

On motion of Ms. Driehaus, seconded By Ms. Summerow Dumas the following resolution was adopted...

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE 2019 and 2020 POLICY AGENDA OF THE HAMILTON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners recognizes the need for long-term strategies and policy direction to impact the Administrative Work Plan and recommended budget for the upcoming years; and

WHEREAS, a two-year policy agenda enables concentration on key priorities which shall be the focus of County Administration for implementation and further development of the County budget; and

WHEREAS, The 2019-2020 Policy Agenda continues the policy initiatives of the Board from the 2017-2018 Policy Agenda and also sets out new initiatives and policy priorities for the coming years; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Board of County Commissioners have each contributed to the preparation of the attached Policy Agenda and support it in relation to the development of the Administrative Work Plan and upcoming budget;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Board of County Commissioners hereby approves the attached 2019-2020 Policy Agenda.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners, that the Clerk of this Board is directed to certify copies of this resolution to County Administrator Jeff Aluotto; to all Hamilton County Elected Officials; to the Presiding Judges of all Hamilton County Courts; and to all County department heads under the authority of the Board of County Commissioners.

ADOPTED at a regularly adjourned meeting of the Board of County Commissioners, Hamilton County, Ohio, this 18th day of April, 2019.

Ms. Driehaus YES

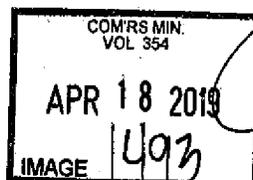
Ms. Summerow Dumas YES

Mr. Portune ABSENT
EXCUSED

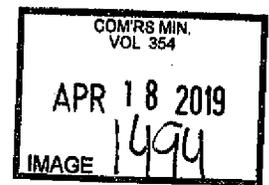
CERTIFICATE OF CLERK

IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of a resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in session this 18th day of April, 2019.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand and affixed the official seal of the Office of the Board of County Commissioners, Hamilton County, Ohio, this 18th day of April, 2019.



Jacqueline Panioto
Jacqueline Panioto, Clerk
Board of County Commissioners
Hamilton County, Ohio



Hamilton County

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2019-2020 Policy Agenda Board of County Commissioners Hamilton County, Ohio

Hamilton County Government is in a period of transition. Financial challenges resulting from state cuts have threatened basic services. The Board of County Commissioners (the Board) was able to balance the 2019 budget with cuts to services and one-time revenues. Over the next two years, the Board will need to develop a strategy for bringing the county budget into structural balance.

Funding the work of the judiciary, the Coroner's Office, 9-1-1 services, the County jail as well as basic development services and county operations will depend upon an adequate resolution to this problem. In addition, the type of partner the County will, or can, be with local political subdivisions and stakeholders will be a question that will need to be asked and answered so that the County's role in areas such as economic development, transportation, emergency management and crisis response (e.g. the opioid crisis, infant mortality, etc.) can be adequately and consistently defined.

Despite those challenges, the work of the county goes on, and the Board has a number of initiatives and opportunities to make Hamilton County more prosperous, healthy, and safe.

Over the last two years in particular, the Board undertook an ambitious policy agenda and intends to bring the same urgency to its work over the next two years. This Policy Agenda provides a set of principles and policy-related goals that the Board and Administration will use to establish work plans for 2019 and 2020, and will serve as a guidepost for county departments when evaluating county operations or developing new programs.

I. Basic Services:

Fundamentally, Hamilton County is responsible for providing many of the essential government services necessary to maintain a safe, healthy, and prosperous community. Because the State of Ohio has reduced Hamilton County's general fund budget by \$32 million annually, the county faces



significant challenges in providing a structurally balanced budget while still delivering basic services.

Correcting this problem will require cooperation from every county department and all of the separately elected county officials, the Prosecutor, Sheriff, Clerk of Courts, Auditor, Recorder, Treasurer, Coroner, and the Judiciary in the top-to-bottom review of county finances. The review must necessarily scrutinize what the Board has accomplished over the last two years and what remains undone – with such a top to bottom review ascertaining what must continue to be done in the light of current priorities. The Board will also seek to maintain full budget and spending transparency including the obligations of the courts and Prosecutor's office around budget approvals per statute; and around restricted fund usage, balances and decisions for utilization.

The Board will also work with the County Commissioners Association of Ohio to pursue our aligned legislative priorities with the Ohio General Assembly, which will have a positive impact on the county budget if successful.

