

**Work Sessions held on October 20, 2025 1:30 p.m. Topic: 2026 Coroner's Office Budget**

*In Attendance: Casey Kozlowski, Kathryn Whittington, J. P. Ducro, Janet Discher, Lisa Hawkins, Amber Stewart, Dr. Cathy Bishop Press: Warren Dillaway.*

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the budget submission from the Ashtabula County Coroner's Office. 3% increase in salaries. They have 3 full-timers, 1 part-time, investigator on FMLA. Budgeting 500 hours for part-timer. Insurance reduced due to personnel. Deputy Coroner position is not being considered right now, but maybe in the future, if needed. She has physicians who will cover if she is out of town. Contract services increase autopsies, toxicology. They do not have radio's and use IAR as a radio system, when they are on-scene so dispatch knows their location. VPN is used out in the field, as Duo does not connect to the O drive. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the transport contract. Asked for \$3,000 for microfilming.

**Work Sessions held on October 20, 2025 1:45 p.m. Topic: 2026 Auditors/Data Board Budget**

*In Attendance: Casey Kozlowski, Kathryn Whittington, J. P. Ducro, Janet Discher, Lisa Hawkins, Scott Yamamoto, Rock Benson Press: Warren Dillaway.*

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the budget submission from the Ashtabula County Auditor's Office and Data Board. General fund is less this year, as Weights and Measures funded a vehicle in 2024. 3% increase in salaries. Budget is less as a part-time position in 2024, is not budgeted for 2025, will use a temp agency if needed.

Data Board- the increase in the budget includes upgrades, 3% increase in salaries, contract services- software and upgrades. Phones have to be replaced by 2030 so phasing in. The choice is to replace all the phones or replace the entire system and phones. There will have to be an AI policy and a Cyber Security plan by 1/1. Microsoft licensing- will include everyone for 2024, might have to amend the budget. Asked if Data Board has the ability to send notifications every year to each department showing age of computers/software and if need replaced, so it doesn't happen all at once. Total licensing - \$166,000 which includes non-general funds and courts.

Court IT is paid from court computer funds. Placeholder of \$250,000 with Courtview 3.

**Work Sessions held on October 20, 2025 2:00 p.m. Topic: 2026 Planning and Development Budget**

*In Attendance: Casey Kozlowski, Kathryn Whittington, J. P. Ducro, Janet Discher, Lisa Hawkins, Jake Brand, Press: Warren Dillaway*

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the budget submission from the Department of Planning and Development. General fund is salary based, they are fully staffed. 3% increase in salaries. Health insurance will increase due to personnel.

**Work Sessions held on October 20, 2025 2:15 p.m. Topic: 2026 Emergency Management Agency Budget**

*In Attendance: Casey Kozlowski, Kathryn Whittington, J. P. Ducro, Janet Discher, Lisa Hawkins, Mike Fitchet, Debbie Riley Press: Warren Dillaway*

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the budget submission from the Ashtabula County Emergency Management Agency. EMA, Perry Communications, E911 and LEPC funds. 3% increase in salaries. No big changes. 2026 EMA drills are scheduled 2 days in a row- happens every 8 years. EMPG grant changed to 1 year instead of 3, due to reorganization of FEMA. 911 fees were raised, should be \$.20 per phone/tablet that we should see. 911 fund will be analyzed the carryover balance and what new revenues look like. In February EMA will review the revenues. He discussed Vistra and the change.

**Work Sessions held on October 20, 2025 2:30 p.m. Topic: 2026 AC Dept. of Environmental Services Budget**

*In Attendance: Casey Kozlowski, Kathryn Whittington, J. P. Ducro, Janet Discher, Lisa Hawkins, Doug Starkey, Angie Gruber, Christina Partridge, Skip Ensmann, Ray Nevison, Bob Church Press: Warren Dillaway*

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the budget submission from the Ashtabula County Department of Environmental Services. 3% increase in salaries. Will be seeking a new Sanitary Engineer, as the current person is resigning. There will be a Waterworth presentation possibly in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. Sanitary engineering codes need re-done, as it is dated include picture of expectations and make current.

