



## SHELBY COUNTY PROGRESS REPORT

January 26, 2024

Shelby County officials entered 2023 with numerous projects in process. We have worked diligently to move these closer to completion.

One of the first projects to be completed was the launching of our new website located at <https://shelby.oh.us>. The site is mobile and user friendly with access to all county departments.

We continue to work to find a new owner and use for the old jail. A small garage attached to that building has been used by our maintenance staff, so we located a new site to address this priority. A house was purchased on South West Avenue and torn down to create space for a newly built maintenance garage.

In early 2022, the Commissioners signed an agreement with Motorola Solutions for a new Emergency Communications Infrastructure project. The new system has five new tower sites: Sidney (next to the Sheriff's Office), Jackson Center, Anna, Fort Loramie, and Russia. Testing of the towers and radios occurred throughout the county and focused heavily on our schools and local industry with results showing great success. New radios are being installed in vehicles and first responder agencies while our emergency responders are undergoing training. Our planning has resulted in the most advanced communication system in Ohio. Our goal was to create a system that allows for communication between all entities and includes the Sheriff's office, local police agencies, county fire departments, EMS agencies, the Engineer's office, and our county schools. The system will allow City and County entities to communicate more efficiently. The cost is \$7.8 million plus additional funding for maintenance over the next 20 years.

A major upgrade to the Fort Loramie Wastewater Treatment Plant is online with the clean-up items ongoing as parts of the old system are decommissioned. Constructed by Peterson Construction the new plant cost \$11.7 million. 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 treats waste from Fort Loramie Lake residents, the Village of Fort Loramie, the Village of Kettlersville, and areas of Newport and McCartyville and can treat 600,000 gallons per day.

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 potential routes for the proposed bike path going from Kuther Rd to Lockington. The bike path is to connect to the bike path being developed by the City of Sidney. Funding has been assembled for the project as the County has been approved for funding from the State of Ohio Capital Budget and Ohio Transportation Alternate Funding (TAP).

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. In 2023, we partnered with NKTelco to provide 17 miles of new fiber resulting in a middle-mile fiber ring to connect areas of Jackson Center and Russia to Sidney. We continue to work to identify broadband partners and funding to develop a long-range plan.

ARPA dollars are also committed to our efforts 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. We are continuing a contract in 2024 with 4C for Children working to recruit, train, and provide start-up funds for new childcare providers.

Other investments utilizing ARPA funds in 2023 focused on wastewater improvements including several pumpstation upgrades and tile replacements.

The County is pleased to have installed the first EV Chargers in the City of Sidney. The charging station is in the parking lot at 125 South Miami behind the Courtview Center and the Shelby County Board of Elections. The charging station, built by ChargePoint, can charge four vehicles simultaneously. The station will use combined charging system plugs, which are compatible with most EV vehicle models. The charging station cost \$47,000 to install with most of the costs to be reimbursed by AES Ohio through a rebate.

A major responsibility of the Commissioners is in maintaining our county infrastructure. County sales tax dollars are utilized for this purpose. In 2023 for example, almost \$200,000 was necessary for boiler repairs, floors, lighting, and intercoms at the jail. Other HVAC replacements or repairs were necessary at S&H, EMA, the Courthouse, and Fairhaven.

Shelby County will be seeing many staffing changes as persons retire. To address this growing concern, we have started an Employee Retention and Recruitment Program being led by a committee of employees from various offices and agencies.

In the fall of 2022, Shelby County began the process of repaying the State of Ohio sales tax monies after a local business was found to have overpaid their Direct Sales Tax Payments. As we repay \$1.8 million over the next three years this tightens our belt and we will need to be very cautious in our spending. Our 2024 General Fund appropriations are up 4.3% over 2023 at \$24,471,033. This reflects a 3% increase in employee salaries and notes inflation has dramatically increased our costs in contracts, equipment and insurance.

Our goals for 2024 will have minimal capital projects as we monitor our revenue by rehabbing the twenty restrooms in the Courthouse as a priority. Other items not previously mentioned include creating a plan for our future IT needs, and to 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 make 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.