

**Sandusky County Commissioners – 622 Croghan Street, Fremont, OH 43420**

**2026 MEETING**

Meeting: Board Of Commissioners

Location: Commissioners' Board Room

Date: 2/19/2026

Time: 8:00AM – 9:52am

Present: Commissioners: Russ Zimmerman – Vice President; Charles Schwochow

Present: Theresa Garcia – County Administrator

Others Present: Julie Schwochow, Andy McDowell, Steve Shiets, Cody Maynard, Chris Schneider, see sign in sheet for guest

(\*action items)

| AGENDA ITEMS  | BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS / ACTION STEPS:  | PERSON RESPONSIBLE:                 | DOLLAR AMOUNT: | MOTION / VOTE   |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|----------------|---|
| Call to Order Pledge of Allegiance (8:00am)   | *** Commissioner Miller was out of office today   | Russ Zimmerman,<br>Vice President   |                |   |
| *Review & Approval of Commissioner Meeting Minutes, incoming Mail Review & External Meeting Notices | The 2/17/2026 minutes were reviewed/approved by the Board. The Board reviewed incoming mail and external meeting notices.   | Russ Zimmerman<br>Charles Schwochow |                | *Motion: Move to Approve minutes<br>Moved by: Charles Schwochow<br>2nd: Russ Zimmerman<br>Yes – 2 (Miller absent) |
| Commissioners and Administrator Discussion  | Andy McDowell sent an email requesting a letter of support from the Commissioners regarding an easement of approximately 109 acres that would preserve the property for agriculture. Andy was in the room and came forward and talked about the program and what happens with the easements on the property. He answered many questions on the program. See attached letter of request. |                                     |                |   |
|   | Carlos Baez, County Engineer, sent an email with updates on ODOT's new signs for Rt. 20. They have several new signs on West bound and East bound lanes on the west end of Fremont.   |                                     |                |   |
| * Then /Now Documents   | None  |                                     |                |   |

|                   |   |   |  |   |
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| * Personnel       | None  |   |  |   |
| * Travel Requests | None  |   |  |   |
| Sanitary engineer | <p><b><u>Steve Shiets and Cody Maynard – Sanitary Engineer.</u></b> Steve and Cody came in for their regular meeting with the Commissioners. See attachment for agenda items. Steve talked about the Rice Township Water Project. There is concern about paying off the project with the current residence and a hotel. Commissioner Zimmerman asked Steve about hearing anything more from the City of Fremont about supplying water. The last conversation was they were not interested. Steve was under the same impression. The resistance with Fremont was putting a meter in for the County to control where the water goes and billing. Property acquisition for Steve right now is a hold up.</p> <p>At 8:37am Commissioner Schwochow made a motion to enter executive session to discuss property acquisition.</p> <p>At 8:56am Commissioners exited executive session.</p> <p>District 1 agreement needs to be finalized. He will contact the Prosecutors' Office to finish it up. He will need to update the Three-Way sewer agreement. Steve talked about merging all the districts into one district. All residents have been notified of the new rates for 2026. He hasn't had any concerns or calls on the rate increases. They finally got their truck back from the accident in August. They purchased a new vehicle last year and will replace another this year. Steve reviewed 2026 field operation projects. Steve asked about some updates to the building as they get closer to EMS moving to the new station.</p> | <p>Steve Shiets –<br/>Sanitary Engineer</p> <p>Cody Maynard -<br/>Utilities Manager</p> |  | <p>* Motion: Move to enter executive session<br/>Moved by: Charles Schwochow<br/>2nd: Russ Zimmerman<br/>Yes – 2 (Miller absent)</p> <p>* Motion: Move to enter executive session<br/>Moved by: Russ Zimmerman<br/>2nd: Charles Schwochow<br/>Yes – 2 (Miller absent)</p> |
| Clerk of Courts   | <p><b><u>Christie Schneider – Clerk of Courts.</u></b> Chris asked to come in and talk to the Commissioners. Chris met with Judge Welty last Friday and it went well. She asked about what they needed to do to help her. Judge did let her know that she was taking over the county court funds. The money in the funds that were budgeted for clerk of courts was moved to a new fund. The carpet at the Titles office needs to be replaced. Chris was told to contact the Board of Education for replacement. She had an invoice for phones she questioned. It should go</p>   | <p>Chris Schneider –<br/>Clerk of Courts</p>  |  |   |

|                               |  |  |  |   |
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|                               | to facility fund for payment like other utilities. Chris also asked about making sure concerns come to her. She did start working with mediation with the Judge as well. |  |  |   |
| <b>* Resolutions</b>          | None   |  |  |   |
| <b>Public Open Session</b>    | Citizens Attendees – none<br>Media Attendees – none<br>Elected Officials – none  |  |  |   |
| <b>* Adjournment (9:52am)</b> | With business completed for the day the meeting was adjourned.   |  |  | <b>* Motion: Move to adjourn</b><br>Moved by: Charles Schwochow<br>2nd: Russ Zimmerman<br>Yes – 2 (Miller absent) |

