

Commissioners' Journal
October 28, 2020

The Geauga County Board of Commissioners met in special session on October 28, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. at the site of the new Geauga County Office Building, located at 12611 Ravenwood Drive, Chardon, Ohio.

It is declared and determined that all formal actions of the Board of County Commissioners concerning and relating to the adoption of all resolutions that were adopted in this meeting, and that all deliberations of the Board of County Commissioners that resulted in such formal action were open to the public and were in compliance with all legal requirements, including section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

The County Administrator, Gerard Morgan welcomed everyone to the official Ground-Breaking Ceremony of the new building, noting that this is an official Commissioners meeting, opening the special meeting at 3:07 p.m. by leading the Board and audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Morgan welcomed the Commissioners, Department Directors, Elected Officials and honored guests for being there. Mr. Morgan recognized and thanked Mr. Steven Jones and Dr. Donald DeCarlo from University Hospitals. Mr. Morgan expressed that today is a special day, the official ground-breaking ceremony for the NEW Geauga County Office Building that they look forward to the progress on the building with occupancy in 2022.

This building has been a long time coming; not only the four plus years of planning for this specific building, but the numerous years before that, when discussions about a more centralized and combined facility for County offices have been discussed.

Commissioner Jim Dvorak:

*Good Afternoon, it gives great pleasure to be here today for this Ground-Breaking Ceremony, "Gauga County is where history meets the Future".
Hundreds of Years ago to start a building project, the Builder would start with a Cornerstone.
Today we have ground breaking ceremonies.
Let's pause for a moment, with a prayer about Cornerstones, by author Karen Barber*

*On this stone now laid with prayer
Let Thy Church rise, strong and Fair
Ever, Lord Thy name be known
Where we lay this Cornerstone.*

*May Thy Spirit here to rest.
To the heart by sin oppressed,
And the seeds of truth be sown.
Where we lay this Cornerstone.*

*By Wise Master Builders squared.
Here be living stones prepared.
For the Temple near Thy throne,
Jesus Christ, our Cornerstone.*

*Dear Lord, watch over our Construction project and keep the skilled Trades people safe and sound!
Amen*

After High School, I followed my Dads footsteps and became a Bricklayer. We worked together a lot over the years. I miss him every day. He taught me a lot about Building a Building and a lot about Life. Now I went from building Buildings to building Relationships. Dad you brought me from being a Craftsman to a Commissioner and I want to thank you.

As was mentioned, this building project is a long time in coming, to that point we want to acknowledge the past Commissioners who purchased this property in the 1970's and the past Commissioners who dedicated Ravenwood and Merritt in the 1980's. Had it not been for their fore-site this process to get to this point would have been even longer.

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This new facility will bring the County Offices that are most utilized by the citizens to a more centralized location within the County, thereby making the services provided, more convenient.

I look forward to watching this building being constructed and for the future when this building will provide a great space for the County Employees to work to provide the necessary services to the citizens of this Great County.

This is a big Day, a Historic Day, a Milestone of Brick and Mortar. This building will be a building of Service to the people and it will show a sense of Community, a sense of Pride. And will help produce "The Geauga Way of Life".

Thank you.

Commissioner Spidalieri:

Good afternoon and thank you all for coming. Mr. Spidalieri stated that it was humbling to see so many people here representing Geauga County, the many different departments and residents of the community that wants to see us move forward. Mr. Spidalieri wanted to recognize and thank the Commissioners Staff, Past Commissioners, former County Administrator David Lair, Prosecutor Jim Flaiz, and the partnership with University Hospitals, mentioning the Job and Family Services building and their continued support, NV5 with the savings happening already, Donley's Independence for working together as a team. Ms. Spidalieri thanked Commissioner Lennon and Mr. Morgan for the hard work and being so instrumental in this process. Mr. Spidalieri recognized the members from the Veterans Service Commission and the facility that they will have to service our Veterans. Mr. Spidalieri stated that he can't thank everyone enough and this proud moment that will serve our residents so much better.

Commissioner Lennon:

I just want to take a moment and Thank everyone here today, and specifically recognize University Hospitals and the partners they are in being here today, Mr. Steven Jones and Dr. Donald DeCarlo, as they have been a big part of what has moved this building project to become a reality. Mr. Lennon noted that the Hospitals plans for the Job and Family Services building they purchased from the County, adding that there is much synergy between the hospitals and Geauga County offices, noting the Department on Aging, Job and Family Services and Veterans Services. The future potential for where we are standing today is more than a hospital and county buildings; it can be destination for residents of Geauga County and beyond, not only providing healthcare and county services, but potential business opportunities as well. University Hospitals plans for the Job and Family Services Building will bring many high paying jobs to Geauga County as well as economic stimulus. UH Geauga has become more than just a hospital, they are regional player bringing world class care. Mr. Lennon expressed that the Commissioners look forward to a continued partnership with University Hospitals and a big thank you to all our UH Partners.

