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# FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Briefing Session Minutes
Thursday, October 22, 2026

President O'Grady
Commissioner Boyce

The purpose of the meeting was to review resolutions submitted for the October 27, 2026, General Session and to discuss other matters pertaining to the programs of the agencies.

The meeting was convened in the Commissioners' Hearing Room, while also hosting guests via Zoom Webinar Meeting ID: 811 9053 2115; Passcode: 1803. To attend virtually and watch the session live, click here to register in advance.

Commissioner Boyce convened the meeting at 9:02 A.M.

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## ENGINEER

Adam W. Fowler, P.E., P.S., Engineer, Engineer's Office offered a resolution for plans approved for the Zuber Road/Plum Run Drainage Improvements Section 4 project, Pleasant Township, Franklin County, Ohio (Engineer).

Mr. Fowler reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Adam W. Fowler offered a resolution awarding contract and approving contract bond to Strawser Paving Co., Inc. for the Ferris Road Improvements (Minnie Avenue to Cleveland Avenue) project ($7,220,149.25) (Engineer).

Mr. Fowler reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

*Commissioner Boyce discussed opportunities to coordinate roadway reconstruction with utility providers and consider future infrastructure needs, including electric vehicle charging. Mr. Fowler noted that the Engineer's Office coordinates utility relocations and potential improvements with affected providers.*

Adam W. Fowler offered a resolution authorizing the Franklin County Engineer to enter into a contract modification with CDM Smith, Inc. for the Hott Ditch Drainage Improvement project, Madison Township, for a decrease of $13,624.13, for a revised contract amount of $288,031.98 ($288,031.98) (Engineer).

Mr. Fowler reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

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RECORDER

Daniel J. O'Connor, Jr., Franklin County Recorder offered a resolution authorizing the set aside for the Recorder's Technology Fund for calendar year 2027 (Recorder).

Recorder O'Connor reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

VETERANS SERVICES

Matt Zelnik, Interim Executive Director, Veterans Service Commission offered a resolution authorizing a partnership with Central Ohio Veterans Stand Down and the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority in sponsoring the 2026 Annual Central Ohio Veterans Stand Down at the Greater Columbus Convention Center ($30,000.00) (Veterans Services).

Mr. Zelnik reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

*Commissioner Boyce requested clarification on the use of funds. Mr. Zelnik confirmed that the allocation supports the cost of using the Greater Columbus Convention Center.*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

Tamara Ennist, Planning Administrator, Economic Development and Planning offered a resolution for review of a petition to annex 5.9 +/- acres from Franklin Township to the City of Columbus, Case No. ANX-30-26 (Economic Development and Planning).

Ms. Ennist reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Tamara Ennist offered a resolution to adjust the boundaries of Montgomery Township, thereby making them conform to the boundaries of the City of Columbus, Case No. ANX-31-26 (Economic Development and Planning).

Ms. Ennist reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Tamara Ennist offered a resolution for review of a petition to annex 29.7 +/- acres from Plain Township to the City of New Albany, Case No. ANX-32-26 (Economic Development and Planning).

Ms. Ennist reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

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JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

Carmen Barnes, Chief Operations Officer, Job and Family Services offered a resolution approving subaward agreements with multiple community agencies for Franklin County Out-of-School Time youth programs ($5,745,499.94) (Job and Family Services).

Ms. Barnes reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

*Commissioner Boyce questioned the level of funding provided to the City of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department and requested information on reductions in youth program funding in recent years. Ms. Barnes explained that awards reflect the competitive procurement and eligible populations. Commissioner Boyce emphasized the importance of after-school programs as workforce supports for working parents.*

Carmen Barnes offered a resolution approving a subaward agreement with the Columbus Urban League for the Franklin County Trades Academy Workforce Training Program ($1,000,000.00) (Job and Family Services).

Ms. Barnes reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

PURCHASING

Nick Brefeld, Compliance Program Manager, Purchasing offered a resolution approving purchases for various Franklin County agencies ($5,756,441.68) (Purchasing).

Mr. Brefeld reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Nick Brefeld offered a resolution approving purchases for various Franklin County agencies ($41,880.00) (Purchasing).

Mr. Brefeld reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Eli Redfern, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Prosecuting Attorney offered a resolution approving an extension of the term of the Franklin Park Conservatory Joint Recreation District (Board of Commissioners).

Mr. Redfern reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Eli Redfern offered a resolution approving a Memorandum of Understanding between the Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services, the Board of Commissioners on behalf of the Franklin County Office on Aging, the Franklin County Sheriff's Office, the Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the City of Westerville, the City of Upper Arlington, and The Center

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for Family Safety and Healing regarding responsibilities in cases of adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 5101.621 (Board of Commissioners).

