

**MORGAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
RIECKER BUILDING**

The Board of Morgan County Commissioners met in their office Monday, May 18, 2026.  
The meeting was called to order at 8:30am with the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

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

The commissioners did the following over the past week:

Commissioner Best attended a Windsor Township meeting on Thursday.  
Commissioner Maxwell attended a CCAO meeting on Friday.

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**26-243-** Motion by Mr. Mayle and seconded by Mr. Best to approve the minutes of May 11, 2026

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

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***Al Eltringham, Riecker Maintenance***

Monarch Roofing Re-inspected the lower-level roof with the Insurance Adjuster 5-11-26

All mowing at the Grove Park, Commons, Dirt Pile Lot, EMA Building, Old Transit Garage and Senior Citizen Building completed 5-14-26

Jason Pierce has finished the quote to install Emergency lights for the Riecker Building 5-1-26

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***Jeremy Welch, Representative for CMRCC, Staci Duskey—Arnold, Judy Funk, Tim Funk, Concerned Citizens***

**Data Centers and the Carpenters Union**

- A representative from the Carpenters Union, covering Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky, presented information on data centers.
- Data centers are crucial for modern infrastructure, including AI (like ChatGPT), medical records (MyChart), and storing photos.
- The union's main goal is to ensure that if a data center is built, it employs a local workforce.
- The representative cited an Ohio pilot program for renewable energy projects that requires a 70% domiciled workforce as a good example to follow.
- The Carpenters Union has experienced building over 130 data centers in Columbus alone.

## Local Control and Community Benefits

- Data centers do not require county permission to build, but they seek it to avoid controversy.
- This provides an opportunity for the county to negotiate terms, such as requiring the use of a local workforce.
- The community was urged to demand infrastructure upgrades (e.g., internet, water lines) from the developer to entice further development in Morgan County.
- The community should consider what they want to see if the project is approved, rather than just opposing it. Suggestions include a self-powered solar farm or a community energy agreement.

## Workforce and Labor Concerns

- The Carpenters Union can recruit locally for large projects and bring in new members year-round, unlike some other trades.
- It was noted that the Iron Workers Hall in Parkersburg is empty.
- A concern was raised about a past incident where non-English-speaking workers were sent to a job site without an interpreter, leading to safety issues.
- The union representative acknowledged the importance of addressing language barriers for safety and stated they try to plan for this when given advance notice of projects.
- A typical data center construction project can employ around 1,200 people at its peak and takes 12–24 months to complete.

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### *Heidi Burns, JFS*

Title XX Plan for 26-27

COG Meeting on May 18<sup>th</sup> – Joe will be going with Commissioners

Shared Employment Agreement Renewal with Jackson and Perry Counties for June 1, 2026, through May 31, 2027

Transit Contract Renewal for July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027

**26-245-** Motion by Mr. Best and seconded by Mr. Best to enter executive session at 9:26am with Heidi Burns pursuant to ORC. 121.22 section (G)(1) Employment, Personnel.

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

**26-246-** Motion by Mr. Mayle and seconded by Mr. Best exit executive session at 9:53am with Heidi Burns pursuant to ORC. 121.22 section (G)(1) Employment, Personnel.

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

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***Steve Redrup, EMA***

Attended a BRIC grant meeting

Assisted local fire department with equipment and training issues

Prepared for the LEPC exercise

Vehicle and building maintenance

Attended the County Fire Meeting

Held the annual LEPC exercise in Reinersville. 30 people were in attendance; the Ohio EMA specialist for our region was in attendance and advised we met all goals for the exercise. He will submit it to the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) and Ohio EMA that we passed.

