

THE BOARD OF ATHENS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, met in regular session, with Lenny Eliason presiding, Chris Chmiel and Charlie Adkins in attendance.

Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the following agenda:
Athens County Board of County Commissioners

Meeting Agenda for Tuesday, June 30, 2026 Convenes at 9:30 a.m.

Approve Agenda

Approve Minutes June 23, 2026

Approve Appropriations, Transfers, New Line Items Requests/Changes, Then & News, & Bills
Fund to Fund: Engineer \$22,370.13 from 491.1300.580102 Bond Transfer to 036.2036.422101 Transfers In

- 9:30 Mollie Fitzgerald, EDC - CCC Plastics
- 9:45 DJFS - Weekly Updates - POTH Lease Agreement
- 10:00 Bid Opening - 10 W. Washington
- 10:05 Bid Opening- Surplus
- 10:05 Jeff Maiden, County Engineer-
- 10:15 Children Service - Levy
- 10:45 Athens Conservancy - Request to Install Benches
- 11:00 United Seniors - Penny McCune
- 11:15 Jeff Jenkins HAPCAP-Verification of Blight forms signed for two Land Bank properties
- 11:20 Ryan Gillette - Dog Shelter Improvements
- 11:30 LUNCH

Agenda Items

- Amended Certificate
- Utility Permits (3-AEP & 1-LeAx Water)
- Veteran's Credit Card Increase (Ratify Commissioner Eliason's Signature)
- Athens County Area 14 Workforce Board Members
- 317 Board - Term (Heather Batin)
- LOS River and Seam
- DJFS INTER-COUNTY TRANSFER OF ALLOCATED FUNDS

ADJOURNMENT

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the minutes of June 23, 2026.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Appropriations, Transfers, New Line Items Requests/Changes, Then & News, & Bills

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel approving the Appropriations, Transfers, New Line Items Requests/Changes, including Fund to Fund: Engineer \$22,370.13 from 491.1300.580102 Bond Transfer to 036.2036.422101 Transfers In and approving the payment of the required County Bills, which are included in the Auditor's Office INVOICE TRACKING REPORT - From: 06/18/2026 To: 06/23/2026, INVOICE TRACKING REPORT - From: 06/23/2026 To: 06/26/2026, INVOICE TRACKING REPORT - From:06/25/2026 To: 06/30/2026 and the bills are hereby the same and authorize the County Auditor to issue warrants on the County Treasurer for payment in the same. Complete list of bills maintained in the Auditor's office.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

CCC Plastics - Mollie Fitzgerald

Molly Fitzgerald, Executive Director of the Economic Development Council, provided an update on the proposed lease between the Athens County Port Authority and CCC Plastics for the speculative building in the industrial park. She outlined the company's operations, stated that it would be the company's first U.S. facility, and explained that all required Ohio EPA permits would be obtained prior to operation. Commissioners and members of the public discussed environmental impacts, air and water quality, hazardous materials, emergency response planning, local hiring, and lease provisions. Molly agreed to obtain additional information from the company, coordinate with emergency management officials, and provide written responses to outstanding questions. Commissioners also expressed support for holding a future public meeting to allow additional community input regarding the proposed project.

Bridge Replacement Reimbursement Agreement - Engineer Jeff Maiden

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the Bridge Replacement Reimbursement Agreement and formally accept the donation of up to \$250,000 from Texas Eastern, contingent upon the Prosecutor's review and approval of the final agreement.

Agreement on file in the commissioners office.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Equipment Replacement and Financing Request - Engineer Jeff Maiden

Jeff also presented commissioners with a proposed equipment replacement plan and requested consideration of financing options for the purchases. He explained that several pieces of the Engineer's Office fleet have reached the end of their useful lives, particularly two single-axle dump trucks that are between 20 and 25 years old.

In addition to the dump trucks, the proposed equipment list includes a backhoe and equipment trailer needed to transport the county's chip spreader and other heavy equipment more efficiently.

Jeff advised that the total equipment package would require financing of approximately \$575,734. He asked commissioners to consider whether financing through the county or issuing a 10-year bond would provide the most favorable interest rate. He noted that the department had previously evaluated county financing versus public bond financing and ultimately determined that issuing bonds had provided a more competitive rate.

Commissioners agreed to review the proposal and consult with bond counsel and the County Treasurer regarding available financing options before determining the most cost-effective method for funding the equipment purchases.

Bid Opening - DJFS 10 W. Washington Street Building

No Bids

DJFS Inter-County Transfer of Allocated Fund

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the Resolution authorizing Tamara Collins to execute inter-county transfer requests on behalf of the Commissioners:

RESOLUTION APPROVING TAMARA COLLINS, DIRECTOR OF ATHENS COUNTY JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES TO ACT ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSIONERS DURING INTER-COUNTY TRANSFER OF ALLOCATED FUNDS

WHEREAS, changes in Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:9-6-82 in which permits a County Department of Job and Family Services Director to accept and release funds between counties; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the current changes in the Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:9-6-82 has now granted the Board of Commissioners the authority to assign to the "Director of the County Family Services agency (CFSA) to serve as their designee, hereby granting the Director the authority to sign the inter-county adjustment agreement on behalf of the county, and;

WHEREAS, with the changing of the allocated funding this authority will allow the Director to act on opportunities to utilize other funding, while releasing funding to other counties that our county is not able to utilize to ensure that each CDJFS will be able to serve the people of their county to the fullest extent possible, and;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Athens County Commissioners do hereby resolve that: Pursuant to 5101:9-6-82 (inter-County Adjustment of Allocations) of the Administrative Code publicized by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services; the Director (Tamara Collins) of the Athens County Department of Job and Family Services, [aka the County Family Service Agency, (CFSA)], is the authorized designee to sign the inter-county adjustment of allocations form for, all funds

handled through said agency, on behalf of the county. Tamara Collins is required to provide written notification to the President of the Board, each time this specific designated authority is utilized. Said designation is in effect until January 1, 2029. Furthermore, this designation amends/clarifies the designation resolution dated October 3, 2013 to include a "specific period of time" for said designation and said designation shall automatically renew, in five year increments, unless specific notification of cancellation is submitted to Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

The foregoing resolution was introduced upon a motion by Commissioner Charlie Adkins and seconded by Commissioner Chris Chmiel.