Signature of:



Scott Miller, President

absent

Charles Schwochow, Vice President



Russ Zimmerman

**Board of County Commissioners, Sandusky County Ohio**

Attest:



Clerk to the Board / County Administrator

I, the undersigned, Clerk of the Board of Commissioners, Sandusky County, Ohio, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy from the official record of said Board of County Commissioners as recorded in its Journal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk, Board of County Commissioners, Sandusky County, Ohio



## Western Reserve Land Conservancy

land • people • community

### **Memorandum**

**To:** Sandusky County Commissioners

**From:** Andy McDowell, Northwest Field Director  
Western Reserve Land Conservancy

**Date:** February 18, 2026

**Subject:** Resolution of Support for Western Reserve Land Conservancy's application to the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (LAEPP) on behalf of James and Mary Lou Neill for the purpose of farmland preservation in Townsend Township, Sandusky County

Dear Sandusky County Commissioners,

Western Reserve Land Conservancy is requesting a Resolution of Support from the Sandusky County Commissioners to include in our application to the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (LAEPP) for the purchase of an agricultural easement that will permanently preserve approximately 109 acres of James and Mary Lou Neill's farm located in Townsend Township, Sandusky County, and Margaretta Township, Erie County. The Neill Farm property contains five parcels along Wahl Road and State Route 6.

As food and agriculture is the largest industry in the state, it is important to protect Ohio's farming resources. Preserving agricultural land will ensure it remains agricultural for future generations. If the Neill's LAEPP application is successful, it could encourage more farmers in Sandusky County to preserve their land.

The application requires a Resolution of Support from the Sandusky County Commissioners (suggested language attached). Please mail an original Resolution of Support and email an electronic copy to:

Milan Tropf  
Western Reserve Land Conservancy  
3850 Chagrin River Rd.  
Moreland Hills, OH 44022  
[mtropf@wrlandconservancy.org](mailto:mtropf@wrlandconservancy.org)

On behalf of the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, I would like to thank Sandusky County Commissioners for their support of this project. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at (440) 773-6227. We look forward to your response.

## 2025 Visitor Bureau Committees

Website Committee Not needed at this time

This committee is needed when a new website is needed if we are seeking bids. Website was last done by Dave Thornbury in 2021.

**Chair:**

**Committee Members:**

### Building Committee

This committee was formed in 2012 when the Sandusky County Visitors Bureau was considering moving to a new location. We currently are in a 20-year lease agreement, exercisable in 5 year periods, with the Sandusky County Agriculture Society. That agreement began on June 1, 2021.

This committee may be needed when the 5-year periods expire to discuss rent costs/increases.

**Chair: Bill Hollister**

**Committee Members: Michael Russell, Joni Hasselbach**

### Policy Committee

This committee is needed to discuss/create any necessary policy changes and to review the Employee Handbook when needed.

**Chair: Bill Brown**

**Committee Members: Deb Nofzinger**

### Personnel Committee

This committee is comprised of the Board Chair, Vice-Chair and Immediate Past Chair. This committee provides guidance, oversight and support to the Executive Director regarding employee staffing issues.