GOAL: *Develop creative solutions to reduce ongoing expenses and optimize revenues across all county departments and agencies receiving county funding.*

We will also focus on continuing innovative and strategic approaches to delivering basic services that will save public dollars in the long term.

The County workforce is an indispensable element in providing basic government services. The Board has invested in the workforce by establishing a \$15/hour minimum wage, making adjustments to benefits, and providing cost of living increases. The Board also commissioned a gender equity study by the University of Cincinnati Economics Center which found that while the county performs better than regional averages in the area of pay disparity, there are still steps the county can and should take to promote gender equity in the workforce.

Despite positive progress and largely due to budget strains, many Hamilton county workers still make less than their counterparts in other counties, making it difficult to attract and retain employees, which drive up costs due to employee churn.

GOAL: *Continue to make the workforce a priority in setting policies and adopting the budget.*

Inclusive of this goal is the need to consider, as a part of making the workforce a priority, funding county departments at a level that enables them to provide adequate services to the citizens of Hamilton County.

a. Criminal Justice

With 70% of its annual budget appropriated to departments responsible for criminal justice and public safety, the Board must continue to innovate in the area of criminal justice. In 2018, the Board sought and received a State Capital Grant to expand the Hamilton County Justice Center with new space that will be more conducive to offering behavioral health and drug treatment services to inmates in the county jail. In early 2019, the Board has already embraced two programs to divert people from the jail: The Community Alternative Sentencing Center will give judges a new option for sentencing in cases of minor crimes where the offender will have access to treatment and career training, and the Law



Enforcement Assisted Diversion program will give police officers a new tool to address the root causes of criminal activity in the neighborhoods they serve. And the county's Re-Entry Department must be appropriately resourced in order that it might continue to effectively implement strategies designed to reduce recidivism and to successfully re-assimilate former inmates back into becoming successful and productive members of our communities. These programs will reduce recidivism, prevent future crime, and save taxpayer money.

GOAL: *As so-called "tough on crime" policies have failed to improve public safety and proved costly to taxpayers, it is time for the Board to focus instead on "smart on crime" policies, which are designed with the appropriate level of intervention to facilitate rehabilitation and reintegration to society.*

Construction on the new Crime Lab will continue in 2019 on this critical facility which will aid in the investigation of crimes, supplement our collaborative efforts to address the epidemic of addiction, and potentially generate revenue by expanding services available to communities outside of Hamilton County.

GOAL: *The Board will continue to prioritize the construction of the new Crime Lab in order to maintain the benefits in public safety from the new crime lab and in revenue generation from the same.*

b. Shared Services

Because local communities are suffering from the same funding cuts that plague Hamilton County, it is now more important than ever for us to partner with municipalities and townships to find new efficiencies and opportunities for shared services.

GOAL: *Hamilton County will seek out new shared service opportunities with, by, and between internal county operations, other county agencies, local governments, and external agencies.*

The county 9-1-1 center serves 47 local communities and fields 22,000 calls per month, while investing in needed capital and operational improvements to the County's 9-1-1 Communications Center, and expanding promotion and access to electronic community alerting systems and enrollment in the County's Smart 9-1-1 system.

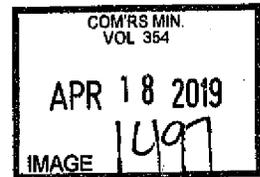
GOAL: *The Board will pursue a sustainable model for funding the County 9-1-1 center, which may require partnership with the state government.*

Lastly, because county government is organized under several separately elected officials from the Board of County Commissioners to the Elected Executive Officers and the Judiciary, there are also opportunities to find cost savings by enhancing the cooperation between these offices.

GOAL: *The County should look internally for shared service opportunities between county departments, especially in the areas of information technology.*

c. Protecting Our Most Vulnerable Citizens

In addition to the public safety and basic services provided by the general fund, the Board of County Commissioners also oversees several special purpose levies. Among those, the voters of Hamilton



County decided to increase funding to the Senior Services Levy in 2017 and the Children's Services Levy in 2018.

Preventative strategies employed by the county to keep vulnerable children safe in their homes have already resulted in a decrease in foster care caseloads, but caseloads remain much higher than historical trends would suggest.

