

**MORGAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
RIECKER BUILDING**

The Board of Morgan County Commissioners met in their office Monday, July 7, 2025.
The meeting was called to order at 8:30am with the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Cecil Mayle, President
Heidi Maxwell, Vice-President
Steve Best, Member

The commissioners did the following over the past week:

25-323- Motion by Mr. Best and seconded by Mrs. Maxwell to approve the minutes of June 30, 2025.

Mr. Mayle yea, Mrs. Maxwell yea, Mr. Best yea Motion Carried

*Commissioners are in receipt of June expense, revenue and statement of cash report from the Morgan County Auditor.

Al Eltringham, Riecker Maintenance

Bragg's started installing new carpet and as of Friday 12-27-24 the conference rooms on the 2nd and 3rd floors and the Treasurer's office are completed. They are moving to the Recorder's office 12-30-24 Commissioner's finished 1-2-25 Recorders Office is finished 1-10-25 Now working on the extension Office 1-8-25. Carpet will be replaced in the Auditors office 2-1-25 Auditors office Carpet replacement has been completed 2-2-25. Engineer is next to be done and they are starting 7-18-25

County Garage delivered Low Clearance Signs for the Car Port at the Health Department/Genesis's Building and the Maintenance Team will install them next week. 7-1-25

We will be preparing the old Maintenance van and the Toyota van to sell on GOV DEALS within the next few days. Keys and Titles have been turned over to Jeff Babcock 6-18-25

Advance Heating and Cooling is scheduled (6-25-25) to do the Spring/Summer service and to look at RTU3 and RTU1 6-26-25 Service did not happen and the Tech that Advanced sent didn't know the system causing the system to be down and non-operational. Advanced was able to change their schedule to get their best Tech here on 6-26-25. RTU1 is up and operational at 16:45 hr.

All mowing was completed on 6-25-25

RTU 2 completed 7-2-25 and working on a quote to repair RTU 3

Courthouse Clock has stopped working, checked breakers and switches. Need to call Jason Pierce to check and repair any electrical problems. 6-26-25

Went to the Health Department and located the Breaker for the Exterior Lighting and the Parking lot lights. We turned the breaker off and showed them where it was and directed them to shut it off in the morning and back on before leaving at the end of the day. We also found what is believed to be the eye for those lights. Will need Jason Pierce to check it and replace it if necessary. 7-1-25

Custard Insurance Adjusters (Shane Mott) was on site to do an estimate on the lower roof of the Riecker Building and will send the Quote forward. 7-3-25

Jeff Babcock, IT Administrator

Power Outage

A power outage was reported this morning.

John Telesz, Engineer

Alarm and Warning Systems

Raised concerns about the lack of an alarm or warning system to notify people in case of emergencies, stating that there's no way to warn people and that the judge is "completely bamboozled" by this lack of a system, questioning whose fault it is. Discussion included the existence and effectiveness of sirens, specifically mentioning areas and noting that while there used to be two sirens, now there is only one raising doubts about their audibility in certain areas. The need for a system to alert people, especially in flood-prone regions, was emphasized.

Road Repairs and Maintenance

Discussed ongoing road repair efforts, which is also a concern. They are working on patching a bunch of roads today before chip and seal work. A meeting is scheduled for 6:30. Five percent of the prep work is done, specifically for Road 101. Road 37 is ready for the HMA bid, which is the next step. Details about materials and methods were shared: the material goes down cold, emulsifies, rolls, and holds up better because it's like a permeable pavement. After chip and seal,

if water still gets through, they will "concrete into it" using Portland cement to make a stiffer mix.

Annual Reporting and Funding

Explained that at the end of each year, Steve prepares a report that provides an explanation of what has been done, detailing funding, payroll, and expenses for materials and equipment. Also, mentioned having a couple of these reports, noting that this is for the "gear pad" and is "nothing new." This report is used for future planning and transparency.

Heidi Burns, JFS

25-324- Motion by Mrs. Maxwell and seconded by Mr. Best to enter executive session with Heidi Burns at 9:05am pursuant to ORC. 121.22 section (G)(1) Employment, Personnel.

Mr. Mayle yea, Mrs. Maxwell yea, Mr. Best yea Motion Carried

25-325- Motion by Mr. Best and seconded by Mrs. Maxwell to exit executive session with Heidi Burns at 9:27am pursuant to ORC. 121.22 section (G)(1) Employment, Personnel.

