

January 21, 2026

Vote: Bigrigg yea
Shryock yea
Fischer yea

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Vote: Bigrigg	yea
Shryock	yea
Fischer	yea

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Shryock	yea
Fischer	yea

Mr. Fischer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Shryock to affirm the following Temporary Transfers/Additional/Reductions that were approved by County Administrator Mary Beck and certified by the County Auditor.

Vote: Bigrigg	yea
Shryock	yea
Fischer	yea

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COMMISSIONER'S JOURNAL

Wednesday

Regular

January 21, 2026

Haley Sturtz-Animal Shelter Facility Discussion

At 9:30 a.m., Haley Sturtz from the Coshocton County Animal Shelter attended the Coshocton County Commissioners' meeting to discuss animal shelter operations moving forward into 2027, along with Mr. Rusty Dreher. Haley explained that a new Dog Warden is expected to begin on February 7, and that Deputy Caden Brown has been removed from the program, due to bidding. The shelter has now assumed responsibility for owner-surrendered animals, and once a dog is surrendered it becomes the shelter's responsibility. Haley stated she is comfortable with this arrangement. She noted that some deputies had previously been transporting surrendered animals at no cost, while the shelter charges a \$25 surrender fee, and expressed that it is best for these animals to be returned directly to the shelter. Haley acknowledged that many responsibilities are being shifted back to her and her staff and stated she serves as an effective liaison between her team and the County Commissioners.

Discussion also focused on communication and oversight moving forward, including who would serve as the primary point of contact between the shelter, the Commissioners' Office, and the Sheriff's Office. It was noted that Beth Walsh may be involved in communication with the Sheriff's Office, and Rusty stated he would act as the primary navigator and point of contact through January 2027. The Sheriff's Office has also asked about approximately \$23,000 taken by the Sheriff's Office related to shelter services. Haley emphasized that a great deal occurs at the shelter on a daily basis and requested reassurance that no unnecessary changes would be made to operations. She stated the shelter has come a long way since 2016 and that she is proud of the work accomplished and wishes to maintain current operations unless changes are required.

Haley reported that two rooms at the shelter currently lack air conditioning and heat. She stated she is willing to cover the cost of repairs herself but wanted confirmation from the Commissioners before proceeding. Commissioner Bigrigg expressed appreciation for the qualities and dedication Haley brings to the shelter and thanked her for her continued service. Ongoing concerns were raised about frequent deputy turnover and the need to repeatedly train new individuals every two to three months. Owner-surrender services have been provided since 2012, though they are not statutorily required. Haley continues to provide this service by choice to support the community. It was noted that Knox County charges \$125 per surrendered dog.

Mr. Dreher stated it is beneficial for Haley to maintain control over where surrendered dogs are placed and suggested the Dog Warden position would be better structured as an appointed position rather than a bid position, as frequent turnover creates additional hardship for the shelter. Haley expressed concern about this turnover. Mr. Dreher stated the position is a Monday through Thursday day-shift role and that he will continue serving as a navigator until January 2027. He also noted that by statute, only the county or a humane society may operate an animal shelter and stated he will continue advising the Board to allow Haley to operate the shelter as long as she is willing and able. The shelter continues to receive strong community support, which was acknowledged by the Board.

Fees and funding were also discussed. The current owner-surrender fee is \$25. Adoption fees were noted as \$250 for dogs and puppies, which includes vaccinations and spay or neuter services. Mr. Shryock questioned whether increasing the surrender fee to \$50 would discourage surrenders. Rusty stated that while fees may need to increase in the future, raising them could create additional issues. Haley stated she prefers keeping fees low, including the \$15 dog tag fee, as she believes these costs are fair and best serve the community. She also noted she manages funding conservatively and identified propane as a significant expense during winter months. Rusty commented that changes made during COVID had positive impacts on shelter operations and stated he will remain in contact with Beth Walsh regarding normal wear and tear and facility needs. Commissioner Bigrigg stated the Commissioners would review options to address deputy turnover. The meeting concluded with Commissioner Bigrigg thanking Haley for her unmatched dedication to the job and the community, and Rusty expressing openness to the idea of a long-term contract with the shelter, which the Commissioners agreed was a good idea.

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Meetings Attended

On Wednesday afternoon, January 14th all three (3) Commissioners attended the Exit Audit meeting in the Community Room. On Tuesday morning, January 20th Mr. Bigrigg attended the Family Children First Council meeting, later that evening Mr. Bigrigg and Mr. Fischer attended the Regional Planning and Coshocton County Township Association meetings.

Adjourn

Mr. Bigrigg adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.



Robert W. Bigrigg



Dane R. Shryock



Gary L. Fischer



Clerk