

Blue Ribbon Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: February 27, 2025

Time: 10:00 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 was taken, confirming the presence of commission members and audience members.

Purpose of the Meeting

Mr. Krabill outlined the primary objective of the meeting: to finalize the development of key discussion points on various topics for upcoming meetings. The first topic addressed was **Infrastructure – Roads and Street Maintenance**, with Mr. Kelly Moon and Mr. Mike Parker assisting in this area. A date for this meeting remains undetermined.

Infrastructure –roads/street maintenance – meeting date to be determined

Review

- Major maintenance, Capital improvements or extra capacity needed in the near future (less than 5 years)? Long term - > 5 years?
- Is routine maintenance primarily in-house or contract?
 - Primarily vehicle maintenance
- Use of brine to pre-wet salt and reduce bulk salt costs – Margaretta got brine mixing machine via grant and is letting Perkins purchase brine. Groton and Oxford will work with Margaretta on a similar deal. The Erie County Highway department may also want to share.
- Oxford-Margaretta-Groton (OMG) have jointly purchased used a road roller, new asphalt crack sealing machine, new mini-track hoe, and used paving machine. Erie County and OMG share equipment and personnel to do smaller paving jobs at about 60% of a contractor cost to mobilize and lay asphalt for small jobs.
- Three townships working together appears optimal and manageable to start and probably for the long term.
- Fleet maintenance, fleet garage, and fleet mechanic concept might benefit townships, cities, villages and school districts. Even within the Erie County Departments, this could be beneficial.
- Activities planned or in progress to improve efficiency

- Future meeting with Erie County Engineer and key townships officials to add items to this topic
- Level 3 events – how to best share resources
 - Note: ODOT has joint agreements/mutual aid and contracts with local contractors on assistance

Mr. Parker emphasized the necessity of a preliminary meeting with township trustees and the County Engineer to address some of the key questions and refine this topic further before the official discussion.

Mr. Parker inquired about the option of shared resources in the event there is a level 3 weather incident. Mainly, the possibility of road superintendents from different townships coordinating together for mutual aid. **Mr. Tim Coleman (Perkins Township Trustee)** noted that ODOT has existing agreements with local contractors for emergency assistance.

Public Transportation – meeting taking place Tuesday, April 8, 2025

Review

- Possible centralized hub in Sandusky to service more expansive area outside of city limit
 - Existing
- What is the appetite for expanded services county wide from other municipalities
- Current customer base and revenue sources
- Current scheduling and operations
- What private sources are available
- How to better site bus stops/facilities
- Activities planned or in progress to improve efficiency
 - 2023 HDR Study provided SWOT analysis and review of STS transit vs. comparable transit systems in the state.

Ms. Karen Balconi Ghezzi expressed interest in an expanded multi-township transit system but noted financial constraints. She added that transportation systems can also utilize Medicare and Medicaid to assist in funding for transporting individuals with specific needs and appointments.

Ms. Colleen Gilson (Community Development Director) and James Stacey (Transit Administrator) provided insights on Sandusky Transit System's structure, funding, and ridership statistics. Ms. Gilson noted a centralized hub already exists.

Mr. Stacey detailed that the transit system operates five fixed routes and a door-to-door county-wide service, with over 400,000 fixed-route rides and 21,000 demand-response rides last year. He noted the Transit System is funded by Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the City of Sandusky and eight various transportation contracts with Cedar Point, Job and Family Services, Kalahari and Veterans Services, to name a few. Mr. Ted Kastor inquired about ridership trends, to which Mr. Stacey confirmed a steady increase post-COVID.

Mr. Coleman proposed additional community-sponsored shelters, and Mr. Stacey noted grants from the Health Department (two shelters) and CDBG funds (four shelters) have aided in new shelter acquisitions.

Education – meeting taking place Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Review