Mr. Mayle yea, Mrs. Maxwell yea, Mr. Best yea Motion Carried

Travel Request:

- Heidi Burns to Wooster on 7/1 for JFS Monthly District Meeting
- Heidi Burns & Kari Schaad to Coshocton on 7/18 for PCSA Quarterly District Meeting
- Heidi Burns, Missy Fisher, Joe Frazier to Columbus 7-23—7-25 for JFS Fiscal Symposium
- Heidi Burns & Kari Schaad to Athens on 7/28 for PCSA Quarterly District Meeting
- Heidi Burns to Lancaster on 7/30

Steve Redrup, EMA; John Wilt, 911

Water Damage and Building Repairs

Mr. Redrup had cleaned offices, including Mr. Wilt's and his own, which had experienced significant water damage. Water intrusion issues were detailed, including a junction in the gutter

that caused flooding and standing water in the office, even migrating to the hallways. This specific joint was identified as needing Flex Seal. Additionally, there were mentions of holes in the roof, and multiple leaks. Leaking window sills, particularly the trim, allowed water to come down the inside walls, potentially leading to mold in the office. The presence of broken windows in the alley and a seamless soil pipe in the interior hallway were also noted. Efforts to address the damage included discussions about repairing the roof and a painting demonstration, which resulted in a decent paint job, even on the sidewall. Mr. Wilt also mentioned that their computers were not cleaned up due to uncertainty about their replacement.

Emergency Communications and Flood Warnings

Discussions centered on emergency communications and flood warnings, highlighting reliance on the National Weather Service for various warnings, including winter storm and flood warnings. A challenge noted was being far from radars, which don't accurately show local conditions, exemplified by a microburst flooding event on 8th Street that occurred without warning. A Facebook page is used for warnings, requiring people to sign up. Various alert systems were discussed:

- **IPALS:** Described as similar to a presidential warning, it cannot be disabled and hits all cell towers in an area. It's utilized for imminent flooding situations and broadcasts messages on radio stations (like WJAW) and weather radios, serving as a primary emergency broadcast system. The county has opted out of local emergency alerts, relying on IPALS for broader coverage.
- **Hyper-Reach:** This system notifies Amazon Alexa users and subscribed individuals.
- **AMBROW:** Mentioned as a system that also comes out on IPALS. A company contacted the treasurer to sell a more costly product similar to Hyper-Reach, which Cheryl expressed interest in.

Office Relocation Considerations

The possibility of relocating operations was discussed, specifically considering a move to South 5th Street or the basement of the sheriff's office. Mr. Wilt expressed a strong preference for South 5th Street, envisioning it as a 'bat cave' where they could open the door, pull in, close the door, and maintain privacy, ensuring nobody knows their location.

Equipment Logistics and Maintenance

Discussions also covered equipment logistics and maintenance. It was noted that during the last hail storm, two of three trailers were utilized, with one speaker observing them go 'edge to fence'. Concerns were raised regarding a fire extinguisher located near a rarely used back door, which 'no one ever sees,' implying a lack of visibility or accessibility.

Julie Gridley, Pound Keeper

Strays: Three

Surrendered: Zero

Adoptions: Three

Transfer of ownership:

Donations:

Volunteers:

Cindy, Andie, John, Steve and Rick Welch. These five people have been simply amazing. They have donated their time to walk, clean and feed the dogs snacks. I hope you all know how much I appreciate all of you for your continued support to the Dog Pound.

Shannon Wells, Development Office

Commissioner Mayle, Commissioner Maxwell, Commissioner Best and Shannon Wells attended a luncheon sponsored by OhioSE for local leaders on June 30, 2025. The new President and CEO, Matt Abbott was the guest speaker.

Shannon Wells submitted the \$750,000 Residential Public Infrastructure Grant for the Village of McConnelsville on July 2, 2025 for an emergency sewer line relocation project.

Commissioner Mayle, Commissioner Maxwell, Commissioner Best and Shannon Wells attended a meeting of the Morgan County Land Reutilization Corporation on July 2, 2025.

DLZ has scheduled a study review meeting for the 911 emergency operations center for July 21, 2025 at 10:30am and a jail study kick off meeting for July 21, 2025 at 1:30pm.

25-326- Motion by Mrs. Maxwell and seconded by Mr. Best to authorize the execution of a local jail capital project grant agreement in the amount of \$1,512,093 to rehabilitate the Morgan County Jail.

Mr. Mayle yea, Mrs. Maxwell yea, Mr. Best yea Motion Carried

25-327- Motion by Mr. Best and seconded by Mrs. Maxwell to table the execution of a local jail capital project grant agreement in the amount of \$1,512,093 to rehabilitate the Morgan County Jail.