**Chair: Ty Tracy**

**Committee members: Deb Nofzinger, Bill Brown, Peggy Courtney**

**AGENDA**  
**Commissioners' Meeting**  
February 19, 2026

1. Rice Township Water Improvements
  - Utilize a 3 Phase Approach for construction
    1. Replacement of the Shorewood Water Plant
    2. Replacement of the Shorewood Distribution System
    3. Expansion of the Distribution System along State Route 53 corridor
      - a. State Route 53 corridor could be “phased in” due to costs
  - Could also utilize 3 Phase Approach to maximize funding
    - Downside would be timing delays
  - The General Plan for Water Supply was submitted to the Ohio EPA
    - General Plan recommends County Water Supply
    - Project construction is estimated at \$12.7 million
    - Relying heavily on the General Fund
      - 30 Year Loan Payment is over \$600,000 repayment per year
      - 2.5% Interest but believe we can get 0% (\$424,000 repayment per year)
  - Ohio EPA sent an initial review (but not approved yet)
  - Update to receive General Plan Ohio EPA Approval
    - Source Funding of Repayment (General Fund)
      - Most likely looking for a commitment from the Commissioners
      - \$424,000 if 0% loan is utilized
  - Test well site on property location – either one of the following:
    - Obtain an easement to drill test well on water plant property
    - Purchase water plant property to drill test well
- Current Situation
  - Planning Loan was completed with repayment over the next 5 years
  - Commissioners have now paid three payments of \$19,008.60
  - Until we get to construction, these will need covered by the Commissioners
  - Preliminary Design not affected by water supply was already started
    - Preliminary Plans are 30% complete
  - Two more loan applications are required: (1) Design Loan & (2) Construction Loan
  - County Water District Legal / JED – Prosecutors and/or Squires Patton Boggs
  - Purchase property of Water Plant & Water Tower (along with any necessary easements)
    - Utilize Prosecutors Office like Wightman’s Grove property acquisitions
    - Minimum Foot print
      - 2 well fields with 300’ Isolation Radius
      - Yields about a minimum of 17-acre rectangular property
      - Isolation radius can include floodplain but wellhead must be out of it
      - Water plant must be out of the floodplain
      - Access must be out of the floodplain
2. Rice Township Water Improvements - Property Acquisition ([Executive Session?](#))
  - Met with ms consultants via TEAMS on February 17, 2026
    - Evaluated the pros & cons of the two properties
    - One site appears to be the preferred site
      - Open farmland so no clearing of woods
      - Farmland could be rented for continue organic farming
        - \$150 to \$300 per acre depending on the ground
      - Building construction will be easier
      - Adjacent to road right-of-way so no utility easements
        - No maintenance of easements through wooded areas
  - Dealing with one property owner versus two property owners
  - Placement of water tank northerly, creates more service area

- Total Acreage
  - Farm Home Site
    - Allows for at least three wells (2 initially and a third for future)
  - Splitting off site of minimum 17 acres splits the farm awkwardly
    - Bare minimum and possibly lose the ability to expand the plant
    - \$150,000 grant for property acquisition
  
- 3. District #1 Agreement
  - New Agreement had three requests originally from the County
    - Switchover Date for County to take over the billing for County customers with a flat rate
    - Add an Operation & Maintenance charge to the City for pumping Pinewood Village Area
      - This would include the Autumnwoods Subdivision Area
      - Similar to how Grandview Lift Station pumps City sewage from Augusta Drive Area
    - Update the rates to the current rates for both the City and County
  - New Agreement had one request originally from the City
    - City I/I Plan was approved via Ohio EPA with the following commitments:
      - County is committing \$50,000 annually for I/I Plan over the 10 year period
      - If \$50,000 is not spent in that year, funding rolls over to the next year
      - Basically, committed spending \$500,000 on I/I issues within the next 10 years
  - City requested the following items based on their review:
    - County pays for upgrades to the City's system to connect new properties
    - Removal of County unmetered customers referenced to City unmetered customers
    - City is willing to proceed with the switchover date
    - Modification of the description of the City's charge and update County's charge
    - During the last discussion, City billing office indicated the overhead charge was \$1.88
      - Cost does not support switchover to County performing the billing at \$6.95
      - Still don't think we are comparing apples to apples but we are closer than before
  - John Larson has updated the agreement, and I have reviewed it
    - Need to forward the agreement to Prosecutors for review
    - Reach back to Catie Romanchek
    - Expiration Date of the Agreement
      - Date was at the end of 2025 to coincide with Three Way Agreement)
  - Three Way Agreement expired at the end of 2025 and needs renewed
    - General Sewer District
    - Sandusky Township Regional Sewer District (STRSD)
    - City of Fremont
  
- 4. Office Operations
  - All the rate increases have been inputted into the utility billing system
    - Customers were notified on their January bills as well as our website
    - February bills were sent out with the new rates
  - 2025 Inventory has been completed
  - Vehicle Accident on P-161 on August 14, 2025 (\$26,747.02)
    - Truck was picked up yesterday from Snyder Collision in Sandusky, Ohio
      - Strobe lights were not reinstalled in the front
      - Snyder indicated that we are responsible for reinstallation
    - Rental car was returned as well
    - Want to thank Ian for his assistance in this matter
  - Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are pretty much done for all satellite locations
    - Step by step instructions for work orders
    - Still working on updates for Rules & Regulations and Licensed Contractor's Handbook
    - Contractor's Handbook should be up for review to the Prosecutor's shortly
    - Have Commissioners pass a resolution for licensed Contractors and the handbook
  - 2026 Budget
    - Original approved for 2026 budgets

