

**Commissioners' Journal**  
**September 19, 2017**

*The Geauga County Board of Commissioners met for a work session with Richard L. Bowen and Associates on September 19, 2017 at 10:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Chambers located at 470 Center Street in 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.*

*President Ralph Spidalieri opened the work session at 10:52 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.*

*In attendance: Commissioner Spidalieri, Commissioner Claypool, Commissioner Lennon, County Administrator David Lair, and Clerk Christine Blair.*

*From Richard L. Bowen and Associates were Robyn Wolf, AIA, NCARB, and Kenneth Emling, AIA, NCARB.*

*The audience included Steven Yaney from the Development and Zoning for the City of Chardon, Maintenance Director Glen Vernick and Geauga County Prosecutor Jim Flaiz.*

*Topics of Discussion for today's meeting included:*

*Update - work completed over the past two weeks*

- *Elected Officials Meeting (completed)*
- *Facility Assessments (completed)*
- *Issuance of Questionnaire (completed)*
- *Data evaluation and documentation (ongoing)*
  - A) *Floor Plan Evaluations*
  - B) *Building Assessment – scoring documentation*

*Mr. Emling stated that the Elected Officials meeting was held on September 11, 2017, and they have been through all of the buildings, visually assessed, photographed and compared to floor plans and this process is now complete. There was a brief discussion about going through the Courts, and that they will need to go back through Juvenile / Probate. Mr. Emling stated that during the interview process they want to go back through the areas with each department to do a follow up from the initial walk through.*

*Mr. Emling stated that they have forwarded the questionnaire to all the departments and have given two weeks to have them completed. Commissioner Claypool asked that we follow up with a follow up on receipt. County Administrator David Lair offered to contact each department on receipt of the questionnaire. Mr. Emling stated that once those questionnaires are received, they will start to set up the interviews, including the City of Chardon.*

*Mr. Emling explained that Ms. Wolf has been working analyzing the information received from the building assessments and showed the Board a draft of what they are doing that includes scoring the buildings, along with a print of space being used versus being empty and not utilized. Ms. Wolf explained the grading listed on the draft, stating that this is a current existing condition and what each scoring grade meant in regards to age, security, HVAC and lighting. This scoring also can project cost on upkeep and maintenance for the future.*

*2 week look-ahead (anticipated activities)*

- *Data evaluation and documentation (continuing)*
- *Receipt and review of completed questionnaires*

*Mr. Emling stated that as soon as some questionnaires are received they will work to schedule interviews and spend a day out here to keep things moving.*

*Mr. Emling provided an updated schedule that shows they are currently on track, and that it does include the dates of upcoming meetings.*

**Commissioners' Journal**  
**September 19, 2017**

*Review of September 11<sup>th</sup> Elected Officials Meeting*

- *Review and discussion (as needed)*

*Mr. Emling expressed that he felt that the meeting went very well overall, and he understands concern from some of the Elected Officials. Since Prosecutor Jim Flaiz was in attendance he was asked if he had any questions. Mr. Flaiz stated that, based on the questionnaire, he feels that there is a predetermined result and that their office needs to construct a new space. Mr. Flaiz stated that in talking with other stakeholders, there is a lot of distrust in the process and that all of this is aimed to get to that predetermined result. Mr. Flaiz stated that he doesn't feel exactly the same as the Auditor and Treasurer but that there is a lot of concern out there. He doesn't feel the time spent on the study is to build a giant complex on the thirty-five acres.*

*Commissioner Lennon expressed his personal feeling that this expenditure of time and money is to put all the cards on the table and see what is possible. Is a new building a vision? Sure but there are other buildings than the square in play, using Job and Family Services as an example. Mr. Lennon added that he has no personal preconceived idea, that this is a good hard look at what we have always done. He wants to ask the hard questions and see what our options are, that we need to stop doing the same things over and over again. Mr. Lennon stated that it shouldn't look like this in twenty-five years and if it does, we are in trouble. We need to look at what the recommendations are and use that for the future. Understanding how certain Elected Officials feel about where they have been, he feels we need to question whether this is what is best for the tax payers, efficiency and the City of Chardon. Besides the Court, which are a huge piece of the puzzle, there are other pieces, including JFS, Ravenwood, Veterans, and that 470 is not ideal. Mr. Lennon asked the Prosecutor to work with them and give them his best data; we should always be moving the needle in a positive direction.*

*Mr. Lair expressed that we talk about buildings because there are issues with them, security is a concern, and Judges in both Courthouses and the Commissioners don't own the land the Courthouse sits upon, asking how you expand when you don't own the land. Mr. Lair added that once this analysis is done any changes the Board would want to make based on the recommendation will need to fit within our budget.*

*Mr. Flaiz stated that he wasn't saying this was a bad idea because, in the past previous Boards have put band aids on things over and over again. Mr. Flaiz stated that he doesn't agree with the predictions about Chardon, but agrees that the current businesses there will not stay without County Government there, adding that if you take the income and business off the square, the value of the assets will devalue.*

*Commissioner Claypool stated that there have been ideas floating around but there is no preconceived notion. 'What if' doesn't mean that is what is going to happen. All these ideas have been thrown out there but no one has approached it from a business perspective. Mr. Claypool stated anything that would be built will happen over time so there would be time to transition and Chardon can improve and become better than what it is today. At the end of all this there will be a lot of discussion and everyone will be involved.*

*Mr. Lennon added that this is healthy to have these conversations, because everyone has a different take on it, and nothing is written in stone. Mr. Flaiz reminded the Board that the City of Chardon is only 5,000 of the 95,000 that live in this County, adding that he doesn't feel like we need to bend over backwards for the City of Chardon. Mr. Lennon added that he understands that there is a historical part that we don't want to lose, but a lot was lot with the improvements made on the square. Mr. Lair offered the idea that the growth that could happen on the thirty-five acres means we won't use the whole property and economic development could occur on the remaining land.*

*Mr. Flaiz stated that if the Board was looking at the Merritt Road area, why they haven't asked his office for an updated opinion on location of the County Seat. Mr. Claypool added that he was waiting to see what the results are. Mr. Lennon stated that we haven't gotten off first base, that we are just getting started, we have to see what the study comes up with, knowing that security is going to be a big part it. Something more centralized will make a lot more sense, adding that he hopes that the Prosecutor works with them.*

*Mr. Emling explained the concept of the questionnaire as part of the data gathering and that during the interview process we will go through your space and welcome the information.*

**Commissioners' Journal**  
**September 19, 2017**

*Mr. Lair added that it has to make financial sense and better serve the citizens, using the Title Office and the License Bureau as an example. There was a brief discussion about the efficiencies and the cost savings that could come from this. Mr. Claypool asked Mr. Flaiz to help tamp down the misconceptions, and that right now its gathering of information. Mr. Lennon added that this is for the future and generations to come.*

*Overall Project Schedule Update – on schedule*

*Mr. Emling expressed concern about the questionnaires and the interviews but feel comfortable with where we are.*

**BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD**

*Motion: by Commissioner Lennon to adjourn the meeting at 11:45 a.m.*

*Geauga County Board of Commissioners*

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*Ralph Spidalieri*

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*Walter M. Claypool*

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*Timothy C. Lennon*

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*Christine Blair, Commissioners' Clerk*

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