Mr. Mayle yea, Mrs. Maxwell yea, Mr. Best yea Motion Carried

ODOT has awarded \$500,000 to the Morgan County Transportation Improvement District for road improvements on Front Street/CR2 in Malta. Shannon Wells and John Telesz plan to meet with DLZ to apply for Ohio Public Works funding in August to complete the project.

Mr. Mayle yea, Mrs. Maxwell yea, Mr. Best yea Motion Carried

25-328- Motion by Mrs. Maxwell and seconded by Mr. Best to entering into a contract with Roxsol LLC for the soil report and design. The total cost for the design of the two systems will be \$1,400.00 This resolution will be contingent upon funding.

The following addresses will be provided services:

1811 St. Rt. 555 Malta, OH 43758 (Swank)

Mr. Mayle yea, Mrs. Maxwell yea, Mr. Best yea Motion Carried

Emma Yeager; Sam Miller, ARC Projects

Overview of Area Development Project Applications for Morgan County

Ms. Yeager presented a spreadsheet listing all projects submitted for area development from Morgan County, totaling just over 4 million dollars across seven applications. These projects either exclusively serve Morgan County or include Morgan County in their service area. The process for executive committee approval and data development was outlined.

Funding Availability and Allocation Process

Ms. Miller explained that the exact amount of funding for area development projects in the eight-county region is typically unknown until early August or September. Last year, nearly two million dollars in state funding was available for projects in the eight-county area, and state

funding is expected to be stable. Federal funding, however, may decrease slightly or remain stable for the next budget cycle. Buckeye Hills is committed to funding at least one project that covers every county within their eight-county region. Projects can apply for up to \$750,000 for construction and up to \$500,000 for non-construction. However, given the total available funds, the number of projects that can be fully funded is limited, and the total ask from Morgan County projects is substantial.

Project Eligibility and County Serve Documentation

Ms. Miller emphasized the critical importance of proper county serve documentation for project eligibility. Projects that fail to follow directions, such as not securing support letters from a Morgan County entity or partner, are immediately deemed ineligible and will not be scored. An example given was the "Rail Distillery" project, which likely did not follow instructions regarding county serve documentation. While some projects on the submitted list are ineligible, their ineligibility cannot be publicly confirmed until the final slate is approved in August.

Scoring and Prioritization of Projects

It was described the scoring matrix developed by Buckeye Hills, which is based on the investment priorities of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). Infrastructure projects consistently tend to be the number one investment priority in their eight-county region and typically score higher. The executive committee will review and approve the final slate of projects in August.

Building Bridges to Careers (BB2C) Project

Ms. Miller discussed the Building Bridges to Careers (BB2C) project, a non-profit organization based out of Washington County. This project aims to create an ecosystem map that includes educational institutions, training programs, internship opportunities, and businesses with immediate hiring needs across the eight-county region. The core mission of BB2C is to focus on career readiness, educating students on available opportunities after high school, and retaining them within the region by demonstrating that good jobs and education are available locally. Ms. Yeager added that BB2C is very focused on kids, offering summer camps and STEM-related activities. BB2C works closely with Education Service Centers (ESCs) and school districts in each county.

Chesterhill and McConnelsville Projects

Mrs. Wells mentioned submitting a CDBG application for the Chesterhill project, which is

categorized as critical infrastructure and has a funding request of \$500,000. She also noted a sewer line relocation project in McConnelsville, submitted for \$750,000 under the RPEG residential program. The CDBG application for Chesterhill was submitted on July 6th, shortly after the application window opened on July 1st. Adjustments were made to the Chesterhill project's funding request, as an initial \$935,000 request was reduced after a water line extension component was cut.

Funding Commitment and Capital Stacking Challenges

Ms. Miller highlighted a significant challenge where many projects prematurely claim ARC funding as committed in other grant applications. This creates difficulties because ARC funds cannot be committed until early next year. Projects must have all other funding sources secured and lined up before ARC funds can be awarded, as ARC aims to be the last funding source in the "capital stacking game."

Consumers Gas Cooperative Project

Mrs. Wells described a \$2.3 million project with Columbia Gas, which was submitted under Consumers Gas Cooperative because the commissioners could not apply in their own name. This project, focused on gas supply at EZG, is being championed by the Morgan County development office. Ms. Miller noted that this project, like others, might receive only a partial award based on its score and available resources, as full awards are not guaranteed.

Partial Awards and Project Continuity

Ms. Miller explained that when the project list is released in August, it may include partial awards rather than full funding, depending on the project's score and the total available funds. She emphasized that ARC funding is a first step, not a golden ticket, and that Buckeye Hills continues to work with communities to help projects find alternative funding sources if they are not fully funded through ARC area development. The goal is to support good projects even if they don't receive ARC funding.

