commissioner Christian-Bennett ask Director Bragg to see if this issue is on his agenda for this Thursday during the discussion with Chris Meduri. We now have a Board who cares about the outcome of the Airport. There is a lot of potential for the Airport. Director Bragg said there needs to be several different phases with the project to improve the basic infrastructure. Phase 1 would consist of the Airport to be self-sustained and to add hangers. Commissioner Kline asked if the County would take over the Airport to do these repairs. Director Bragg confirmed that the county would need to take over and a study would have to be done first. Commissioner Kline said this would fall under the County no matter what. Director Bragg agreed. There are firms available who are willing to offer their services.

9:55 AM Director Townend and Ms. Kautzman attending

Mr. Dick Bonner, Board Member of the Airport, was present and has been involved with the Airport for twenty years. Years ago, Commissioners Smeiles and Keiper committed to the airport to get repairs done to the runway. He thought the process was finalized but once Chris Smeiles retired the whole process stopped. Politically there has not been the will to commit to the Airport. Commissioner Christian-Bennett said the Ohio Department of Economic

Development completed a study on all the county airports in 2014. She noted that several times throughout the study it was mentioned that the Portage County Regional Airport was not being used to its potential. Director Bragg said approximately ten years ago; but nothing was ever done. Commissioner Badalamenti indicated that we have enough information about the airport that another study is not necessary. The Commissioners never wanted to commit to the funding. Mr. Bonner said they need to hire an Airport Manager who would apply for grants. Commissioner Christian-Bennett said the airport is at a perfect location, accessible to Akron, Youngstown, and Cleveland. Commissioner Christian-Bennett recommended inviting Chris Gilmore, Homer Lucas, Dick Bonner and Dale Kelly to these discussions when we get to that point.

#### Justice Center

Commissioner Christian-Bennett asked if the new facility is completed. Director Townend indicated that it is built and being occupied but they are still tweaking a couple of things. Director Townend indicated they were under budget with this project.

#### Dog Warden

Director Bragg indicated that Director McIntyre would like to install a dog run. This could be paid through the donation that was given last year. The roof needs repaired, and Director McIntyre mentioned that he would like a culvert installed by the stream where they walk the dogs.

#### Records Center

Director Townend said the roof needs replaced at the Records Center and the whole building structure shifts. When the Building Department issued the occupancy permit; they indicated it needs fire prevention and a sprinkler system. Commissioner Christian-Bennett suggested using the Annex building for the Records Center. Director Bragg said a lot of court records could be microfilmed.

Director Townend said the Annex building needs a new heating and air duct work and the basement leaks. To replace the duct work would be very costly. Ms. Kautzman said to fix the leaks in the basement; you would have to dig to find the pipe that is broken. Commissioner Christian-Bennett also heard of tearing the building down. Director Townend wonders if JFS will ever need the use of the building. Commissioner Badalamenti thinks it is a half decent building. Commissioner Kline said we need to work with the elected officials to get their files destroyed to have more room at the Records Center. The Board asked Director Townend to get a report from Glenn to see what materials are at the Records Center.

Commissioner Christian-Bennett asked what is being done about the shredding for the Administration Building. Director Townend said most departments already have agreements in place with companies such as Iron Mountain. Commissioner Christian-Bennett said Bill Steiner does not take the toters anymore; he notified us via an emailed a while back. Most of the items in the Commissioners' Office can be recycled instead of shredded. She asked that the toters in

the Commissioners' Office be removed. Commissioner Christian-Bennett said the Treasurer's Office would be a department that needs documents shredded. Director Townend will reach out to them to see what their shredding needs.

#### Station 30

Commissioner Christian-Bennett thought we should eventually invite Director Shackelford in this discussion. Director Bragg said at this point we need Station 30 for the vehicles. A person from each facility will need to be present on these discussions when we get to that point.

#### Motor Pool

Director Townend reported that the underground storage tanks must be removed according to the State Marshal. All the items at the Motor Pool have been inventoried. The Water Resources Department, County Engineer and Solid Waste have all expressed interest on some of the items. Director Townend asks who is now responsible for the transfer of items. Commissioner Badalamenti is willing meet each department to see what items they are interested in and to keep track of the items being transferred.