GOAL: *The Board will work to deploy new resources strategically to protect children, so that vulnerable children have permanent, loving environments free from issues of abuse, dependency and neglect. This includes promoting kinship care, providing in-home trauma-informed care to children and families, and helping parents better navigate the complex world of children's services by creating an external parental advocacy center.*

GOAL: *The Board will continue to support seniors through the senior services levy by connecting senior populations to needed services, helping seniors navigate the complex health care system, providing medical care to homeless senior populations, and providing support for home caregivers.*

In 2019 and 2020, the County, through the Tax Levy Review Committee, will also evaluate the renewal of the Developmental Disabilities Levy and Family Services and Treatment Levy to ensure that they are best positioned to assist individuals in the community with developmental and intellectual disabilities as well as those with substance abuse disorders.

II. MSD and Water Rates

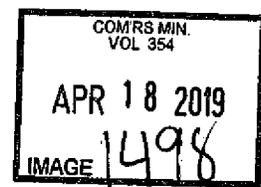
While the Federal Consent Decree requiring billions in new sewer projects presents an affordability challenge, the Board of County Commissioners has maintained flat sewer rates for the last three years, and must continue to prioritize affordability. The County will seek to ensure that the cost sewer service is affordable and equitable for all Hamilton County residents. The Board will also implement a Customer Assistance Program and explore new fee structures for wastewater services as recommended by the County's Rate Affordability Task Force.

GOAL: *As the entity that owns the Metropolitan Sewer District (in trust on behalf of the ratepayers), Hamilton County must work to keep rates as low as possible while achieving resolution of the management challenges arising out of the 1968 Operating Agreement under which the City of Cincinnati has managed the utility.*

GOAL: *The Board will also continue its efforts to ensure Greater Cincinnati Water Works provides a fair rate structure for township residents.*

III. Economic Development

Given budget challenges, the Board will need to continue its practice of participating in economic development partnerships with limited resources. Seizing critical opportunities such as the music venue on the Banks, new parking assets in the West End and Over-the-Rhine, and site readiness projects in Lockland and Lincoln Heights, among others, will serve as catalyzing investments to grow our



economy. The board will also need to develop a strategy for overcoming challenges such as the lack of a functional convention center hotel to serve the Duke Energy Convention Center. The Board will continue to embrace the county HCDC Office of Innovation and Creativity and to entrust to the OIC a policy agenda designed to pursue start-up businesses; stage 2 businesses; retaining and relocating businesses that are tied to emerging trends in our local economy. We must also continue to partner with those organizations driving jobs and economic growth in Hamilton County.

GOAL: *In 2019 and 2020, the Board will pursue strategic economic development partnerships to add jobs, to enhance vibrancy, and to attract and retain businesses & residents.*

The work on economic development is only meaningful if all Hamilton County Residents have the opportunity to share in our economic growth and prosperity. The Board will therefore pursue economic development projects which include commitments to inclusion in both the workforce and in contracting. Workforce Development is also crucial for Hamilton County's competitiveness so the Board will favor economic development projects that provide pathways to career training and new jobs for Hamilton County Residents.

GOAL: *Integrate inclusion and community benefit goals into economic development partnerships.*

Our regional economy depends on our transportation infrastructure. This Board has made funding infrastructure a priority, bringing new funding to the table for the Western Hills Viaduct and other road and bridge projects throughout the county. Through Collaboration with the City of Cincinnati, we have already raised over \$100 million of the \$330 million needed to complete that project.

GOAL: *We must continue to pursue support from the state and federal government for the Western Hills Viaduct.*

A robust public transportation system is essential to maintaining competitiveness, connecting people to employment opportunities, and attracting and retaining talent.

GOAL: *For the purpose of achieving our transportation policy objectives adopted in June 2018, the Board shall work in collaboration with SORTA, the City of Cincinnati, and the voters of Hamilton County to build a public transportation system that connects the people of our region to jobs and entertainment centers.*

IV. Initiatives of the Board of County Commissioners

The Board of County Commissioners has invited collaboration from other governments, business, nonprofits, and citizens on several of the most pressing issues facing Hamilton County through the establishment of several coalitions.

The Heroin Coalition has worked to provide wide scale distribution of Narcan (Naloxone) at no cost to taxpayers, implemented a county-wide Quick Response Team, opened the Talbert House Engagement Center for on-demand access to addiction treatment, improved protocols in Hospital Emergency Departments, built grassroots prevention coalitions in local communities, reduced the



supply of deadly drugs through law enforcement interdiction, and facilitated better connectivity between regional assets in the areas of prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and law enforcement. The Coalition has also successfully drawn down millions in State and Federal grants.

Those efforts have resulted in a decrease of overdoses by 28%. Despite a positive trend, overdoses still remain significantly higher than in the years prior to the onset of the heroin epidemic, and new and more dangerous synthetic drugs have replaced heroin and are responsible for most deaths.

