Blue Ribbon Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: March 25, 2025
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Location: Erie County Office Building Chambers, 247 Columbus Avenue, Sandusky

Welcoming Remarks – Co-Chairman Jeff Krabill

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chairman **Jeff Krabill**. Roll Call was taken, with all members being present. An attendance sheet was signed by audience members present.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes that were distributed electronically was made by Ms. Crescimano and seconded by Mr. Forster. The motion carried unanimously.

Purpose of the Meeting

Mr. Jeff Krabill (Blue Ribbon Commission) welcomed all participants and provided an overview of the agenda, emphasizing the significance of today's discussion on brainstorming opportunities where funds can be saved through information technology (IT) and also understand what platforms and services are being used by the political entities. **Ms. Karen Balconi Ghezzi and Mr. Tom Tucker** are the Facilitators.

Ms. Karen Balconi Ghezzi (Blue Ribbon Commission) reviewed the questions submitted for today's meeting:

Review

- o What all software platforms and services are being used right now by the separate entities and how are they charged? (per unit)
    - o GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Advisory Board established in 2006, includes municipalities and other entities with cost share agreement.
        - ▪ This Board provides software training and info/data that all members have access.
        - ▪ 209 named users currently utilizing cloud based program, including public and businesses. Good Example of existing cost share services.
    - o Not everyone on Microsoft 365 platform
        - ▪ Google is used as an alternative at lower cost
    - o Village expenses have been challenges for IT

- Castalia contracts with Firelands College to pay for an IT person
- Provide an electronic data forum for entities to share good practices, related to service, efficiency, safety etc.?
  - Ex. Perkins determines cost saving measure that is quickly published and are able to share info on operating experience
  - Mutual interest for database/forum to readily share best practices?
  - School districts have ITC sites through Northern Ohio Educational Computer Association (NOACA) and is resource for schools to share resources
    - Need to see if this available to be utilized by local entities
    - If not, could a Council of Government (COG) be formed and become purchasing agent for this to help benefit smaller entities
  - Townships use same financial program (UAN)
- Data Management for evidence has been a challenge for police. Any actions here for improved data management?
  - Perkins School District – Revamping retention schedule currently, but majority of data is currently records retention. Easier to retrieve off cloud versus boxes of paper
  - Consensus is to move away from paper files and towards cloud sources
  - Vermilion Township – finding time and manpower is a challenge to move towards digital records in place of paper files
  - Determine county wide scanning policy/procedure and shared cloud service to make data management and records retention easier to access and save funds by sharing
- Countywide directory for field experts/specialists
  - UAN is sending out new computers to each entity, but smaller village/township has to hire out to set up these computers
  - Cities, county, schools have own IT, but smaller entities do not.
    - Could a centralized shared service work?
    - Village of Castalia contracts IT services through Margaretta Township
  - Establishment of Listserv/Directory to help fill gaps for questions/needs for local entities
  - Erie County Cares (Trudy Riddle)
    - 2021 Committee formed to create website of county services
    - Currently, health department receives e-mails and directs them towards services
    - Hoping to staff with health department to respond to phone calls and follow up person
    - Looking to cut back on duplication of services, to help establish self-sufficiency

- People go agency to agency looking for housing help, but looking for resolution to issue rather than short term solutions of challenges
    - No cost resource for locals
    - Intent to eventually encourage employers to advertise with website to help financially sustain resource as a benefit to community
- Perform evaluation of IT compatibility and efficiency
- HIPAA and Security planning
    - Entities have desire for professionals to manage and store data for security purposes
    - Perkins Township – Contracts with DMC for security
        - Includes notices on latest phishing scams and education
- Cloud based computing vs. ongoing server maintenance by locals
    - How does new data center impact servers/cloud?
    - County - Cloud computing solutions with everything integrated
    - Milan Library – ClevNet system tied in for benefit to locals
    - Board of Elections – contracts for security that also includes ongoing education
- IT Training
    - School districts will share resources/individuals for training
        - Could develop list of trainers to be shared resource for programs
    - Firelands BGSU could be available for local training
    - JFS: Incumbent Worker Training – will reimburse up to 50% for training
    - Perkins School District – utilizes NorthPoint for technology related training
    - All relates back to countywide directory for sharing these resources
- Software licensing (requirements vs options) and how to ensure we share these
    - Need to develop a list of what each entity uses for software and how much it costs
- Software Alignment
    - School Districts - required to use state mandated software
    - IWorq: Zoning software managed by Auditor's office but shared with Townships paying a yearly nominal fee for subscription.
    - GIS Board is governmental entity, with everything covered at a rate based on population (under 100,000)
- Software Engineer
    - GIS – Application development
    - Local government can have a challenge affording the skillsets to develop these sort of resources
        - Cheaper to find software vendor that can provide upgrades, build programs
    - SC Strategic Solutions – local vendor that assists with wide range of IT needs and records retention

- o Any other areas/comments?
  - o Digital traffic control to monitor countywide hacking/ransomware challenges
  - o Review countywide existing IT security and training practices and software, with the goal of creating a user group for buying power
  - o Erie County ISB Board could be reestablished from what existed in the past, previously ran by Erie County IT
  - o Database of experts to share services and training

Meeting Summary

Mr. Parker provided a summary of key points that there may be interest in forming a county wide user group for software licenses, IT Security, Cloud based computing, data storage and IT training. Members in the audience nodded in agreement.

Adjournment

Next Meeting: Scheduled for Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at the Office Building,
247 Columbus Avenue, Sandusky at 10:00 a.m.
Topic Discussion: Infrastructure (water, sewer and sewer plants)
Facilitators: Mr. Moon and Mr. Krabill

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Parker and seconded by Mr. Moon. The motion carried unanimously.