- Hospitalization costs acceptable? Interest in pooling?
- Transportation costs? What governs the amount and size of buses? Is there a rule of thumb or a state requirement? Does every bus still need to be standard size or can some be downsized to 37 passenger airport bus size? Smaller can be safer, less initial cost, and less expensive for maintenance and fuel. Observations noted are that some bus routes are running at low capacity.
 - A lot has been done already with pooling and vehicle size, but may be worth future discussion
 - Busses run \$150k now, and ordering delays cause issues
 - Bus drivers an additional challenge including raised wages to attract drivers
- Fleet maintenance, who performs it, where
- Are alternatives to costly capital improvements being actively pursued?
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- Is Perkin LSD board pursuing the 20 mil floor? If so, why?
 - No.
- Expenditures per student per district?
 - Detailed School Finance Payment Report (SFPR) found and saved, will be shared with Commission in advance of meeting with Board Packets (in lieu of SF-3 Data)
- What administrative functions are feasible to share?
 - Previous efforts by Perkins to share school treasurer
 - School social workers at each school (Goes through NorthPoint ESC)
- Snow & ice removal, contract or in-house? In-house cost?
 - Perkins assists in some snow/ice removal/SD handles remainder
- Review budget performance indicators
 - FY24 Cupp Report saved, to be shared with Commission in advance of meeting with Board Packets
- Activities planned or in progress to improve efficiency

Mr. Kastor responded to one of the review questions, if the Perkins School Board is pursuing the 20 mil floor. Mr. Kastor stated no, they are not pursuing this option.

Mr. Tom Tucker (Blue Ribbon Commission Member) stated that some bus routes are running at low capacity and questioned whether smaller, cheaper, more efficient busses could be used when transporting children to different school districts.

Ms. Lisa Crescimano (Blue Ribbon Commission Member) stated that expenditures per student per district information can be found in a Detailed School Finance Payment Report (SFPR) online. Sub-Committee Member Kevin Cannon will provide this report to the Commission for review prior to the education meeting April 15th. A question was posed as to potential administrative function sharing, with treasurers and school social workers being noted as possibilities.

Ms. Crescimano noted the CUPP Report is a useful tool that provides data regarding budget information on each school district. Mr. Cannon will provide this report to the Commission in advance of education meeting.

Administrative Staff – Human Resources and Employee Benefits – meeting taking place on April 22, 2025

Review

- Determine administrative costs of court system
 - Determine what can be shared
 - Judge staffing all have individual staff, and is there a possibility for any overlap
- What entities have:
 - Planning departments, how many planners, budget?
 - Project Managers, how many, budget?
 - HR managers, how many, budget
 - PR personnel, how many, budget?
- Any opportunities to share the above or any other administrative resources?
- ECEDEC, Erie Shores, GSP should be included as entities provide the funding.
 - Receive local entity funding, so what resources do they use that can be best shared amongst everyone
 - Erie County Chamber previously offered Health Plans, but unknown if GSP offers it still similar to how GCP offers the “COSE” program
- Buildings & grounds, in-house or contracted or a combination?
- Possible addition to county website for links to various entity building zoning, sewer, water driveway permitting process – one stop shop. May not save costs but would reduce burden of finding the who, what, where for residents.
- Is there a way to better cooperate from an HR standpoint?
 - Small business challenge is for HR support and is a need in area identified by Firelands Forward -
- Activities planned or in progress to improve efficiency

Mr. Forster stated he believes it would be important to assess administrative costs in the court system and opportunities for shared resources. Krabill stated he believes each Common Pleas Judge has their own staff, but can court order their budget, so there may not be much leniency in this area.

Mr. Parker mentioned that ECEDC, Shores and Islands Ohio and GSP receive local government funding and inquired about what resources they use that can also be used as collaboration with other entities. Mr. Kastor noted that GSP has 19 employees and healthcare used to be provided to smaller organizations. Mr. Krabill added that the Erie County Chamber of Commerce, before combining with GSP, offered health insurance to its members. He added an idea to explore pooled healthcare benefits for small business entities considering the past practice of the Erie County Chamber.

Economic Development – meeting yet to be determined

Review

- Will be developed by Commission members after an advance meeting with various officials.
- Activities planned or in progress to improve efficiency

Mr. Krabill proposed a planning session with key stakeholders, including GSP Director Eric Wobser, Perkins Township Administrator Gary Boyle, Sandusky Community Development Director Colleen Gilson, and a representative from the City of Huron.

Further discussion

The Commission discussed the two meetings that need to be scheduled, roads/street maintenance and economic development. The next two available dates following the last topic discussion is April 29th and May 6th. The Commission will meet Tuesday, April 29, 2025 at the Office Building Chambers regarding the roads/street maintenance and Tuesday, May 6, 2025 at the Office Building Chambers regarding economic development.

Approval of Minutes

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

Adjournment

Next Meeting: Scheduled for Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at the Office Building, 247 Columbus Avenue, Sandusky at 10:00 a.m. with the primary discussion of Fire/EMS.

On motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Krabill and second of Mr. Moon.