Signed this 30th day of June 2026

/s/Lenny Eliason, President

/s/Charlie Adkins, Commissioner

/s/Chris Chmiel, Commissioner

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Bid Opening - Surplus

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to award the surplus items to the highest bidders as presented: The successful bidders were as follows:

- Large Patio Umbrella: Makina Wirick – \$106
- Shibumi Shade Tent: Leah Watson – \$41
- Solar Lights: Makina Wirick – \$30
- Yard Dice: Makina Wirick – \$11
- Garden Hose: Makina Wirick – \$5
- Cushions: Jeff Stull – \$5

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Children Service - Levy

1. Children's Services Levy Request and Financial Discussion

Children Services Director Otis Crockron appeared before the Board to continue discussions regarding the agency's request to place a 1.25-mill additional levy on the November ballot. He reviewed information previously provided to the commissioners concerning increasing placement costs, declining federal reimbursement, and the agency's long-term financial outlook.

Otis explained that one of the agency's greatest financial challenges continues to be the growing number of children who are not eligible for Title IV-E federal reimbursement. He noted that federal eligibility requirements are still based on standards established in 1996, resulting in significantly fewer children qualifying for reimbursement despite increasing placement needs. He reported that the agency currently spends approximately \$162,000 per month, or roughly \$1.9 million annually, on placement costs for children who receive no federal reimbursement, describing the situation as financially unsustainable.

Commissioner Chmiel questioned how Title IV-E eligibility is determined. Otis explained that eligibility depends on several factors, including family income, the circumstances under which a child enters agency custody, and whether the child was removed from a qualifying home setting. He stated that children entering agency custody from juvenile detention or other non-qualifying settings often fail to meet federal eligibility requirements, leaving the county responsible for the full cost of care.

Otis further explained that increasing behavioral health needs have resulted in more children requiring placement in specialized residential treatment facilities. He noted that finding appropriate placements has become increasingly difficult, with staff often contacting more than one hundred providers before locating an available bed. The limited number of facilities has also resulted in substantially higher placement costs.

Commissioner Chmiel asked whether there has been any effort at the federal or state level to modernize Title IV-E eligibility requirements. Otis stated that both the Ohio association representing children services agencies and state officials have advocated for federal reform but acknowledged that little progress has been made. He added that Ohio has instead focused on implementing provider rate transparency requirements intended to better regulate residential placement costs beginning in 2027.

Otis reiterated that the agency is not requesting additional funding lightly but believes the levy is necessary to maintain operations while continuing to meet mandatory service obligations.

2. Staffing and Service Reductions

Otis reported that Children's Services remains under a hiring freeze, with approximately 11 vacant positions, including two assessment worker positions responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect.

Commissioners asked what services would be affected if additional funding is not obtained. Otis responded that the agency's greatest concern would be maintaining the quality of services provided to children and families. Because Children's Services is legally required to investigate abuse and neglect reports and provide care for children in custody, he explained that reductions would likely occur in prevention and support programs rather than mandated services.

He reviewed several discretionary programs that could potentially be reduced, including the Champions for Children initiative and the School Outreach Program. While acknowledging that these programs help prevent children from entering agency custody, he noted that the School Outreach Program alone represents approximately \$475,000 annually in salary and benefit costs. He emphasized, however, that prevention services often reduce long-term placement costs by keeping children safely in their homes whenever possible.

Otis advised that, following its most recent meeting, the Children's Services Board voted to request placement of a 1.25-mill additional levy on the November ballot.

3. Commissioners' Review of Financial Data

Commissioners questioned whether the agency's financial information justified placing an additional levy before voters.

Commissioner Eliason stated that a review of the agency's financial statements for the previous five years indicated approximately \$75.9 million in actual revenues compared to \$74.6 million in expenditures, producing an operational surplus of approximately \$1.3 million during that period. Based on those figures, the commissioner stated that he did not believe sufficient evidence had been presented to demonstrate an immediate need for additional tax revenue.

Commissioners also questioned how much revenue the proposed 1.25-mill levy would generate. Otis responded that it would generate approximately \$1.9 million annually, explaining that several levy scenarios had previously been prepared by the County Auditor's Office.

Further discussion focused on projected agency finances over the next several years. Commissioner Eliason requested copies of the agency's projected budgets after completion of the new Children's Services building, including anticipated reimbursement for building occupancy costs.

Otis stated that agency projections show approximately \$800,000 in carryover remaining at the end of 2026 while average monthly operating costs remain approximately \$1.2 million. He further advised that current projections indicate the agency could experience a negative cash balance approaching \$1.4 million by the end of 2027 if current trends continue.

Commissioner Eliason requested copies of the multi-year financial projections for further review before considering any levy request.

4. Foster Care and Residential Placements

Commissioner Adkins questioned whether additional recruitment of foster families within Athens County could reduce expensive out-of-county residential placements.

Otis explained that while the agency currently licenses approximately 35 foster homes, foster care is appropriate only for children whose assessed level of need permits placement in a family setting. Children requiring intensive behavioral or mental health treatment must instead be placed in specialized residential treatment facilities or group homes that provide a significantly higher level of supervision and care.

