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THE STATEHOUSE REPORT

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Congratulations to Fayette County, which was announced this week as the location of a \$3.5 billion Honda electric vehicle battery plant. Pictured above are Fayette County Commissioners Dan Dean, Jim Garland, Tony Anderson and Former Fayette County Commissioner and current state Senator Bob Peterson.

Funding for electronic poll book replacement remains a priority

With election day quickly approaching, the spotlight turns once again to voting. A key piece of elections infrastructure used in many counties is electronic pollbooks. Unfortunately, the fleet of e-poll books currently in use by county boards of elections are falling out of compliance with state security directives and need to be replaced. Thus, securing state funding to cover a portion of these costs for replacement pollbooks is a key priority for CCAO.

Electronic poll books have a number of beneficial purposes:

- E-poll books are voter friendly. They help to reduce check in times for voters, leading to shorter lines on election day.
- E-poll books support accuracy. E-poll books help ensure that a voter's correct ballot is identified, reducing poll worker error and increasing election administration accuracy.
- E-poll books assist voters, especially those voters who appear at the wrong location, who can be identified and directed to the correct location. E-poll books can even print direction for the voter.
- E-poll books are taxpayer friendly. Voter information can be uploaded in matter of hours as opposed to days using paper poll books, necessitating additional staff time.
- E-poll books are secure. Upgraded poll books will keep county boards of elections compliant with Secretary of State security directive.

With boards of elections purchasing replacement poll books, counties look to once again partner with the state on funding for these devices. House Bill 673 would provide \$7.5 million in state funding to counties for replacement poll books. These funds are estimated to cover 85 percent of the total cost, with the remaining 15 percent covered by counties. This 85/15 partnership split is identical to the cost share enacted the previous time the General Assembly provided poll book funding in 2015.

As elections issues are discussed during the upcoming lame duck session, CCAO strongly encourages members to contact their state lawmakers and ask them to include replacement poll book funding as part of any broader election reform legislation.

Any questions regarding e-poll books can be directed to CCAO External Affairs Manager [Adam Schwiebert](#)

Honda to invest \$4.4 billion in new EV battery plant and retooling operations across four counties

Forty-five years to the day after former Governor Jim Rhodes signed the final agreement with Honda to build a motorcycle plant in Union County, federal, state and local officials once again gathered in the statehouse to celebrate the latest Honda's latest investment in Ohio.

On Tuesday, Honda Motor Co. announced a \$3.5 billion electric vehicle battery plant, in partnership with LG Energy Solutions, will be constructed in Fayette County. The plant is expected to employ over 2,200 workers when fully operational. Honda also announced a \$700 million investment to retool production and assembly plants in Union, Logan and Shelby Counties to produce and assembly electric vehicle components.

Executive Vice President Bob Nelson of American Honda Motor Company, Inc. slated the Fayette County site for groundbreaking in early 2023 and completion by the end of 2024, with finished EV batteries shipped in 2025 for installation at the three Honda and Acura plants the following year. Those operations are a big part of Honda's plan to produce EV-only cars and trucks by 2040 and to be carbon-neutral in "all products and corporate activities" by 2050, he said.

"It has been more than four decades since Honda first saw great promise in Ohio, and although the way we manufacture vehicles is evolving, one thing that will stay the same is the quality of our workforce and their ability to get the job done. Honda and LG Energy Solutions now join a long list of companies that have looked all over the country for the best place to do business and have chosen Ohio because we have the ideal economic climate and an innovative and talented workforce. Today's announcement is further proof that there is no better place to be right now than in the great state of Ohio," DeWine said in a statement following the announcement.

OneOhio Recovery Foundation continues standing up organization during latest board meeting

The OneOhio Recovery Foundation board met this week, making progress on several key items regarding the setup of the organization. During Wednesday's meeting, board Chair Kathryn Whittington said they now have an official location at Cohatch, an office space and coworking provider at the Polaris Mall.)

Whittington further told members in her update as chair that the board has been "very busy" in recent weeks and urged them to provide information on OneOhio's work to their communities. The expert panel application and policy process will start in the coming weeks, she said, in anticipation of a board vote at the December meeting. The schedule and assignments for committees are also being developed.

"I am proud of the work our board is doing to set up the foundation with the goal of ensuring that recovery settlement dollars are used to directly address, or work to prevent, the awful ways that drug addiction and abuse have impacted our families, local resources and quality of life," Whittington said in a [statement](#) after the meeting.

The board approved a conflict-of-interest policy as one of the final parts of its application for tax-exempt status. Attorney Holly Gross said that was developed by using an IRS template with some "minor tweaks." Gross added that the conflict-of-interest policy will be looked at in relation to grant-making policy and the experts panel as well.

In regard to a diversity and inclusion policy for the board, Christopher Smitherman -- the vice mayor of Cincinnati and a small business owner -- asked about how success would be measured. Gross said there could be an annual evaluation process. Smitherman also said he didn't see anything in the policy about procurement and ensuring that grants include support for everyone who is affected by the opioid crisis.

There was additional discussion of having an expert on diversity and inclusion speak with the board at its December meeting so they can develop a good policy that is within the law. Gross also recommended the policy define diversity broadly. Smitherman said it includes race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, veteran status, disability and other factors. Sen. Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) had raised concerns around a policy that might be "too prescriptive."

Board CFO Jim Quinn gave logistical details on their location at the coworking space and said he hoped to have more information about the 2023 budget in December. In the audit and finance committee report, Chair Larry Kidd said they were in the process of developing an RFP for an accounting firm. There will be work with a tax firm as well, though it may be the same company as the accounting firm.

He moved to spend up to \$35,000 to obtain tax advice regarding how to set up the foundation and it was accepted without objection. Members also discussed different software that will be needed regarding financials and grant-making.

Kidd also gave an update on the Search Committee, saying they are in the process of interviewing three search firms that have extensive nonprofit foundation expertise. It could take six to eight months to find a foundation executive director, he said, and so they may want to discuss naming someone the interim director. Kidd added that their preference is to have an Ohio resident but want the best individual. The board approved a motion for up to \$150,000 for the search firm.

Members also talked about how the IRS application for tax-exempt status includes budget details and a general explanation on how the grant-making process will work. The foundation will not be able to give grants until it has an executive director and staff to oversee operations and the money itself, and there was also discussion concerning allocation of the settlement funds.

The next OneOhio board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 14 at 12:00pm at Cohatch Polaris.



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