Project Support Letters and Documentation

Ms. Miller clarified that projects claiming to cover Morgan County must have a support letter from a local entity, such as the school district, business association, chamber, or someone working on the ground in the community. This could also include letters from a village or township. Without proper documentation, projects are deemed ineligible.

Next Steps and Availability for Questions

Ms. Miller offered to answer any further questions, provide business cards, and encouraged ongoing communication for project support and clarification. She expressed her appreciation for Morgan County and commended Mrs. Wells for setting a high standard for development offices. For More Information See Attachment A.

Amber Wilson, Senior Citizen Director

Funding and Fundraising Updates

Ms. Wilson reported receiving \$1,575 in funding from Marietta-Buckeye Hills for the Title III program and noted the club's bake sale raised over \$665. The upcoming Art Walk on Friday was also mentioned.

Assistance for Residents at the Manor

Ms. Wilson raised concerns about the inability to help residents at the Manor, citing repeated calls for help, unsafe living conditions and lack of effective maintenance. The issue is affecting the organization's reputation.

Maintenance and Living Conditions at the Manor

Discussion centered on poor maintenance at the Manor, including non-functioning air conditioners (up to 18 units not working out of 60+ apartments), with some residents on oxygen having been without AC for two years. Challenges include the lack of windows for window units and portable ACs blocking sliding doors, which are fire exits. Additionally, residents are using buckets to catch water from furnaces, indicating inadequate repairs, and there are concerns about the maintenance man's experience.

HUD and Rent Disparities

Discussed the range of rents paid by residents (\$0, \$50, \$900+), the role of HUD, and questions about how units pass HUD approval despite issues. There is confusion about which units are HUD-supported and whether HUD standards are being met.

Reporting and Escalation Attempts

Ms. Wilson described efforts to contact fair housing authorities Buckeye Hills, and the health department, but received little to no response. The health department cannot intervene due to the Manor's private ownership and existing contracts. It was also suggested that residents could contact JFS by stating they feel they are living in an unsafe environment.

Management and Ownership Issues

There is uncertainty about the Manor's ownership (possibly based in New York or another state), which has reportedly changed two or three times in the last two years, leading to confusion about who to contact. Lori Schuster is identified as the manager but has limited authority to address major issues, such as purchasing new air conditioners.

Health and Safety Risks for Seniors

Concerns were raised about seniors' health and safety, including risks of heat illness, dehydration, and injury due to poor facilities. While the VFW has provided fans, they are ineffective in hot conditions. There is a serious concern that residents could become deceased due to these issues, with Ms. Wilson noting the grim thought that even if someone passed away, it might not prompt action.

Barriers to Effective Intervention

Existing contracts, specifically with Joy Exterminators for bed bug treatment, prevent outside help from the health department, even though the current treatment (spraying) may be insufficient and residents require proper treatment. The health department also has grants for people aged 60 or 62 and above, but cannot intervene due to the Manor's private contract. This creates a liability concern if they were to intervene.

Potential Media Involvement

It was mentioned the possibility of contacting Whiz News to draw attention to the Manor's issues, a suggestion that others have made before.

Facility Code and Accessibility Issues

Some apartments lack up-to-code features, such as accessible, thermostats and doors, causing anxiety and limiting mobility for residents.

Jeff Babcock, IT Administrator

AEP took power down to various County buildings this week. Several pieces of equipment were damaged as a result, including a network switch on the Sheriff's office phone system and the battery backup on the Courthouse's fiber Internet circuit.

The roll-out of new County e-mail addresses remains ongoing despite several delays due to air conditioning and power-related outages.

Computers and e-mail addresses were set up for new officers at the Health Department and the

Prosecutor's office over the past week.

More suspicious e-mails were discovered on the County network. The e-mail in question attempted to fool the recipient into downloading malware (likely ransomware) under the guise of a software update required to view an attachment.

Becky Thompson, Dog Warden

-Submitted report

-Full report can be found online at:

https://www.morgancounty-oh.gov/dog_warden_reports.html

Transfers, Then & Nows, Supplemental Appropriations & Utility Applications

25-329- Motion by Mrs. Maxwell and seconded by Mr. Best to request to set up the following line items for the CCA 2.0 fund #415 for the 2026/27 Grant Period.