Matthew Starkey added that although the agency continually recruits additional foster parents and recently received new inquiries from prospective foster families, increasing the number of traditional foster homes would not significantly reduce residential placement costs because many of the affected children require specialized treatment that foster homes cannot legally or safely provide.

Discussion also addressed the effects of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act, which has increased expectations for residential treatment facilities while reducing the number of available providers. Matthew Starkey explained that increased demand for specialized placements has allowed providers to charge substantially higher rates due to limited statewide capacity.

Commissioners acknowledged that counties remain legally obligated to secure safe placements regardless of cost, while state efforts currently focus primarily on increasing provider rate transparency.

5. Prevention Services and Budget Discussions

Commissioner Adkins questioned whether agency leadership had fully discussed potential budget reductions with the Children's Services Board before requesting an additional levy.

Commissioner Adkins stated he had been informed that potential program reductions had not been fully considered and requested copies of board meeting minutes documenting those discussions.

Otis responded that budget reduction discussions occur routinely during board meetings and agreed to provide the requested meeting minutes and documentation. He maintained that agency leadership has consistently evaluated available options while recognizing that prevention programs play a critical role in reducing future placement costs.

Matthew Starkey emphasized that programs such as school outreach provide direct services to families before situations escalate to formal child welfare cases, arguing that investments in prevention ultimately reduce long-term expenditures.

6. New Children's Services Building

Commissioner Adkins revisited previous discussions regarding construction of the agency's new building, noting that earlier conversations indicated the project would not necessitate an additional tax levy.

Questions were raised regarding bond payments associated with the building, reductions in reserve balances, and projected reimbursement for federally eligible building costs.

Otis explained that annual bond payments total approximately \$771,000, with approximately \$300,000 expected to be reimbursed through federal administrative funding after occupancy. Commissioner Adkins expressed concern that the building project has nevertheless increased operating costs and requested additional documentation regarding reserve balances and bond payment projections.

7. Comparison with Other Counties

Commissioner Chmiel asked how other Ohio counties have managed similar financial pressures without seeking additional levies.

Otis responded that many counties receive direct General Revenue Fund (GRF) appropriations from their boards of county commissioners, whereas Athens County Children's Services has historically operated without county general fund support. Otis also identified several counties that operate stand-alone children services agencies while noting that funding structures vary considerably across Ohio.

Children's Services Investigations

Commissioner Chmiel inquired about the workload of the two sheriff's deputies assigned to Children's Services investigations.

Otis estimated that the deputies are currently involved in approximately 200 active investigations, while the agency serves roughly 800 children each year through investigations, protective services, and ongoing case management.

He explained that many investigations remain active for extended periods and that deputies assist with numerous screened-in abuse and neglect cases, even when children are not ultimately placed into agency custody.

8. Closing Discussion

Otis concluded by reiterating that the agency will continue making operational adjustments regardless of whether a levy is pursued. He agreed to provide commissioners with additional financial projections, historical placement cost data, board meeting minutes, and other requested documentation to assist with future discussions.

Commissioners indicated they would review the additional information before considering any future action regarding placement of a levy on the ballot.

See document provided by Otis on back of page 243.

Why are we going for a levy?

Placement costs have increased significantly over the past four years, going from \$1,924 million in 2021 to \$5,252 million in 2025.

In particular, residential placement costs have increased from \$1,462 million to \$4,722 million over the same time period.

In that same time period, federal Title IV-E reimbursements for these placements have gone from \$843,936 to \$1,822,323. This has meant that we have gone from a reimbursement rate of 44% in 2021 to 35% in 2025.

These are children unable to find safe placements in traditional foster care or even treatment foster care homes.

As a public children services agency, we are required by court order to find safe placements for children. We must provide safe placements for children as long as we have temporary or permanent custody of them.

If we were to place children in inadequate placements for their needs, it would risk harm to the child, other children, and caregivers and could expose the agency and county to lawsuits if something were to happen.

Why the increase?

Family First Prevention Services Act has forced residential treatment facilities to increase costs in order to comply with the new requirements placed on their function by the act.

Title IV-E Eligibility – We are still calculating IV-E eligibility based on income requirements from a formula established in 1996. Eligibility is calculated based on the monthly income of the parent received at the moment of removal. A parent paid earlier in the month can result in a loss of eligibility for the child for the entirety of their time in care.

If a child is not eligible for Title IV-E reimbursement, the agency is responsible for covering the entirety of their placement costs. In the case of residential placement, this can mean upwards of \$800 or more, per day, per child that our agency is required to pay.

The number of children in our care that are not IV-E eligible has gone from 9.75 (avg for that year) in 2020 to 27 currently. ACCS pays approximately \$1.9 million annually for the placement of non IV-E eligible children.

What are we doing?

We have been the lead county in Southeast Ohio for the pilot Treatment Foster Care program where we are recruiting and training more treatment foster caregivers to allow for children to be placed in our home communities.

Our agency has actively participated in advocating for rate card legislation at the state level to control what residential facilities are able to charge agencies for placements. They should not be able to charge agencies different and increased costs for the same bed.

We have implemented a strict hiring freeze, moved employees into different roles, and scaled back events and spending to help control costs.

Other Steps ACCS Employed to Reduce Spending

- December 2025, extended a hiring freeze
- Placed appropriate clients with Safe Opportunity Foster Alliance (SOFA)
- Developed the Southeast Treatment Foster Care Program
- Reduced overall conference attendance
- Postponed the Champions for Children Dinner
- Reduced contract amount for Grove (Northwoods Case Aide Program)
- Reduced ACCS contribution to FCF from \$40k to \$3K

Current Positions on Hiring Freeze

- RTC and Events Assistant
- School Outreach Caseworker – Tri County
- School Outreach Caseworker
- Family Services Caseworker
- Family Services Caseworker
- Family Services Caseworker
- Assessment Caseworker
- Assessment Caseworker
- Permanency Caseworker
- Family Mentor
- Intermittent Family Support Worker

New Building

Funding for the new building was secured in 2024, through a county bond financed by Zion Bank, to allow for payment over 30 years.