**Water:** \$8 million plus in grant funds. Progress include: 42 new accounts, installed 4.5 miles of waterline, 9 miles in 2026. Increase in training for new employees. Discussed the purchase of a truck, started looking at ¾ ton, as cannot find the ½ ton truck. Discussed potential projects, if grant funding is available. Discussed the bulk water station in Rome Township.

**Sewer:** a little over \$4 million in grant funds. Progress includes: 6 new accounts, installed 300 ft. of sewer line, with the potential of 4 miles with Kingsville project.

Refunds/Reimbursements in projects. OWDA has changed the way they fund- as it is a reimbursement. Adjust the revenue in January. Doug will supply a list of all outstanding loans and payoff dates.

In addition to the truck being purchased by the water budget, they also budgeted one truck in water, one truck in sewer as replacement vehicles.

A building expense line was discussed. \$90,000-\$100,000 in indirect costs. They are fully staffed in both departments. There may be one retirement planned in 2026.

**Work Sessions held on October 20, 2025 3:00 p.m. Topic: 2026 Clerk of Court's Office Budget**

*In Attendance: Kathryn Whittington, J. P. Ducro IV, Casey Kozlowski, Janet Discher, Lisa Hawkins, April Daniels. Press: Warren Dillaway.*

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the budget submission from the Ashtabula County Clerk of Courts. There is a decrease in salary/wages due to retirements, with re-hires at the beginning pay scale. A position is split 70% in title and will be reflected in the fund. She used the funds usually earmarked for Sheriff vehicles for the server project. Court Computer Fund revenues there is a willingness to pledge a portion or all to Court IT salaries. The revenue estimate is about \$42,000 annually, she pays other items out of that, but is willing to give the remaining balance is. The ORC shows the funds cannot be commingled.

**Work Sessions held on October 20, 2025 3:15 p.m. Topic: 2026 Public Defender's Office Budget**

*In Attendance: Kathryn Whittington, J. P. Ducro IV, Casey Kozlowski, Janet Discher, Lisa Hawkins, Megan Brunarski. Press: Warren Dillaway.*

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the budget submission from the Ashtabula County Public Defender's Office. She is short-staffed, small pool of qualified attorneys, seems to be across the state of Ohio. Wages are competitive. Two vacancies. One replacement hire will begin 11/18. Discussed the scheduling issues that were talked about with Judge Campese. She has stated that she will send somebody, maybe not the attorney that will stay on the case, if it is a 72-hour hearing on abuse and dependency. No calls have been received for Guardian Ad Litem. Amendment to the budget with contract services and supplies- onboarding and offboarding new staff is expensive. She will ask for an additional \$4,000 in contract services and supplies by \$400 as running a little short. 3% for salaries. 2026 is looking at 82% reimbursement rate.

**Work Session held on October 21, 2025 9:00 a.m. Topic: Work Sessions/Agenda Items**

*In Attendance: J.P, Ducro IV, Casey Kozlowski, Kathryn Whittington, Janet Discher, Lisa Hawkins, Brett Bellas, Jessica Brundage Press: Warren Dillaway*

**Public Participation:**

- Brett Bellas from Morgan Twp. asked if their road person could be added to the Commissioners health insurance. Their budget doesn't sustain providing insurance on their own. The Board cannot provide health insurance to townships. Maybe there would be an interest by the Township Association with a plan to be drafted.
- Jessica Brundage- Delta Vision and Dental renewals were discussed and approved by the Board of Commissioners. Decision: on next week's agenda for approval. The IEN Program agreement was discussed with public disclosure that Ashtabula County is moving to a self-insured health insurance plan.

The following Memorandum information was discussed with the Board of Commissioners and the Disclosure Summary was read into the record by Jessica Brundage, Human Resource Director, in its entirety:

This Memorandum is being presented to satisfy the public disclosure requirements under Ohio Revised Code 9.833 (C)(3) for contracts associated with the County's self-funded health-insurance program.