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***Sophia Wiseman, OSU Extension***

May 2026 OSU Extension Monthly report for Morgan Co. Commissioners

**Sophia Whisman- 4-H Extension Educator**

At the end of April Sophia attended an extension advisory, Junior Fair Board, Senior Fair Board, and older youth in training meetings. She also attended a staff meeting and a bird of the forest training to add more knowledge to her natural resource interest. Sophia also had her performance review with her supervisor Pam Montgomery on April 29th. May 4th Sophia held QA test-out and had one youth attend. She also on the 4th attended a STEAM design team zoom to discuss the upcoming Inservice we will be offering to 4-H educators across the state. May 6th Sophia traveled to Jackson County with Jordan Penrose and Betsy Ellingsworth to attend the interviews for the candidates for the district directors. May 7th and 8th Sophia traveled to Muskingum County to volunteer for RMRW at East Muskingum Middle School and Tri Valley Middle School. On May 8th she also had a one on one with her supervisor Pam Montgomery. On May 13th Sophia taught a session for the STEAM design team's Lunch and Learn series, providing a lesson to educators for monarch migration. On May 14th, Sophia attended a Sale Committee meeting. On May 15th Sophia traveled to Muskingum County to volunteer for RMRW at Jogn Glenn Middle School. Sophia works on prepping for QA and Skillathon.

**Pam Montgomery-4-H/FCS Extension Educator and Area Leader**

#### 4-H Activities

On April 30th, Pam helped a 4-H member family member with 4-H online and uploaded the required Horse Project Forms. On May 11th, Pam held Camp Counselor/CIT Training session #5. On May 12th attended a 4-H Master Clothing Educator Volunteer Executive Committee meeting to discuss plans for trainings and meetings in 2026 which is a Statewide group of volunteers that she works with as the Extension Professional. On May 13th she wrote a blog post regarding 4-H Horse Project requirements

#### FCS Activities

On April 30th, Pam held a Successful Co-Parenting session. On May 1st, she attended WHIZ-TV Topic: Cooking for One or Two. On May 8th she attended Morgan County Family and Children 1st Council. On May 13th, Pam held Basics to a Household Budget for DJFS.

#### Area Leader Activities:

Pam holds one-on-one sessions with employees in Area 19 (Morgan, Muskingum, Perry, and Washington Counties) regularly. Beginning to complete Performance Reviews for the past year. Pam also attends Staff meetings and Extension Advisory meetings when needed or requested. Pam continues onboarding new employees in Washington County. She also attends two online monthly Area Leader meetings. March, April, and May 2026 Pam has been writing Performance Reviews for all staff in Area 19 and meeting with staff to deliver the reviews.

#### Other

Pam Participated in the online Extension Webinar Series ABCs of Artificial Intelligence and attended a monthly one-on-one meeting with her supervisor.

#### **Betsy Ellingsworth- FCS Extension Educators Coordinator 3**

Betsy wrapped up the Captain Cash series to teach basic financial literacy to Job Club members at Morgan High School on April 24.

She also finished teaching the 6-week Taking Care of Me series at Morgan West Elementary to all kindergarten- 2nd grade students on April 20 and then began teaching the program to K-2 students at Morgan South Elementary on April 21.

She continues to partner with Morgan United Ministries to distribute recipes and healthy eating resources at the monthly food distribution in Malta which she participated at on May 13.

Betsy is leading Wits Workout sessions at the senior center to promote brain health & socialization, which she led on April 23 and May 7.

She attended the Community Health Coalition Meeting at the Morgan County Health Department on April 23 to discuss the Community Health Improvement Plan.

Along with other Morgan County OSU Extension employees, she attended and presented at the Extension Advisory Committee Meeting on April 20.

On May 1, she attended and completed the training in Columbus for Growing Teachers through the Seasons curriculum, and on May 4, attended the JCEP (Joint Council of Extension Professionals) meeting in Columbus. On May 6, she traveled to Jackson County to participate in the interview screening for the new District Director position.

Betsy and Alivia co-presented at the AG field day for Morgan Middle School at the Muskingum Livestock Sale Barn on May 8.

She offered healthy living resources at the Morgan County Senior Fair on May 7.

Betsy also traveled to Muskingum County on May 15 to assist with and become familiar with the Real Money Real World Curriculum.

Betsy continues to seek opportunities to learn and grow in her FCS role. She is currently enrolled in the ABCs of AI for Extension Webinar series to be familiarized with these technologies, become more knowledgeable about AI, how to use them to increase efficiency for daily tasks, and to improve communication with clientele.