Once completed and we move in later this year, we will be able to recoup some costs of the building and there will be expected savings over time as we move from four converted residential buildings to a single office building.

What happens if we don't pass the levy?

If we don't pass the levy, we will be forced to scale back some of our non-mandated services.

We are required to receive referrals, investigate reports, remove children if necessary, and find safe placement for them if removed.

Our agency, blessed by the continual support of the community, has been able to implement several programs that improve our ability to help children and families in our community.

If this levy doesn't pass, some of the programs that may go away are our School Outreach program, community events like Kidfest or Santa Tree Project, independent living help for youth getting ready to age out of foster care, financial aid for foster and adoptive families, kinship assistance, and many other forms of assistance we give children and families as they strive for reunification.

School Outreach, where we have caseworkers in all five Athens County school districts working with families in an informal setting to hopefully avoid needing a formal case with our agency, would need to be scaled back as workers would be reassigned to complete mandated casework Programs/Activities which may be affected should ACCS levy fail. (See List Below)

Program/Activity
Various Food Boxes (over 70 meals)
Allowance checks for kids 13 and up
PSJ
Santa Tree
Books 4000
Costcut
St. Pious Clinic
Tribble Food bag program
Foster parent Banquet
Champions for Children Dinner
Adoption parent support group
Supernova Princess Ball
Volunteer Appreciation Expenses
Athens Laundry Cards
Redhook and Nelsonville childcare for parent/teacher conferences
Athens Omega's Best The Heat Series
Paid passes
School Outreach team salary and benefits

Property Taxes

We understand that people are frustrated with the increase in property taxes over the last several years.

About 55% of our annual budget comes from our property tax levies and we couldn't function at our current level without them.

Federal and State Changes

At the state level, we are strong advocates for a change to the way in which residential care facilities are able to charge different rates to different agencies for the same children and same beds.

We also oppose new legislation "HB 635-Enact the Child Protection Reform Act" that would require in-person visits from the home agency caseworkers, rather than collaborating with the agency local to the child's placement to conduct the visit. It would also require more frequent visits, increasing the work and cost burden on PCSA caseworkers who are already overworked.

Additionally, we would like to see more of these facilities open to meet the demand that currently exists and the expectation that cases will continue to get more complex along with the behavioral needs of the children.

Federally, the changes implemented in the Family First Prevention Service Act need to be adjusted to be more in line with the reality of how residential treatment facilities are able to function and how much of a cost burden they are able to push to agencies that place children in their care.

Mission

Protecting children, strengthening families, securing futures.

Athens Conservancy - Request to Install Benches & Wildflower Sign

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the Athens Conservancy request to Install Memorial Bench and Educational Signs as proposed. Planner LaVelle and The Athens Conservancy was directed to coordinate the installation with the County Maintenance Dept. See Document on back of page 244.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

United Seniors - Penny McCune

JoAnn Rockhold, Administrator informed Penny, Executive Director of United Seniors that the organization's senior services levy will not need to be renewed until 2027 for the 2028 ballot. Penny also submitted the agency's annual funding request at the same level as the previous year. Penny provided an overview of United Seniors' programs, including transportation, wellness activities, exercise classes, insurance counseling, and social events, highlighting the successful Senior Day event that attracted more than 200 participants and 57 vendors. Penny also discussed recent operational improvements that have reduced expenses and increased investment earnings, as well as ongoing efforts to recruit additional transportation drivers and respite care staff to better serve the county's senior population.

W&S - Pilot Project Agreement

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the pilot project and authorize the county's participation, including the \$2,000 toward installation costs with W&S Funds. Agreement on back of page 245.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

HAPCAP - Verification of Blight Forms

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to authorize Commissioner Eliason to sign the two (2) HAPCAP Verification of Blight Forms:

- M04-0040011300 31 Hill Street Gloucester 45732
- M040030002500 60 Main Street Gloucester 45732

See forms on back of page 246.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Dog Shelter Improvements - Ryan Gillette

The Athens County Dog Warden Ryan Gillette appeared before the Board to request approval for security improvements at the county dog shelter to address operational and safety concerns resulting from the implementation of Avery's Law.

Warden Gillette explained that Avery's Law now permits dangerous and vicious dogs to be impounded at the county shelter while awaiting court hearings, rather than remaining with their owners. The law also increases the county's civil and criminal liability if an impounded dog causes injury while housed at the shelter.

To improve safety, Warden Gillette proposed constructing an additional secured enclosure and gate within the shelter's rear kennel area. The improvements would:

- * Create a secure area to house dangerous or vicious dogs while preventing unauthorized access by volunteers or visitors.
- * Allow staff to move dogs between indoor and outdoor kennels using sliding doors without directly handling the animals.
- * Reduce the risk of employee or volunteer injury during routine cleaning and feeding operations.
- * Include a "squeeze gate" area that would allow veterinarians to safely restrain and sedate aggressive animals when necessary.

The proposed enclosure would be fabricated using expanded metal panels and welded construction to provide greater durability and security than standard chain-link fencing. The total project cost was estimated at \$5,600, including materials and installation.

Warden Gillette advised that the expense exceeded what could reasonably be absorbed within the shelter's current budget and requested county assistance with the project.

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve funding for the security improvements in the amount of \$5,600.00 with J&W Welding Service LLC, recognizing the importance of protecting employees, volunteers, and the public while ensuring compliance with Avery's Law. Commissioners expressed appreciation for the Dog Warden's proactive approach to

WILDFLOWER SIGN AND BENCH CONTENT 6.17.26

Content for museum-quality sign along bikeway. Multiple images of wildflowers will be included and named. Here is what the sign will say.