The attached IEN Program Agreement will establish Ashtabula County's participation in the IEN Risk Management Consultants Program, effective January 1, 2026. This agreement is a key component of the County's transition from CEBCO/Anthem to the new CIGNA-based self-funded health insurance structure and defines the administrative and compliance framework for managing the County's group health plan.

Under this program, IEN Risk Management Consultants ("IEN") coordinates the County's plan services through a unified platform that integrates claims administration, stop-loss coverage, pharmacy management, primary care initiatives, and compliance support.

The agreement is being provided to the Board today for review and public disclosure in accordance with ORC 9.833(C)(3) and will be brought back for formal authorization and approval at the October 28, 2025 work session.

The agreement includes:

- A 2026 annual fee of \$79,567, payable in twelve monthly installments of \$6,630.58.
- An automatic 3 percent annual adjustment for renewals unless otherwise amended.
- A detailed Business Associate Addendum (BAA) ensuring HIPAA compliance.
- Inclusion of Ohio Revised Code § 307.901 language protecting the County from unenforceable arbitration or liability clauses.

**Read into the record: ORC § 9.833(C)(3) Disclosure Summary – which was verbally summarized and distributed in writing before the BOC votes the next step is on the agenda 10/28 presenting the agreement and board decision.**

- **Contract Terms:** Annual administrative fee of \$79,567, payable in monthly installments, effective January 1, 2026.
- **Broker Representations:** IEN represented that this program maintains equivalent benefits while reducing renewal costs compared to CEBCO's 17.9 percent increase, improves plan management, and provides added support through nurse-navigator services.
- **Possible Savings and Losses:** Estimated renewal savings of roughly 10 percent for 2026 compared to CEBCO's renewal. As a self-funded plan, the County continues to bear claim risk, offset by stop-loss protection.
- **County Liability:** As the plan sponsor, the County remains responsible for employee health-care claims, subject to reimbursement from stop-loss coverage.
- **Public Disclosure Timing:** The proposed contract and this disclosure statement were made available publicly more than one week prior to today's Board meeting, satisfying the timing requirement of ORC § 9.833(C)(3).

**The following schedule items were discussed:**

Lattes with Legislators- Youngstown/Warren Chamber hosted at Geneva Public Library Friday, 10/24 7:30 a.m. to 9a.m. – need to register- Commissioners cannot attend.

**The following miscellaneous items were discussed:**

ACDES truck purchase- Commissioner Kozlowski reviewed available vehicle options. Recommendation is the 2026 GMC Sierra 2500 at a cost of \$61,057, ¾ ton, gas not diesel. Originally proposed diesel trucks but higher trim levels. Decision: ok to purchase the vehicle from Classic in Madison.

**Legal Review:**

Access Agreements- creation

**Old Business:**

- Main Avenue- in process
- Demo of old YDC building
- Fair Board re-bid- waiting for spec confirmation from Evan (Lisa)

**Outstanding/Upcoming Board Appointments-**

MHRS one opening

ACTS terms expire 12/31 for Renee Howell, Thomas Michel, Michelle Thompson, Miriam Walton and Elena Marquetti (recd application from Miriam)

CSB terms expire 12/31 for Scott Ardary, Nancy Callaway, Mike Candela and Fred Grimm, open vacancy from Chris McCain (recvd new application from Timothy Neal, reappt applications recvd from Nancy, Fred & Mike)

Senior Levy terms expire 12/31 for Lynn Zalewski, Robert Kenyon, Mary Pepperney (recvd Robert Kenyon & Lynn Zalewski) (Jerry Brockway, Dianne Solebrino, and Mary Runyan not seeking reappt)

**Work Sessions held on October 21, 2025 1:00 p.m. Topic: 2026 Sheriff's Budget**

*In Attendance: Kathryn Whittington, J. P. Ducro IV, Casey Kozlowski, Janet Discher, Crystal Sturgill, William Niemi. Press: Warren Dillaway.*