#### **Jordan Penrose- Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator**

In April, Jordan gave his monthly TV interview on WHIZ News, discussing upcoming events, farm safety, evaluating pastures, and forage tips. He has also helped put part two of the Pastures for Profit program in Washington County. He also went on a soil and water bus tour. Jordan attended the three-day Certified Farm Succession Coordinator Training in Wooster. Also in April, he started monitoring true armyworm and black cutworm as part of the Lep Monitoring Network 2026. In May, Jordan went to the District Director 10 Interviews. He also wrote two articles on the topic of hay for the Farm and Dairy and the Ohio Farmer. Jordan has also continued to participate in various meetings, including the bi-weekly corn call meeting, bi-weekly between-the-rows meetings, monthly beef team meetings, and monthly forage team meetings, to share updates about crops, forages, livestock, and conditions in Morgan County with his coworkers around the state. He has also been writing weekly for the Herald, posting weekly blog posts on the Morgan County ANR Blog, and sending monthly email newsletters.

#### **Alivia Mock- Extension Educator Coordinator**

Alivia returned from maternity leave on April 8, 2026. Since returning Alivia has assisted Sophia and Jordan during QA at the high school for the Ag students on 4/10/2026. Alivia co-instructed a farm to table demonstration with Betsy during the Morgan Middle School Ag field day at the Muskingum Sale Barn. Alivia co-instructed a Beef Education station at the Morgan Soil and Water 4th grade Ag field day at the fairgrounds. Alivia has resumed coordination for the Morgan County Master Gardener Volunteers as well.

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***Becky Thompson, Dog Warden***

-Submitted report

-Full report can be found online at: [https://www.morgancounty-oh.gov/dog\\_warden\\_reports.html](https://www.morgancounty-oh.gov/dog_warden_reports.html)

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***Shannon Wells, Development Office***

Shannon Wells met with Michael Day on May 15, 2026, for a jail planning update. The survey team found that a 4" water line will need to be run from Liberty Street to the new jail. The current 2" line will not work for the new expansion.

Shannon Wells met with Riverside Landing management. They would like to schedule an appointment with the commissioners to request an easement at 900 S. Riverside Dr. for food deliveries. They are willing to move their trash dumpsters to their upper lot.

Shannon Wells, Commissioner Maxwell, and Commissioner Best met with Eric Leach on May 15, 2026, for an update on projects he is working on. Commissioner Maxwell added the county health department funding to the list of projects he is working on.

Ohio Department of Development has opened the brownfield remediation grant application for additional properties. Morgan County can still apply for \$600,000 of set aside funds, and Shannon Wells will apply through the Morgan County land bank. The application is due June 5th.

There is a progress meeting on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, at 11am at the Buckeye Southeast Transit office with the engineer and contractor for the parking lot project.

Shannon Wells and John Telesz will meet with Eric Leach on May 21, 2026, at 10:30 to discuss ODOT funding for the Veterans Memorial Bridge. This will be a virtual meeting.

There is a virtual meeting scheduled for May 22, 2026, at 11am with Michael Day for jail updates.

***Jeff Babcock, IT Administrator***

The printer at the Dog Pound is no longer working. Internal rollers that guide paper through the printer have broken off, and paper is not being picked up. The Commissioners agreed to purchase a new printer for the Dog Pound.

All voicemail users at the Riecker Building, Courthouse, and Sheriff's office building were updated to use the new Gmail send-only email account for the voicemail to email feature. The previous voicemail to email account was on the County's old domain and will soon be discontinued.

The IT Director attended Career Day at the Morgan Junior High School on 15 May 2026 to discuss careers in information technology and cybersecurity.

Equivant completed the JuryTRAC migration at County Court. This was a piece that they forgot to include in their Court View upgrade and migration earlier in the year.

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***Transfers, Then & Now, Supplemental Appropriations & Utility Applications***

None

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**26-247-** Motion by Mr. Best and seconded by Mr. Mayle to approve payment of bills. \*See attached\*

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

**26-248-** Motion by Mr. Mayle and seconded by Mr. Best to adjourn the commissioners meeting Monday, May 18, 2026, at 4:00pm.

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

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Approved by Commissioners on: August 17, 2026

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**Heidi Maxwell, President**

**Steve Best, Vice-President**

**Cecil Mayle, Member**

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**Sheila Welch, Clerk**

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