- 415-2627-5102.00 Salary
- 415-2627-5303.00 Program
- 415-2627-5304.00 Equipment
- 415-2627-5309.00 General
- 415-2627-5367.00 PERS
- 415-2627-5368.00 Medicare
- 415-2627-5369.00 Workman's Comp
- 415-2627-4001.00 Revenue

Mr. Mayle yea, Mrs. Maxwell yea, Mr. Best yea Motion Carried

25-330- Motion by Mr. Best and seconded by Mrs. Maxwell to request a supplemental appropriation for the CCA 2.0 2026/27 Grant Period for \$161,884.00.

\$113,485.00 Salary
\$ 11,591.00 PERS
\$ 1,200.00 Medicare
\$ 2,500.00 Workman's Comp
\$ 24,278.00 Program Expense
\$0 Equipment
\$ 8,830.00 General Operating

Mr. Mayle yea, Mrs. Maxwell yea, Mr. Best yea Motion Carried

25-331-Motion by Mr. Best and seconded by Mrs. Maxwell to approve payment of bills. *See attached*

Mr. Mayle yea, Mrs. Maxwell yea, Mr. Best yea Motion Carried

25-332- Motion by Mrs. Maxwell and seconded by Mr. Best to adjourn the commissioner's meeting Monday, July 7, 2025 at 4:00pm.

Mr. Mayle yea, Mrs. Maxwell yea, Mr. Best yea Motion Carried

Cecil Mayle, President

Heidi Maxwell, Vice-President

Steven Best, Member

Sheila Welch, Clerk

Attachment A



2025-26 ARC Pre-Applications - Morgan County

*All projects listed here were submitted before the April 25, 2025, deadline. They are presented in alphabetical order by project title.
Morgan County Commissioner Meeting: Monday, July 7 @ 11 a.m.

Project Title	Project Summary	Point of Contact	County	Total Project Cost	ARC Request
BHRC Region K12 Workforce Ecosystem Map	This project will create a comprehensive regional K-12 Workforce Ecosystem Map to identify and align existing funding sources, thereby better supporting student-facing career development programs and expanding high school internship opportunities with local businesses.	Tasha Werry - Building Bridges to Careers	Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, & Washington	\$ 714,000.00	\$ 499,476.00
Building the New Tablertown People of Color Museum	This project will develop a new 2,400-square-foot museum in Tablertown to attract cultural tourism to the Buckeye Hills Region.	David Butcher - The Tablertown People of Color Museum	Athens, Morgan, Perry, & Washington	\$ 1,250,000.00	\$ 750,000.00
Career Pathways	The Career Pathways, Leadership, Entrepreneurship Initiative is a three-year program launching in 2026 to equip over 175 underserved youth and adults in Southeast Ohio with workforce, leadership, and entrepreneurial skills that promote economic mobility, business creation, and community revitalization in economically distressed Appalachian counties.	Trenda Heddleson - Noble Local Schools	Athens, Morgan, Noble, & Washington	\$ 227,000.00	\$ 175,000.00
Chesterhill Water System Improvements	The Village of Chesterhill is undertaking a critical water system improvement project to replace 38 inoperable fire hydrants, 30 failing valves, and extend water lines, thereby enhancing safety, operability, and fire protection. This project addresses severe infrastructure deterioration that threatens public health and emergency response capabilities.	Kathy Smedley - Village of Chesterhill	Morgan	\$ 935,200.00	\$ 654,640.00
Derailed Distillery	Derailed Distillery is a micro-batch craft spirits venture that will transform a historic building in downtown Marietta into a distillery, tasting room, and restaurant to generate local jobs, boost tourism, and anchor a proposed "Southeastern Ohio Bourbon Trail."	Larry Slotter - Derailed Distillery, LLC	Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, & Washington	\$ 6,714,600.00	\$ 750,000.00

Morgan County Gas Supply	Morgan County faces a critical natural gas shortage due to declining local well production, threatening the operations of major public and private facilities, with over 230 customer impacted, prompting an urgent need for a long-term, reliable solution to protect the region's economic and institutional stability.	Jeremy Miller - Consumers Gas Cooperative	Morgan	\$ 2,360,000.00	\$ 750,000.00
Sewer Line Relocation	The Village of McConnellsville is urgently replacing and relocating two failing sections of sanitary sewer lines: one along State Route 60, near the Muskingum River, and another near Oakwood-Sunset Streets. This effort is necessary due to raw sewage overflows that pose serious health and environmental hazards.	Timothy Louis - Village of McConnellsville	Morgan	\$ 6,174,600.00	\$ 750,000.00
<p>Total Morgan Submitted Applications: 7</p> <p>Total Submitted Applications: 46</p>				<p>Total Morgan ARC Ask: \$ 4,329,116.00</p> <p>Total BHRC ARC Ask: \$ 25,791,235.00</p>	

