

February 2, 2026

Approve Minutes

Vote: Bigrigg	yea
Shryock	yea
Fischer	yea

Vote: Bigrigg	yea
Shryock	yea
Fischer	yea

Vote: Bigrigg yea
Shryock yea
Fischer yea

Vote: Bigrigg	yea
Shryock	yea
Fischer	yea

Vote: Bigrigg	yea
Shryock	yea
Fischer	yea

Vote: Bigrigg	yea
Shryock	yea
Fischer	yea

COMMISSIONER'S JOURNAL

Monday

Regular

February 2, 2026

Mr. Darrel Lanham - Public Comment

At 8:45 a.m., Mr. Darrel Lanham Jr., a county resident, addressed the Commissioners regarding various public matters. Mr. Lanham stated that he has spent approximately seven years working on legal issues related to his past cases, including concerns he described as conflicts of interest involving the courthouse and jail. He advised the Commissioners that he was placing the County on notice of his intent to pursue legal action, stating that he plans to seek monetary damages and to challenge qualified immunity as it applies to the County and involved parties. Mr. Lanham indicated that he has been released for three years, acknowledged responsibility for his past actions, and stated that he is focused on moving forward and does not intend to reoffend. He apologized for any language used during his comments and noted that no disrespect was intended.

Mr. Jed McCoy, DJFS Director - Foster Care Update

At 9:00 a.m., Mr. Jed McCoy, DJFS Director, Mr. John Piper, Fiscal Administrator DJFS, and Mrs. Kathy Art, Child Services Administrator met with the Commissioners to provide the monthly foster care update. Mr. McCoy reported that progress has been made, though slowly, with some children having been relocated. As of that morning, there were 88 children in care, reflecting a slight decrease. He noted that additional reports continue to be received and will be forwarded to the Commissioners as needed. Commissioner Bigrigg observed that the numbers are trending in the right direction, and Jed confirmed that this process takes time and that meetings are occurring more frequently. Jed explained that movement within the department involves deeper case reviews and reassessment of placement options. He also reported that several adoptions are anticipated in the near future and that a newer report has been developed to better break down levels of care.

Discussion included the use of a "Connect" position within child welfare to assist with identifying and engaging relatives for kinship placements. Mr. McCoy explained that the Connect worker conducts family searches, outreach, and provides training. Kathy Art noted that several children currently in kinship care may remain with relatives or be reunified with parents, and that many cases are reaching the 12–24-month decision-making timeframe. She emphasized that Connect is a valuable tool for working with families, though challenges remain when families are reluctant to involve extended relatives.

Commissioner Bigrigg thanked Kathy Art for providing her perspective and commented on the difficulty the public has in understanding the high costs associated with foster care. Kathy explained that children's needs have changed over time, resulting in higher care costs, and that foster care providers are requesting increased funding due to transportation and service demands. It was noted that any increase in funding should be tied to an increase in services.

Mr. McCoy and Mr. Piper discussed potential increases to foster care daily rates, noting that the current rate is approximately \$25 per day for traditional foster care. They are reviewing data from the East Central Ohio group, which shows other counties averaging closer to \$40 per day. John Piper added that although rates may increase, families do not receive the full amount, as portions go to provider agencies, and that higher spending may result in long-term savings through improved recruitment and retention. Kathy noted that many private-network placements are treatment foster homes, which carry higher costs, and that recruitment of local foster families remains challenging despite pilot programs offering higher daily rates.

Kathy reported that there are currently 15 children in congregate care, down from a previous high of 19, which was viewed as a positive development. One high-cost placement has transitioned to a local foster family and is progressing well. Additional discussion addressed the challenges of ensuring adequate care in out-of-area placements, the increasing need for 24-hour care, and the impact of mental health complexities on placement decisions. Commissioner Bigrigg commented that the system remains strained, particularly due to mental health demands.

Financial projections were discussed, with Mr. Piper noting that reductions in congregate care may not immediately reflect in month-end projections. He estimated an approximate \$20,000 decrease. Kathy noted that one additional congregate care placement is being evaluated for a local option. Reimbursement was also discussed, with Mr. Piper reporting that approximately \$4.3 million in placement costs resulted in \$1.2 million in reimbursement in 2025, including some reimbursements received for prior periods.

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Mrs. Robin Schonauer - 2026 Budget Presentation

At 9:37 a.m., Mrs. Robin Schonauer presented the proposed 2026 budget to the Commissioners. Mrs. Schonauer reviewed the general fund budget stating the amount for the 2026 budget is \$20,390,708.00 and non-general fund budget figures \$51,423,059.00, noting that the budget had been set the previous Wednesday. She reported a 1.5% reduction to the 2025 general fund budget and an overall increase of approximately \$1.4 million, primarily due to foster care funding. She explained that court-ordered and mandated services contributed to an increase over the 2025 budget, including 27 pay obligations, mandated services, and foster care expenditures. Mrs. Schonauer also noted that health insurance costs increased by 13% compared to the prior year. She stated that the budget will be monitored closely, referencing strong October sales tax receipts received in January. She further advised that revenue adjustments were requested from Mr. Grant Daugherty and Mrs. Janette Donaker and were completed, and that a transfer from the Capital Improvements Fund to the General Fund was included. Commissioner Bigrigg and Mr. Jim Skelton publicly thanked staff for their efforts. Mrs. Schonauer acknowledged assistance from Mrs. Cortnie Jamison in preparing the budget. Commissioner Shryock thanked Mrs. Schonauer for her work and noted that the process served as a valuable learning experience for all involved.

Executive Session-Employee Compensation

At 9:45 a.m. Mr. Fischer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Shryock to go into executive session with Mr. Chad Lawrence, IT Director, also in attendance was Mr. Jim Skelton, *Assistant -* County Prosecutor and Mrs. Mary Beck, County Administrator to discuss employee compensation. All vote aye. At 10:15 a.m. Mr. Bigrigg returned the meeting to regular session. No action taken.

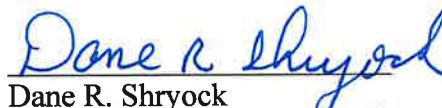
Meetings Attended

Mr. Bigrigg attended the Coshocton Visitor's Bureau (CVB) meeting on Friday, January 30, 2026.


Adjourn

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


Robert W. Bigrigg


Dane R. Shryock


Gary L. Fischer


Clerk