Mr. Redfern reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

Michael E. Ruehrmund, Assistant Director of Community Appointments, Board of Commissioners offered a resolution appointing Melissa Thompson to the Community Shelter Board of Trustees (Board of Commissioners).

Mr. Ruehrmund reviewed information found in documents submitted with the proposed resolution.

*Commissioner Boyce asked whether this was a reappointment. Mr. Ruehrmund confirmed it was a first appointment.*

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The Deputy Clerk noted that no (0) journalizations are expected at General Session on Tuesday, October 27, 2026.

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Michael E. Ruehrmund, Deputy Clerk to the Board of Commissioners, read the following journalization into the record:

The following was journalized at General Session on Tuesday, October 20, 2026.

Case #ANX-34-26 – Type 2 Annexation Petition: An expedited Type 2 annexation petition, filed with the Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department on October 8, 2026, requesting the annexation of approximately 1.949 acres from Mifflin Township to the City of Columbus, located at 3269 and 3275 Westerville Road, and included parcels owned by the State of Ohio and the City of Columbus, was scheduled for Board consideration on Tuesday, October 27, 2026.

Due to statutory limitations, consideration by the Board will be changed to Tuesday, November 10, 2026.

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**County Administration offered the following updates:**

***Joy Bivens, Deputy County Administrator***

- *International air service: Reported the County's proposed $1 million commitment over three years, beginning in 2027, toward a guarantee supporting new nonstop service to Frankfurt, Germany. Commissioner Boyce requested performance and economic-impact data from the airport authority; DCA Bivens agreed to include reporting in the agreement.*

***Kenneth N. Wilson, County Administrator***

- *Confluence Community Authority: Reported anticipated issuance of approximately $25 million in special revenue bonds by year-end, with related financing materials to be shared with the Commissioners.*

***Joy Bivens, Deputy County Administrator***

- *JFS operations: Reported increased caseload demands, calls, and in-person visits associated with benefit recertifications and HR 1 requirements. JFS is considering expanding use of mobile service units and partnerships with community organizations to improve access.*
- *Soul Talk: Announced a November 13 event at East High School focused on relationships and mental health, in partnership with City of Grace.*
- *Ohio State student-athletes: Reported continued conversations with the football team about mental health and resilience, with existing clinical support remaining in place.*

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Following a brief recess at 9:35 A.M., the Board reconvened at 9:39 A.M. for the 2027 departmental budget presentations.

## 2027 BUDGET HEARINGS

HUMAN RESOURCES

Laura W. Repasky, Director, Human Resources, presented the department's 2027 requested budget, joined by members of the Human Resources leadership team.

- *Requested expenditures of approximately $210.4 million, primarily employee benefits and self-insurance expenses, with increased healthcare and pharmacy costs driving the proposed increase.*
- *Highlighted employee retention, training, risk management, and benefits sustainability, including an anticipated 8.8% healthcare rate increase and changes to the health plan.*
- *Commissioners and staff engaged in a robust discussion about GLP-1 medication coverage, employee health outcomes, cost containment, and long-term wellness strategies.*

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PUBLIC FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Darla Reardon, Director, Public Facilities Management, and Vivian Alexander, Chief Operating Officer, presented the department's 2027 requested budget.

- *Requested expenditures of approximately $111.8 million, including major capital improvements and facility preservation, with utility costs and essential maintenance remaining key pressures.*
- *Highlighted the Facilities Master Plan, critical project sequencing, trades staffing, and Small and Emerging Business Enterprise participation.*
- *A robust discussion ensured which focused on how to prioritize, fund, and time major capital projects while maintaining existing facilities and coordinating future space needs.*

SANITARY ENGINEERING

Stephen Renner, Director, Sanitary Engineering, and Ryan Stowe, Assistant Director, presented the department's 2027 requested budget.

- *Requested expenditures of approximately $27.5 million for water and sewer operations, infrastructure replacements, and planned capital work.*
- *Highlighted aging utility infrastructure, deferred projects moving into 2027, and expanded service to underserved areas, along with a proposed 3% increase to consumption charges.*
- *The presentation addressed infrastructure priorities, rising operating costs, and continued efforts to provide affordable, reliable service.*

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There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:17 A.M.

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**(Signature Page Follows)**

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These minutes are a general summary of the Commissioners' Briefing Session and 2027 Budget Hearings for Thursday, October 22, 2026.

**JOHN O'GRADY, PRESIDENT**

**KEVIN L. BOYCE**

**ERICA C. CRAWLEY**
**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**
**FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO**

Submitted by:

Michael E. Ruehrmund
Deputy Clerk to the Board of Commissioners