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the budget submission for the Sheriff's Department; County Jail; County Dispatch; and Courthouse Security. No additional requests from Sheriff's Department. Salary increase is 3%. Moved employee out of CCW fund, which will have to be analyzed before the permanent budget, as there is not enough revenue. Could do a split next year in fines. Contract services increase for computer. Reviewed items under contract services. Tasers equipment is outdated- \$83,991 over 5-year period with an annual cost of \$18,000 which results in a savings of \$19,000. RollKall pays for itself. Brought in over 15,000 revenue. More ammo needed. Simulator grant is over, need to do updates under equipment line item. He requested to purchase 3 cruisers preferably Durangos. Jail housing of inmates by Geauga County was discussed and is not included in budget. Cost is \$130,000. No new hires in request. Discussion of a part-time jail nurse position, which is not included in budget request. Discussed Over time expenses from 2024 to year to date, as they are higher this year.

Jail budget reviewed. Staffing issues result in increased overtime.

Dispatch staffing issues result in increased overtime, wage line item is less. Discussed upcoming contract costs in contract services line item. Equipment purchases include new headsets.

Courthouse security no major changes to budget request.

Need to fill a couple deputy sheriff positions. Sheriff will get Janet information on tasers. Sheriff will ask the Clerk of Courts if she has any funds available towards the cost of cruisers. Janet will review the 2025 budget to see if there are available funds in the budget for cruisers.

**Work Sessions held on October 21, 2025 1:30 p.m. Topic: 2026 Prosecutor Office**

*In Attendance: Kathryn Whittington, J. P. Ducro IV, Casey Kozlowski, Janet Discher, Crystal Sturgill, April Grabman, Sandy Kuhar, Jennifer Dean Press: Warren Dillaway.*

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the budget submission from the Ashtabula County Prosecutor's office. 3% salary increase included. Two wage sheets were presented for the Board's review- one with a Chief Investigator position and one without. The Chief Investigator position, funded by the General fund, was discussed and the importance of the position noted. Other surrounding counties have this position filled. Would be up to staff and help with preparation with cases. Deduct \$98,000 to see budget without position. Budget would be less than last year without position. Brief overview of VOCA 3 different funds. CRCC and VOWA. Did apply for higher VOWA grant. It would help cover salary. CRCC subgrantee of. Level request in budget. Advocates are working in different areas. Brief overview of DRETAC at level funding, with no ask from Board. 2026 carryover. 2 employees. Advance was a gift.

**Work Sessions held on October 21, 2025 1:45 p.m. Topic: 2026 Treasurer's Office Budget**

*In Attendance: Kathryn Whittington, J. P. Ducro IV, Casey Kozlowski, Janet Discher, Lisa Hawkins, Crystal Sturgill, Angie Maki-Cliff.*

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the budget submission for the Treasurer's Office. 3% salary increase included. Contract services- is down to \$30,000, moved postage into Dretac. There are discussions of putting more of a staff persons salary in the Dretac, as they are spending more time in the Landbank. There is a replacement hire. No equipment purchases planned.

**Work Sessions held on October 21, 2025 2:00 p.m. Topic: 2026 Eastern County Court Budget**

*In Attendance: Kathryn Whittington, J. P. Ducro IV, Casey Kozlowski, Janet Discher, Lisa Hawkins, Ryan Colby, Judge Harold Specht. Press: Warren Dillaway.*

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the budget submission from the Ashtabula County Court- Eastern Division. 3% salary increase included. On pace for a decrease in total cases. This is the first year of the jurisdictional changes, lost approximately 70 cases majority are civil cases. Sheriff Dept. traffic tickets are on the rise, a lot of drug OVI cases. Civil cases payment discrepancies were discussed. Clients are told one amount when filing, more costs assigned. Discussed fines/fees issue is being worked on. Unpaid traffic tickets that do not show up, a warrant is issued. Old warrant program updating addresses and sending notices. Wages and benefits are the only increase in the budget. Possible retirement at the end of 2026 or 2027.