- Water Budget - \$123,615
- Sanitary Sewer Budget - \$3,158,305
- Advanced both budgets on October 16, 2025
  - Water Budget - \$108,000
  - Sanitary Sewer Budget - \$3,101,000
- Budget Reductions
  - Water Budget reduced - \$1,696.16 (1.6% Reduction)
  - Sanitary Sewer Budget reduced - \$227,282.46 (7.3% Reduction)
- Vehicle Replacement Purchases
  - 2012 Crane Truck Replacement (\$112,414.68)
    - Diesel Truck (Ford F350) was received for \$66,014.68
    - Utilized the cost of the Ford F350 in 2025 Budgets
    - Service Body and Lift Gate is \$46,400
    - Also includes emergency lighting and moving crane from old truck
  - 2002 Ford F-150 Truck (\$36,040)
    - Ford Ranger was ordered from Advantage Ford
    - Emergency Lighting and outfitting truck will be completed after delivery
- GAAP Reports
  - 2025 Annual Report is in the works
- 5. Field Operations
  - Repairs
    - Rice Generator - Screen is blank (waiting on quote from Buckeye Power Sales)
    - Grandview Generator - Believed to be faulty speed sensor (W.W. Williams)
    - Yacht Club - landscaping bushes to be pulled
    - Flygt Rod Installations (Inhouse & Wave Electric)
      - Rice Lift Station
      - Shorewood Lift Station
  - Yard restoration from various water leaks (3 repairs in the last 6 months)
    - Shorewood Water Leak in front of 1088 Millbrook Drive on September 10, 2025
    - Shorewood Water Leak in front of 2292 Harbor Hill on November 28, 2025
    - Shorewood Water Leak in front of 1014 Shorewood Drive on February 9, 2026
  - Verified all alarm & status points on the Master Terminal Unit (Bergren Co.)
    - Burketts is coming in to check and complete wiring for many of the generators
    - BissNuss (formerly Bergren) will finish addressing these issues
  - EMS connections (Porter Architects)
    - Life Squad 14
    - Bacteria Test needs completed
    - EMS Office
      - 8" sanitary sewer needs deflection testing
  - Technical Services
    - Village of Helena
      - Requested quote for Technical Services
      - Toured plant and discussed current operation
        - Typical more than what we do for Technical Services
      - Draft Technical Service Agreement will be provided
        - \$1,300 per month minimum with Village assistance
          - Record daily flow & turbidity
          - \$2,500 per month to meet Ohio EPA requirements
      - Has not indicated any direction as of today
    - Other Service Agreements
      - Village of Green Springs
      - Village of Lindsey
      - Misty Meadows

- Operator Backup
  - Talked with Northwest Water & Sewer for third party back up for operations
  - They do not perform emergency maintenance (i.e. pulling pumps, grinders, etc.)
- 6. Office Remodel
  - Porter Architects provided pricing (\$310,000)
    - Preliminary Design - \$98,000
    - Final Design - \$150,000
    - Construction - \$62,000
  - Invoice of \$24,894.40 was paid
  - Currently there is no contract with Porter Architects in place
  - Coordination with the EMS renovation of their building on E. State Street will be crucial
  - Sanitary Engineers to take over EMS portion of building and cold storage building
    - Submitted office and site plan layout review to Porter
  - Sanitary Engineers will be looking at the following key areas of focus for the work
    - Meeting / Training Areas for both public and staff meetings
    - Customer Drive Through with Drop Box
    - Updating the Lab for Water & Wastewater Testing
    - Updating Parking Lot and Yard Lot for better flow of vehicles
    - Asphalt the majority of the Yard Lot
    - Increasing Maintenance Area for Equipment and Pump Repairs
    - Increasing Garage area for vehicles along with wash & maintenance bays
    - Increasing Storage Building area for equipment storage
    - Provide individual offices for Supervisor positions
    - Separate areas for I.T. equipment, radio equipment, and housekeeping
    - Separate area from work area for employee lunch breaks
  - Sanitary Engineer Renovation & Expansion will hopefully utilize Bond via the Commissioners
  - Fund requests from the Commissioners
    - Customer Parking Lot
      - Change of the Parking Lot for safety concerns
      - Better flow for pedestrians crossing the street (most don't realize it is a street)
      - Also will allow for a larger parking lot for future County Office structure
      - Discussed with County Engineer and he's looking into costs
    - Separate Electrical Service for Fuel Depot
      - Utilize old EMS Electrical Service or old Sanitary Engineer Electrical Service
      - Sanitary Engineer's electric is maxed out in Storage Building from Fuel Depot
      - Fuel Depot electric has been paid by the Sanitary Engineers since installation
      - EMS old transfer switch will be utilized for Fuel Depot

2/19/2026

| Name            | Signature  | Contact Information |
|-----------------|--|---------------------|
| Andy McDowell   |  | 440 773-6227        |
| Alicia McDowell |  | 419-463-0472        |
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