The Heroin Coalition will also continue to work with the faith community, business community, and other community groups to promote pathways to treatment and employ community-based prevention strategies.

GOAL: *We must continue the collaborative and comprehensive approach toward the disease of addiction by focusing on preventative and supportive programs for people in recovery, especially in the areas of housing and employment. The Heroin Coalition will begin working with the business community and other large employers on ways to address the challenges faced by employees returning to the workforce.*

Oral Health Coalition: The Board of County Commissioners created the Oral Health Coalition in 2017. The Oral Health Coalition delivered its first set of recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners in March of 2019, and the Board and Administration will work to evaluate and implement those recommendations in 2019 and 2020.

GOAL: *Increase access to preventative dental care throughout Hamilton County and reduce the occurrence of dental emergencies, disease, and other complications arising from a lack of dental care.*

Infant Mortality is another area of public health concern where the county's efforts to date have led to positive trends, but we must continue to invest. The County will continue its partnership with CRADLE Cincinnati and continue to support policy initiatives to enhance maternal health and decrease infant mortality.

GOAL: *Continue to invest in strategic partnerships to reduce infant mortality and improve maternal health outcomes.*

The Economic Inclusion Advisory Council was established by the Board of County Commissioners in May 2017 in order to support and assist the Office of Economic Inclusion and other relevant County departments in achieving the County's goals for economic inclusion.

It is the policy of the Board of County Commissioners that all residents of Hamilton county have access to government services, employment opportunities with the County, and opportunities to contract with the county regardless of race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and pregnancy related conditions, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, age, veteran status, disability, genetic information, military service, parentage of young children, status as a foster parent, or other familial status.



GOAL: *Diversity and equity must be integrated into the work of all county departments.*

The Commission on Women and Girls begins 2019 in its second year with 20 new members. In 2018, the Commission developed recommendations in areas including pay equity, women's safety, holistic support, women in leadership, and empowering women's voices. The Board of County Commissioners adopted several of those recommendations in 2018, including directing the HR department to stop the practice of requesting salary history, creating a webpage for the Commission on Women and Girls, and increasing the opportunities for women to be appointed to County Boards and Commissions.

GOAL: *Work with the Commission on Women and Girls to implement the rest of the recommendations from 2018 and to develop new recommendations.*

A new initiative to address the obstacles and pitfalls facing young men transitioning to adulthood will be considered in 2019. The initiative will focus on those aged 14 – 24 years with the objectives to close the pipeline to prison, provide mentorship and support, experience cultural opportunities, remedial help in education through tutoring, build confidence and instill hope.

GOAL: *Establish a new initiative to address the needs of at-risk young men who are leaving school and entering adult society.*

TID Transportation Working Group: with the adoption of legislation by the Ohio General Assembly that will allow County Commissioners to once again serve on the Boards of Transportation Improvement Districts, the County has the ability to play a meaningful role in guiding the transportation discussion in a way that will accomplish our necessary goal of creating a connected region while preserving the county's tax competitiveness, all the while accomplishing the need to provide service to all people, achieving regional connectivity, and securing a freight transportation network of service and terminals that will steer economic development in the county for the next 50-100 years.

GOAL: *Establishment of the Transportation Working Group will serve to re-establish the county in its role as a key partner in developing the solutions required to create a working transit/transportation system that moves people and freight in a regionally integrated fashion.*

V. Accessibility and Open Government

The ability of residents to interact directly with their government is a core function of our system of government. This Board has taken steps to make itself more open and accessible by instituting evening meetings, hosting meetings outside of the County Administration Building, and enhancing the county's website and social media presence. The County redesigned its website in 2017 with a focus on inclusive accessibility. The Board has also embraced and funded accessibility initiatives such as the Clerk of Courts Legal Self Help Center, which has operated for two years to help residents navigate the complicated legal system.

The County will also focus on the development of an Open Data Policy, both to enhance transparency and to facilitate innovation both within and outside the county government. Hamilton County produces



a significant amount of data every day, and while most of it is public record and available to the public, it is not always easy to access. An Open Data Policy would provide quick and easy access to county databases spurring innovation and smart solutions.

True accessibility means that individuals feel welcome and have easy access to county government regardless of cultural or language barriers, or barriers that may arise from a disability. The Board will focus on initiatives that promote a welcoming environment for residents interacting with government.

GOAL: *Continue to make Board business more accessible, make residents feel welcome in county buildings, and develop an open data policy.*