Mr. Lennon stated that he is very proud, since the very first discussions, four years ago, the Commissioners made it criteria number one to do this building project within the current county budget, no new taxes; that is a heck of a statement to make in Government, with the size of this project. Due to fiscally conservative leadership, past and present Commissioners, all of the Elected Officials and Department Heads, this building will serve Geauga County residents proudly for many years to come, thank you and congratulations.

Mr. Morgan thanked the Commissioners, not only for their words here today, but for their steady leadership in guiding this project through the process, dealing with the ebbs and flows, and addressing the naysayers and those that would try and throw roadblocks in the way of doing what is right for the citizens of Geauga County, because it was not good for them or they could not see the benefits this project will provide for them. Through all this, you kept your eye on what was best for the County and got past the trouble spots where previous office building projects ended.

Mr. Morgan added that they wanted to give a thank you to a couple of former County Officials who were instrumental in getting this project off the ground; first, former Commissioner Skip Claypool who lead the drive to bring Bowen Architects on board to evaluate the existing County office facilities and look at possible options for consolidation; second, my predecessor Dave Lair

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who during his tenure as County Administrator saw the plans of new County facilities to bring the offices together start and stop many times but his steady leadership kept the idea alive and maintained the focus needed to eventually get to this day.

Further, we recognize Clerk of Courts, Denise Kaminski for her help in the design and planning of this building. With this new building, Ms. Kaminski's longtime goal of bringing the Title Department and the Bureau of Motor Vehicles office under one roof will be realized.

Prosecutor Jim Flaiz and Assistant Prosecutor Laura LaChapelle also deserve a big thank you for their work with Benesh Law firm in drafting the legal documents for all this.

Finally, although Commissioner Spidalieri already thanked them, I want to acknowledge the teams that have done and will continue to do the important work on this project:

*Designers / Architects – ThenDesign Architects (Bob Fiala, Brad Gellert and their team)
Owner's Representative – NV5 (Mark Seifried and Zach Turner and their team)
Construction Manager – Donley's Independence (Don Dreier, Greg Consolo, Kevin DeGeronimo, Dominic Deluca, Pat Canada, Jack Baumann and their staff)*

At this time, representatives from each firm would like to say a few words, thank you again to all on the project team.

Bob Fiala, expressed that on behalf of TDA Architecture and their team present today, they would like to thank the Geauga County Commissioners, Mr. Morgan, the Departments and Agencies that they have worked with on this opportunity, it has been a great experience thus far Mr. Fiala stated that they look forward to working with NV5 and Donley's on this project so they will be back here in a year or two from now for a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Mark Seifried expressed that on behalf of NV5 they wanted to congratulate the County and all the stakeholders on this very impressive milestone we are achieving today, and all the steps prior to set the stage for today to happen. On behalf of the NV5 team locally, our employees are very proud to serve on this project and help shape the vision forward and the legacy this building will serve forward.

Don Dreier expressed that this is an exciting time for two reasons, as a Geauga County resident for the last thirty-eight years he is proud to have this Building constructed on the site it is, and what it does for the County is amazing, pulling services together in one location, more efficient and better for all the County residents. Mr. Dreier stated that he was proud of the team that has been assembled together, between NV5, ThenDesign, it's an amazing team and are proud to be a part of it. They have a long history of successful projects and that success is a result of the people on that team, mentioning the team members present, including with Pre-Construction, Pete Dorio and Brian Lobsure, who worked tirelessly to get the project budget where it is, Vice Presidents, Don Delucca and Greg Consolo, and two key players to this project Pat Canada, Project Manager and Jack Clark who will be doing the heavy lifting, being on site overseeing the quality, schedule and safety, and everything that makes a project successful. We will be proud to add this project to the list of successful projects, we will work very hard to be good stewards of the money and financial assets, and complete this project on time, within budget and the quality that this community expects it be done in.

Patrick Canada expressed that it has been a very long road to get here; we built a very good team through a lot of challenges and are all very excited to get this project started. As a Geauga County resident, he is very excited about this project.

Commissioner Lennon mentioned that our neighboring Lake County Commissioner Jerry Cirino was present today, adding that he has talked with him over the years to help make decisions as they just finished up their building project. Mr. Cirino expressed Congratulations from Lake County, noting that they just finished up over a year ago a five-story building in Painesville. Mr. Cirino expressed that the renderings are fabulous and know that Geauga County will enjoy this building. Mr. Cirino noted that they consolidated a number of departments, which makes them more efficient and made them work closer together, but that it has allowed them to provide better, more efficient services to their residents. Mr. Cirino looks forward to seeing the progress on this project, Congratulations.

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Mr. Morgan asked the Commissioners, representatives from Donley's, TDA, NV5, Dr. DeCarlo, Mr. Jones, Ms. Kaminsky and Mr. Flaiz to come forward for the ground breaking.

They all moved over to the building site, with hard hats and shovels.

The group broke the ground for the new Geauga County Office Building, posing for pictures.



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BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Motion: by Commissioner Spidalieri, seconded by Commissioner Dvorak to adjourn the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Geauga County Board of Commissioners

Timothy C. Lennon

Ralph Spidalieri

James W. Dvorak

Christine Blair, Commissioners' Clerk

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