Woodland Wildflowers: A Forest In Bloom

Native wildflowers thriving in this peaceful woodland are a sign of a healthy forest ecosystem. From early spring through summer, these lovely blossoms brighten the landscape and provide food for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.

Pause for a moment and embrace the beauty and tranquility of this spot. But please don't pick the wildflowers, especially trilliums.

Trilliums are a cherished native wildflower. Removing a flower and its leaves can weaken the plant, jeopardize its survival, and prevent it from blooming next year. By leaving trilliums undisturbed, you help ensure they will return to grace this woodland each spring.

I Spy Wildflowers!

This stretch of the bikeway is home to:

- Great white trillium
- Toadshade trillium
- Bloodroot
- Twinkleleaf
- Great waterleaf
- Largemouth waterlily
- Spring beauty
- Dutchman's breeches
- Solomon's seal
- Wild ginger
- Wild geranium
- Cutleaf coneflower
- Bluebells
- Jacob's ladder
- Blue phlox
- Leafcup

Thank you for helping protect these native treasures for people – and pollinators – to enjoy today and tomorrow.

Athens Conservancy Logo
WE PROTECT SPECIAL SPACES AND WILD PLACES

Companion bench to be installed next to sign
Memorial dedication line will appear on Bench

WILDFLOWER SIGNAGE DETAILS:

The wildflower sign will be professionally designed, produced, and delivered by EnviroSigns, which produces outdoor, interpretive, historical, and educational signage for many organizations, from nature preserves and battlefields to historic villages and farms. <https://www.envirosigns.com/environments>

Here is an example of what our wildflower sign will resemble:



BENCH DETAILS

A companion bench along the bikeway next to the sign would be produced by the Roundbush Co. The benches are comfortable and are made of recycled plastic for a long life.



Here is the company: <https://roundbush.com/>

	A	D	C	U
1	Bikeway Bench & Sign DRAFT Estimate			
2				
3	Item	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total Cost
4	Bench	1	698	698
5	Concrete	8	7.98	63.84
6	Sign	1	1600	1600
7	Labor	4	103.63	414.52
8				
9	TOTAL			2776.36

apierson@athensoh.org

From: LaVelle, Connor <countyplanner@athensoh.org>
 Sent: Friday, June 25, 2026 9:02 AM
 To: Lenny Eliason; Charlie Adkins; Chris Chmiel; JoAnn Sikorski; Alison Pierson
 Subject: Tuesday's Meeting - Athens Conservancy
 Attachments: Wildflower Sign and Bench project_draft 6.17 (2).pdf; Screenshot 2026-06-25 085809.png

Good morning, Commissioners,

Phil Cantino from the Athens Conservancy will attend Tuesday's meeting around 10:45am to discuss the Conservancy's project proposal for placing an educational sign and memorial bench along the bikeway at approximately mile 13.9. This will be adjacent to their Poston Preserve and is about 1/3 mile north of Glen Ebon Road.

Attached is the project proposal the Athens Conservancy shared. I confirmed with Mr. Cantino that the Conservancy is comfortable with the sign and bench being at least four feet from the edge of the bikeway pavement to comply with our standards.

Regarding costs, the Conservancy said it will fund this through an anonymous donation. They are aware that the county will need reimbursement for the maintenance hours, bags of concrete used for the project, and any other costs not covered directly by the Conservancy.

An example cost breakdown is attached for reference. The labor cost is the combined hourly rate for Mike and Jerry. The bench and sign costs are the high-end estimates based on current pricing. The Conservancy will be responsible for these costs, but I thought this might give a better picture of the project.

I hope that this helps give a bit more background ahead of Tuesday's meeting. Thanks again and have a nice weekend.

--
 Connor LaVelle, AICP CFM
 County Planner
 Athens County, OH
 740-447-5890

improving safety at the shelter.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Dog Shelter Updates - Volunteer Shade Structure Project

Dog Warden Gillette also informed the Board that the shelter's volunteer organization had completed a fundraiser to construct shade structures over the outdoor dog play areas.

The proposed structures would consist of small pergola-style shelters with metal roofs designed to provide shade for animals while remaining below the size threshold requiring building permits.

Warden Gillette explained that volunteers had offered to provide labor and construction, with plans prepared by individuals experienced in construction. Before moving forward, however, he wanted to ensure the project would not interfere with grounds maintenance or conflict with county facilities requirements.

Commissioners advised the Warden Gillette to continue coordinating the project with the county facilities department to ensure adequate clearance for mowing and maintenance equipment. No formal Board action was required, and commissioners expressed their support for the volunteer effort.

Amended Certificate

A motion was made by Mr. And seconded by Mr. Acknowledging receipt of the Amended Certificate for Athens County Commissioners, dated June 30, 2026 prepared by Jill Davidson, Athens County Auditor.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Utility Permits

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve the following Utility Permits:

Permit No. 26-712
From: AEP Ohio
700 Morrison Rd
Gahanna, OH 43230

We hereby request permission to install utility lines within public right-of-way limits.

Location of work: Co Rd # 67, Co Rd Name: Goose Run Rd
Description of Work: Electric
Type of Installation: Overhead Line Parallel to Rd
Estimated Project Schedule: 07/06/2026 - 12/06/2026

Agreed to by: /s/Chris Postle & Michelle Provandie, AEP Ohio

Athens County Commissioners

/s/ Lenny Eliason

/s/ Charlie Adkins

/s/Chris Chmiel

/s/Jeff Maiden, Athens County Engineer

Permit No. 26-713
From: AEP Ohio
700 Morrison Rd
Gahanna, OH 43230

We hereby request permission to install utility lines within public right-of-way limits.