**Work Sessions held on October 21, 2025 2:15 p.m. Topic: 2026 Building Department Budget**

*In Attendance: Kathryn Whittington, J. P. Ducro IV, Casey Kozlowski, Janet Discher, Lisa Hawkins, Tom Congdon. Press: Warren Dillaway.*

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the budget submission for the Building Department. 2025 had staff vacancies, which have been filled and the department is currently fully staffed, working through the necessary certifications. There are two steps in wages. 3% salary increase included. Plumbing has been acquired from the Health Department, with some new process adjustments with the public getting to up to standard. Tom is the only commercially certified electrician. Denny is the back up CBO and does some plan reviews. There is a request for 2 replacement vehicles, (budget \$35,000 or \$70,000 for two) with funds available in the refunds/occupancy fund. There is a 4<sup>th</sup> Inspector starting in November that will need a vehicle. The 2 Tacoma's are 2016, around 90,000 miles. They are thinking of switching to Rav 4's. CitizenServe software begins in November. The building and plumbing fees need to be reviewed and adjusted. Schedule a work session to discuss updating building fees and to include plumbing fees.

**Work Sessions held on October 21, 2025 2:30 p.m. Topic: 2026 Recorder's Office Budget**

*In Attendance: Kathryn Whittington, J. P. Ducro IV, Casey Kozlowski, Janet Discher, Lisa Hawkins, Barbara Schaab. Press: Warren Dillaway entered the meeting at 10:02 a.m.*

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the budget submission for the Recorder's Office. 3% salary increase included. Health Insurance changes due to personnel changes. Document \$5 surcharge for online documents began this year. Required to pay for records to digitize and storage.

**Work Sessions held on October 21, 2025 2:45 p.m. Topic: 2026 Commissioners, County Obligations, Maintenance and Purchasing, Risk Management, Mandates and Tax Maps**

*In Attendance: Kathryn Whittington, J. P. Ducro IV, Casey Kozlowski, Janet Discher, Lisa Hawkins. Press: Warren Dillaway.*

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the 2026 budget submissions for the Commissioners; County Obligations; Maintenance and Purchasing; Risk Management; Mandates and Tax Maps.

The Commissioners' budget shows a slight decrease, with 50% of Janet's salary moved to ARPA funding, a 3% staff increase, and replacement of six computers over a two-year period- 3 in 2026 and 3 in 2027.

Under County Obligations, contract services will decline as the WCC lease ends in 2026. Airport funding will be covered by Economic Development. Insurance and liability costs may rise, and the county will pay higher taxes on Main Ave. property due to partial loss of tax exemption with the Key Bank lease. Included funding for OSU Extension, Soil & Water and Fair Board.

Transfers Out include allocations of 50% of the \$3 million interest balance to the Permanent Improvement or Jail Fund, \$2 transfer fees to Economic Development, \$150,000 to JFS, \$300,000 for the Court Computer Fund shortfall, and \$250,000 to Dog and Kennel, pending negotiations. This budget may have to increase. There may be a Tuberculosis Clinic contract with ARMC in 2026.

Maintenance includes four staff with 3% raises, increased HVAC repair costs, and utilities estimated at \$550,000. Purchasing covers postage and fuel billed to departments, and Risk Management remains flat. Other mandated programs—including Vital Statistics, Indigent Burials, and Memorial Day—are steady. Court of Appeals might include bills for building renovation. Outside counsel reimbursement is at 82%.

Overall, the county faces approximately a \$3.5 million shortfall between requests and revenues, excluding health insurance, workers' compensation, the 27th pay (to be paid out of a special fund) and Veterans Services (will increase due to higher property evaluations). Departments have submitted responsible budgets, but balancing will require further adjustments. Janet will provide updated figures in December, with 2 budget work sessions in December and more planned for early January. Discussed passing a Permanent Non-General budget and a Temporary General Fund Budget.