#### Rootstown Water Resources Building

Director Bragg said this building is only used for the Water Resources crews to work out of. It is not used as an office. This building is in good shape. Director Townend indicated that it would be a nice area for the Veterans Service. Director Bragg said it is also wheelchair accessible.

#### Riddle Block

Director Townend recommends revamping the whole building. We would need to find temporary office space available for Adult Probation, CSEA and Public Defender. It is very close to the Court House and convenient for those departments. Director Bragg said the Riddle Block is in need a new roof. Commissioner Badalamenti asked if there are any grants available because of the age of the building. Director Bragg said there are too many stipulations with historical buildings. The CDBG grant would be the only one eligible for this building; but would take away from other entities who apply. Director Townend said the tuck point and windows also need replaced. Director Bragg said if we are going to keep it; we need to put money into the building to repair it.

#### Ravenna Court House

Director Townend indicated that the parking lot needs redone and the guard rails removed this year. When all the courts are in session and jurors present, they run out of parking spaces. The green spaces may have to be used at this point. Director Bragg said a lot of the landscaping in that area is county property.

#### Prosecutor Building

Director Townend said there is a window that leaks and needs repaired, it is very costly because of the style of window and the location. Director Bragg indicated that the phone

system at the Prosecutor's Office needs replaced soon. The Prosecutor likes their current phone system so they will probably use it as long as they can. This would be paid by the General Fund.

#### Portage County Administration Building

Commissioner Badalamenti indicated the biggest thing in this building is the internet access. A lot of the computers do not have cameras included. Director Bragg said this building is not all handicap accessible. Director Townend said the first and third floor have handicap accessible restrooms; but the first floor is used for the public. The employee handicap parking is full.

#### Board of Elections

- Director Townend believed they got most of the items they had on their list accomplished. One item that was not done is the door widened to bring in voting equipment. Commissioner Christian-Bennett thought there were other items still pending. Director Townend will recheck her list and with BOE.

Commissioner Christian-Bennett said the F-lot is in pretty good shape. Director Bragg indicated that a section of the sidewalks needs repaired. Director Townend said we are not responsible for fixing the sidewalks in front of the residential homes.

Commissioner Christian-Bennett said the lobby directory is confusing and needs to be redone. Ms. Kautzman will get some ideas to redo it.

#### Solid Waste

Director Bragg is not aware of any extra space at that facility and is unsure of the future of that facility. They have a lot of internet issues at that location.

Director Townend said a couple more buildings need to be included to the list such as the Coroner's, WIC in Lisbon, and the Sheriff's Training Center.

#### Pretty Glen Dam

Director Bragg indicated the removal of the dam was put on hold last year by the Board. The stream restoration is where there are grants available. You could also pair it with sewer projects to get other options of grants. Commissioner Christian-Bennett thought ODNR wanted us to remove it or fix it. Director Townend said the engineer report, the appraisal and surveyor has all been completed then the Board decided to stop the process. Director Bragg indicated that conservation easements will need to be done but would not stay; once the project is completed, they are gone. The cost now is 1.8 million. Director Bragg indicated that grant money is not available if you remove it; but grants are available if you restored it.

Commissioner Christian-Bennett indicated the pressing issues seem to be the Airport, Court House parking lot and Riddle Block. Director Townsend will get information from Ms. Crombie regarding the liability insurance for the Airport.

Each Board members will choose their top five pressing buildings that they believe need attention to present next week.

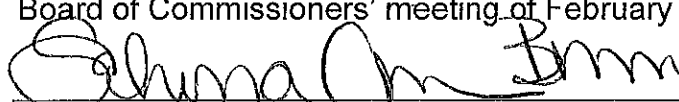
The Board agreed to meet next Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at 9:00 AM to further discuss the County Facilities and their needs.

**Motion:** by Commissioner Badalamenti, seconded by Commissioner Christian-Bennett that the Board adjourn the Meeting of **February 2, 2021 at 12:16 PM.**

All in Favor: Commissioner Christian-Bennett, Yea; Commissioner Badalamenti, Yea; Commissioner Kline, Absent;


**Motion Carries**

We do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct record of the Portage County Board of Commissioners' meeting of February 2, 2021.

  
Sabrina Christian-Bennett, President

  
Anthony J. Badalamenti, Vice President

  
Vicki A. Kline, Board Member

  
Julie Gonzales, Acting Clerk