



SHELBY COUNTY PROGRESS REPORT

January 31, 2023

Shelby County officials entered 2022 with an ambitious list of projects. Unfortunately supply issues, a tight labor supply and inflation have affected our progress.

We are happy to have most of our projects under contract as each new bid shows the strains of inflation. A new garage proposal received no bids and other projects are being scrutinized as the projected bid amount will no longer work.

In early 2022, the Commissioners signed an agreement with Motorola Solutions for the Emergency Communications Infrastructure project. The new system will have five new tower sites; Sidney (next to the Sheriff's Office), Jackson Center, Anna, Fort Loramie, and Russia. Shelby County will have the most advanced communication system in Ohio which includes greatly enhanced coverage across the county, greater spectrum efficiency, advanced radio features and flexibility and will provide a source of interoperability for all emergency responders. It will be upsized to allow for the schools' participation, should they desire. The cost is \$7.8 million plus additional funding for system maintenance over the next 20 years. The current fifty year old system is at "end of life".

A major upgrade to the Fort Loramie Waste Water Treatment Plant has started with the project awarded to Peterson Construction in the amount of \$11,762,560. The joint project with Fort Loramie received funding support with loans and grants from the Ohio Department of Development and USDA's Office of Rural Development. The facility currently treats waste from Fort Loramie Lake residents, the Village of Fort Loramie, the Village of Kettlersville, and areas of

Newport and McCartyville. Improvements will allow the County to be compliant with Ohio EPA standards and increase the capacity of the plant from 400,000 to 600,000 gallons per day.

Construction was completed on the Fairgrounds for the storm-water and sanitary improvements just in time for the County Fair at a cost of \$716,322. This project was assisted with \$100,000 from the State of Ohio Capital Budget and \$85,650 in American Rescue Act funds, while the rest was paid via sales tax revenues.

A vital economic development goal for the Commissioners is to extend a bike path that originates in Hamilton County to the head of the Great Miami River in Sidney. Choice One has laid out a potential route for the proposed bike path going from Kuther Rd to Lockington. An application to the State through their Capital Budget resulted in a grant of \$500,000. We are working to find the additional \$4 million to move forward. This proposed route will connect to the bike path being developed by the City of Sidney.

Utilizing a large portion of the County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds; the Commissioners are working to improve Broadband coverage throughout the county. We must however, locate other funding streams to supplement our funds to make this a reality. As part of this initiative, Shelby County and many community partners participated in a Broadband Accelerator program to develop a cohesive long-range plan, and hopefully set us up to be recipients of state funding in the future. In addition, we have contracted with NKTelco to provide a middle-mile fiber ring that will connect areas of Jackson Center and Russia to Sidney. The 17 miles of new fiber will immediately allow fiber access to 189 homes. We hope to have a long-range plan to address broadband for the entire county developed in '23.

Another initiative utilizing ARPA dollars is to expand access to childcare in Shelby County. We recognize the lack of services prevents persons from participating in the workforce and we know affordability is a huge challenge for many. The Commissioners continue to have 4C for Children working to recruit, train, and provide start-up funds for new childcare providers. While finding appropriate space is a current challenge, we did have one successful outcome by partnering with the YMCA who has opened a satellite in the county nursing home, Fair Haven. Other successes include the St Philomena School in McCartyville and some home-based care expansions.

In order to support local entities affected by COVID closures, grants were awarded to eligible small businesses, restaurants, the hospitality industry, and non-profits utilizing ARPA funds in the amount of \$755,342.

Other investments utilizing ARPA funds include a Vacuum truck (shared expense with County Engineer), EZ Scan Check system for the Treasurer's Office, COVID Vaccine Incentives, and Wastewater facility upgrades including a pump & trailer at Filburns Island.

New for '22, the County participated in a national initiative called Operation Green Light. From the end of October through Veterans' Day, the county buildings were lit with Green Lights to support and educate our veterans to the services and benefits available to them through the Veterans Service Agency.

Shelby County was recently notified by the State of a sales tax recoupment as one county industry was found to have overpaid their Direct Sales Tax Payments. Currently the County is faced with "paying back" over \$1.8 million over the next three years. While this tightens our belt, we had created some savings in the last several years to help in tough economic times. Overall, the '22 County General Fund revenues exceeded projections by \$1.6 million. Our 2023 General Fund appropriations are up by 4% at \$23,267,759.

Shelby County will be seeing many staffing changes as persons retire. We would like to thank all employees for their service and welcome new persons to new positions. Included is Fair Haven Administrator Curtis O'Neal, and incoming Job & Family Services Director, Tina Hooks.

Our goals for 2023 include varied items such as finding a new occupant for the old jail, develop an Employee Retention/Recruitment program, update the County website, install EV charging stations for public use, build a new maintenance garage, and support the efforts of the Shelby County Drug Taskforce and help them align with the OneOhio Region 15.

With the support of our employees, agency partners, and our community, we continue working to making Shelby County a great place to live and work.

We welcome visitors to our sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays and remain available by appointment also.