Location of work: Co Rd # 67, Co Rd Name: Taylor Ridge Rd
Description of Work: Electric
Type of Installation: Overhead Line Crossing Rd
Estimated Project Schedule: 07/13/2026 - 12/31/2026

Agreed to by: /s/Chris Postle & Michelle Provandie, AEP Ohio

Athens County Commissioners

/s/ Lenny Eliason

/s/ Charlie Adkins

/s/Chris Chmiel

/s/Jeff Maiden, Athens County Engineer

PILOT PROJECT AGREEMENT

WHEREAS, this Pilot Project Agreement, also referred to as "Agreement", contemplates a pilot demonstration project between the Athens County Water and Sewer District, a political subdivision under Ohio Revised Code Section 5119.011, 101, address at 15 S. Court Street, Room 204, Athens, Ohio 45701, and Regenerative Energy Services LLC, an Ohio limited liability company, address is 11365 McGowan Lane, Gauseville, Ohio 45739, hereinafter both often called the "Parties". This Agreement calls for the installation and evaluation of a passive trompe aeration system intended to increase dissolved oxygen levels and wastewater treatment efficiency through air-independent aeration. This passive trompe aeration system will be described more fully under the "Project Description" paragraph.

The proposed system utilizes hydraulic head pressure to entrain and compress atmospheric air without external electrical energy input. The pilot project will evaluate operational reliability, dissolved oxygen enhancement, aeration efficiency, maintenance requirements, and environmental compatibility.

The project is intended as a limited-scale demonstration to determine feasibility for future wastewater treatment and environmental remediation applications within Athens County. Regenerative Energy Services LLC shall oversee the design, installation, monitoring, and operation of the pilot project as the Project Developer and System Owner.

1. PURPOSE OF AGREEMENT

The purpose of this Agreement is for the Athens County Water and Sewer District to authorize the temporary installation, operation, and evaluation of a passive trompe aeration pilot system within The Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant operated by the Athens County Water & Sewer District.

The pilot project will evaluate passive aeration performance, dissolved oxygen enhancement, compressed-air generation, and operational feasibility within a municipal wastewater environment. The proposed system is intended to function without external electrical power, chemicals, or moving mechanical components.

The pilot project is intended solely for demonstration, evaluation, and data collection purposes.

- Hydraulic flow availability
- Ability to monitor dissolved oxygen performance
- Minimal interference with facility operations

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF REGENERATIVE ENERGY SERVICES LLC

Regenerative Energy Services LLC agrees to perform the following:

- Design and supply the trompe pilot system
- Coordinate installation with district personnel
- Maintain equipment in safe operating condition
- Collect and document operational data
- Remove equipment upon termination if requested
- Comply with reasonable site safety requirements
- Minimize operational disruption to district infrastructure

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ATHENS COUNTY WATER & SEWER DISTRICT

The Athens County Water and Sewer District agrees to perform the following:

- Provide reasonable site access for installation and monitoring
- Designate a project contact representative
- Permit operational evaluation during the pilot period
- Provide access to relevant operational information when appropriate
- Notify Regenerative Energy Services LLC of operational concerns affecting the pilot system

6. INSTALLATION COST SUPPORT

A. Regenerative Energy Services LLC respectfully requests a one-time contribution of \$2,000 from Athens County to help offset installation, maintenance, and site monitoring costs associated with the Trompe demonstration system.

This request is made in support of a collaborative pilot effort intended to benefit Athens County and The Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant through evaluation of passive aeration, dissolved oxygen enhancement, and low-energy wastewater treatment innovation. Regenerative Energy Services LLC believes it is in the County's interest to support the pilot as an opportunity to evaluate a potentially valuable long-term infrastructure and energy-reduction technology.

Because this project is a limited-scale pilot demonstration intended for evaluation purposes only, the Parties acknowledge that Regenerative Energy Services LLC may not maintain commercial general liability insurance specific to this pilot installation.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, Athens County and the Athens County Water & Sewer District agree that Regenerative Energy Services LLC shall not be held liable for incidental, indirect, or consequential damages arising from normal operation, temporary interruption, pilot testing activities, or removal of the demonstration system, except in cases of gross negligence, willful misconduct, or intentional damage.

Athens County and the Athens County Water & Sewer District further acknowledge that participation in the pilot project is voluntary and undertaken for the mutual purpose of evaluating innovative passive aeration technology.

Regenerative will hold harmless the Athens County Water and Sewer District from claims, losses, or damages arising solely from that Party's own negligent acts or misconduct up to \$1000.

The Parties may separately determine whether additional waivers, acknowledgments, or insurance coverage are necessary prior to installation.

11. ACCESS & MAINTENANCE

Authorized access by Regenerative Energy Services LLC to the pilot system shall be coordinated with waste water district personnel of the Athens.

Routine maintenance activities may include the following:

- Inspection
- Cleaning
- Monitoring
- Adjustment of air flow
- Measurement collection
- System removal or repair

12. TERM OF AGREEMENT

Proposed Pilot Duration

12 months beginning on July 1st, 2026 and ending July 1, 2027. This Agreement may be extended by mutual written consent in a writing signed by both parties.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DESIGN PARAMETERS

A. The proposed system components consists of:

- Nested-pipe trompe aeration design
- Passive atmospheric air environment
- Hydraulic compression utilizing wastewater flow
- Dissolved oxygen enhancement
- Aeration discharge assembly
- Monitoring and evaluation equipment

B. Preliminary Design Parameters- See side picture.

Component	Proposed Specification
Inlet Pipe	2-inch Schedule 40
Air Capture Pipe	3-inch SDR-35 Pipe
Discharge Pipe	4-inch Schedule 40
Estimated Depth	Approximately 11 feet
Estimated Flow	Approximately 1-15 gallons per minute



3. PROJECT LOCATION

A. Site

The pilot system shall be installed at The Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant located at 1120 Jackson Drive, The Plains, Ohio 45750 which has been approved by Athens County Water & Sewer District pursuant to License 33-3637-00, Location #2, 11/19/2016. The pilot Trompe system

B. Installation, maintenance, and site monitoring cost support will include the following:

- Site preparation
- Transportation and delivery
- Excavation or hole preparation
- Installation labor
- System maintenance and inspection
- Site monitoring and data collection
- Anchoring and stabilization materials
- PVC connection materials
- Temporary mounting and support hardware
- Travel and field deployment expenses

This payment is intended solely to offset installation-related costs for the pilot demonstration project and does not transfer ownership of the Trompe system design or associated intellectual property which remains solely owned by Regenerative Energy Services, LLC.

7. SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

The pilot system shall:

- Operate in compliance with applicable environmental regulations.
- Avoid interference with treatment operations.
- Be installed in a manner minimizing safety hazards.
- Not introduce harmful substances into the treatment process.
- Be removable without permanent facility damage.

Any required permits or regulatory approvals shall be identified collaboratively. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has issued a NWP 18 minor discharge permit for the Trompe system design to be installed in waterways including the Hocking River.

8. DATA COLLECTION & PERFORMANCE MONITORING

A. The Parties may evaluate this project by considering the following criteria:

- Dissolved oxygen improvement
- Air compression performance
- Operational reliability
- Flow characteristics
- Maintenance requirements
- Energy reduction potential
- Environmental impacts

13. TERMINATION

Either Party may terminate this Agreement with written 30-day advanced notice mailed to the other at the address provided in this first paragraph of this Agreement.

Upon termination:

- The pilot system may be removed by Regenerative Energy Services LLC
- Site conditions shall be reasonably restored
- Operational data collected prior to termination may remain available for evaluation

14. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

This pilot project does not obligate Athens County Water and Sewer District to spend the trompe system.

Future development or implementation between the parties would require separate agreements.

15. SIGNATURES

REGENERATIVE ENERGY SERVICES, LLC

By: Justin Harbin

Its Manager
Date: 6/30/26

is proposed for installation at the effluent outfall downstream of The Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant using the existing terrain and limited temporary anchoring modifications to the existing concrete headwall structure.

Temporary concrete anchors may be installed within the existing headwall for the purpose of securely mounting a removable collection funnel and associated intake hardware. Any anchors or mounting hardware installed as part of the pilot project shall be limited in scope, designed to minimize structural impact, and may be removed or abandoned in place upon completion of the pilot project subject to Athens County approval.

B. Installation Components

- Funnel-style intake positioned at the base of the outfall waterfall (Black Box below)
- Approximately 4-8 feet of 2-inch PVC riser piping routed overhead ()
- Vertical trompe bore approximately 10 feet deep (red circle below)
- Surface anchoring using stakes, gravel, bolts, or natural rock features
- 2-inch discharge return to downstream channel
- Temporary instrumentation connections for DO, PSI, and airflow measurements

The installation is intended to be non-invasive, fully reversible, and designed to avoid interference with existing treatment operations. A picture of the proposed installation will be submitted below.



C. Site Considerations

- Safe access for installation and maintenance

B. Data generated during the pilot may include the following data:

- Influent and effluent dissolved oxygen measurements
- Airflow output measurements (CFM)
- Pressure measurements (PSI)
- Flow rate and temperature monitoring
- pH observations
- Operational stability observations over extended run periods
- Preliminary blow-test feasibility observations

C. Data generated during the pilot may be shared between the Parties unless otherwise agreed in writing. Interim summaries and a final performance report may be provided to Athens County and The Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant upon request.

9. OWNERSHIP & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The trompe system design, concepts, configurations, and associated intellectual property shall remain the sole property of Regenerative Energy Services, LLC.

Participation in this pilot project does not transfer ownership rights, patent rights, licensing rights, or commercialization rights of the trompe system design to Athens County. The United States Patent Office has approved and issued a provisional patent for the Trompe System Design while a permanent patent is pending.

10. NATIONWIDE PERMITTING AND COMPLIANCE

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has issued a NWP 18 minor discharge permit for the Trompe system design to be installed in waterways including the Hocking River.

11. LIABILITY & INSURANCE

Each Party shall remain responsible for its own acts, omissions, employees, agents, and representatives.

Regenerative Energy Services LLC agrees to operate the pilot system responsibly, in good faith, and in accordance with site safety and local requirements established by Athens County Water & Sewer District personnel and to follow any other applicable safety and legal requirements.

ATHENS COUNTY WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

By: Lenny Elsig, President

Athens County Commissioner
Date: 6/30/26

By: Charlie Adams, Vice President

Athens County Commissioner
Date: _____

By: Chris Chmiel, Commissioner

Athens County Commissioner
Date: 6/30/26

Athens County Prosecutor's Office

By: Timothy L. Warren
Assistant Athens County Prosecuting Attorney
Athens County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
1 South Court Street, First Floor
Athens, Ohio 45701

Permit No. 26-714
From: Le-Ax Water District
6000 Industrial Dr
Athens, OH 45701

We hereby request permission to install utility lines within public right-of-way limits.
Location of work: Co Rd # 19, Co Rd Name: Hebbardsville Rd
Description of Work: Water
Type of Installation: Underground (buried) Line Crossing Rd
Estimated Project Schedule: ASAP - Same Day
Agreed to by: /s/Christina Richey, Le-Ax Water District
Athens County Commissioners
/s/ Lenny Eliason
/s/ Charlie Adkins
/s/Chris Chmiel
/s/Jeff Maiden, Athens County Engineer

Permit No. 26-715
From: AEP Ohio
9135 St Rt 682
Athens, OH 45701

We hereby request permission to install utility lines within public right-of-way limits.
Location of work: Co Rd # 16, Co Rd Name: Pleasant
Description of Work: Electric
Type of Installation: Overhead Line Crossing Rd, Overhead Line Parallel to Rd, & Utility Pole Installation
Estimated Project Schedule: 12/04/2026 - 12/18/2026
Agreed to by: /s/Adam Pfeiffer, AEP Ohio
Athens County Commissioners
/s/ Lenny Eliason
/s/ Charlie Adkins
/s/Chris Chmiel
/s/Jeff Maiden, Athens County Engineer

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Veteran's Temporary Credit Card Increase

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to ratify Commissioner Eliason's Signature on the Veteran's Temporary Credit Card Increase of \$6,000.00 for 30 days.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Athens County Area 14 Workforce Board Members

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to Reappoint the following for the Athens County Area 14 Workforce Board:

Resolution

WHEREAS, on July 22, 2014 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act was signed into federal Law; and

WHEREAS, the members of the local workforce development board must be selected by the chief elected officials in each local area.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The Athens County Board of Commissioners hereby reappoints the following to serve on the Area 14 Workforce Development Board for terms commencing on August 1, 2026 through July 31, 2028:

Mollie Fitzgerald, Athens County Economic Development Council
Jessica Stroh, Hocking, Athens, Perry Community Action

It was moved by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel, to adopt the foregoing.

**Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Program
Community Authorization**

The Athens County Commissioners recognize the residential structure listed below as vacant, blighted, unsafe and substandard and recommends, with the owner's consent, that the Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Program demolish the structure at the expense of the Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Program for the safety and health of the Community.

Owner's Name: Habitat for Humanity SEO

Parcel Number: M040040011300

Address: 31 Hill Street

City: Glouster

Zip Code: 45732

Commissioner *Ray Eli*

Date 6/30/21

**Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Program
Community Authorization**

The Athens County Commissioners recognize the residential structure listed below as vacant, blighted, unsafe and substandard and recommends, with the owner's consent, that the Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Program demolish the structure at the expense of the Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Program for the safety and health of the Community.

Owner's Name: Athens County Land Reutilization Corporation

Parcel Number: M040030002500

Address: 60 Main Street

City: Glouster

Zip Code: 45732

Commissioner *Ray Eli*

Date 6/30/21

Vote on roll call resulted: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea, Mr. Adkins, yea.

Adopted: 06/30/2026

/s/Lenny Eliason, President

/s/Charlie Adkins, Vice President

/s/Chris Chmiel, Member

Attest: /s/JoAnn Rockhold, Administrator

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

317 Board - Term

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to Reappoint Heather Batin to serve on the 317 Board:

Heather Batin
7042 Cameron Road
Athens, Ohio 45701

Dear Ms. Batin:

The Board of Athens County Commissioners, at its regular session held on June 30, 2026, reappointed you to serve on the 317 Board. Your new term will begin July 1, 2026, and expire on June 30, 2030.

Thank you for your continued willingness to serve the residents of Athens County. We appreciate your time, dedication, and commitment to our community.

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

LOS River and Seam

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to approve sending a Letter of Support for River and Seam: June 29, 2026

Appalachian Regional Commission
Attn: Brandon McBride, Executive Director
1666 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20009

Re: Letter of Support for River and Seam: Activating the Ohio Coal Cultural Corridor

Dear Executive Director McBride,

On behalf of the Athens County Board of Commissioners, we are pleased to support the River and Seam: Activating the Ohio Coal Cultural Corridor project and its application for funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission's POWER Initiative.

This initiative will preserve the rich arts, culture, and traditions of Appalachian Ohio while creating new opportunities for artists, entrepreneurs, and small businesses throughout Meigs, Athens, and Perry Counties. By strengthening partnerships among regional cultural organizations, the project will expand arts programming, support workforce development, and enhance heritage tourism across southeast Ohio.

We believe this investment will strengthen our communities, celebrate our unique Appalachian identity, and contribute to long-term economic growth throughout the region.

We appreciate the Appalachian Regional Commission's continued commitment to investing in Appalachian communities and respectfully encourage your favorable consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

/s/Lenny Eliason, President /s/Charlie Adkins /s/Chris Chmiel

The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.

Children Service Levy Discussion

During commissioner comments, the Board discussed the recent Children's Services levy proposal and concerns expressed by members of the public and advisory board members.

Discussion focused on:

- * The agency's current reserve balance.
- * Whether additional levy funding is warranted based on current financial information.
- * Historical differences between projected and actual revenues and expenditures.
- * The financial impact of replacement versus renewal levies on taxpayers.
- * State reimbursement formulas and levy calculations.

Commissioners expressed interest in obtaining additional information regarding:

- * The actual tax impact to property owners.
- * The timing and history of previous levies.
- * Long-term funding needs for Children's Services.
- * State and federal unfunded mandates affecting county child welfare agencies.

Additional discussion addressed increasing placement costs, declining Title IV-E eligibility, private residential treatment expenses, and possible long-term solutions, including regional public facilities and broader statewide legislative reforms. Commissioners agreed to continue researching the issue through the County Commissioners Association of Ohio and other counties before taking future action.


Adjourn

A motion was made by Mr. Adkins and seconded by Mr. Chmiel to adjourn the above meeting.

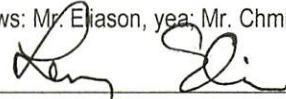
The roll being called upon for adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mr. Eliason, yea; Mr. Chmiel, yea; Mr. Adkins, yea.



JoAnn Rockhold, Administrator



Alison Pierson, Clerk



Lenny Eliason, President



Charlie Adkins, Vice-President



Chris Chmiel