

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD AN INFORMAL REGULAR SESSION ON MONDAY, APRIL 29, 2013, WITH COMMISSIONERS EDWIN H. HUMPHREY, DAVID H. UIBLE AND ROBERT L. PROUD IN ATTENDANCE.**

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE WERE THOMAS J. EIGEL, ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR, AND DEBORAH BRITTON, CLERMONT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE. ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES AT THE INFORMAL REGULAR SESSION ARE LISTED ON THE ATTACHED ATTENDANCE SHEET.**

**LET THE RECORD SHOW THAT THE APRIL 29, 2013 INFORMAL REGULAR SESSION WAS VIDEOTAPED AND IS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 8:00 A.M. TO 4:30 P.M. LOCAL TIME. IN ADDITION, THE INFORMAL REGULAR SESSION IS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC VIEWING THROUGH THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT WEBSITE AT <http://www.clermontcountyohio.gov/videos-worksession.aspx>.**

**THE FOLLOWING ISSUES WERE PRESENTED FOR DISCUSSION:**

**1. Issue - HB59 discussion as it pertains to County Recorder fees and funding – Clermont County Recorder, Deborah Hall Clepper 07-0809-011**

**Discussion** - Mr. Eigel stated that this Informal Session was scheduled to allow Ms. Clepper an opportunity to address the Board in regard to the tabled Resolution from the Board's regular session of April 24, 2013 regarding HB59. A copy of the CCAO Statehouse Report from April 19, 2013 was provided that examines the proposed language of HB59.

Ms. Deborah Clepper, Clermont County Recorder, introduced herself and expressed to the Commissioners she would like their support of House Bill 59 (HB59). Ms. Clepper also stated that HB59 has significant impact on her office as far as funding for the Special Equipment Fund. Ms. Clepper described how the Special Equipment Fund is set up to provide equipment and technology for the Recorder's Office, how fees will be negotiated again this fall, and that the current legislation allows for the Special Equipment Fund Fee is available to be negotiated every three years by the County Recorder submitting a proposal to the County Commissioners for consideration as outlined in ORC 317.321. Making special note, the last time the Clermont County Recorder's Office negotiated the Special Equipment Fund it was requested that the fee be set at \$4.00 per document. Under the current legislation the maximum amount the Recorder is permitted to ask for is \$7/document.

Ms. Clepper outlined the usage of the current Special Equipment Funds as follows: out of the \$4/per record, \$3.45 is currently received by the vendor to maintain and make Clermont County Recorder's Office records available electronically. The Recorder's Office receives \$.55/per document, out of which the expense of \$1,000/month for internet fees must be paid. The remaining account balance of the Special Equipment Fund fees at the end of the year is approximately \$3,000 to \$6,000. This is what is allocated for extra project work, such as digitizing older records.

Ms. Clepper described that the Clermont County Recorder's Office currently has the following records available electronically:

- All records are available from 1993 to current.
- Deeds and Mortgages from 1993 back to 1978 are available.
- From 1978 to 1953 only indexes are available.

Ms. Clepper also stated that she obtained a quote from a vendor to put an additional 10 years of records online at a cost of \$500,000 and also noted it would take several years to fund a project of that magnitude at the current Special Equipment Fund Rate.

Ms. Clepper described that through the current contract at the rate of \$3.45 per document fee to the vendor, we receive new equipment every three years for both the staff and the public work stations. Ms. Clepper pointed out that when she was elected to office that both the Auditor and Recorder's Office had public access work stations. The Recorder's Office has since partnered with the Auditor's Office, and combined public access work stations under the one vendor contract; this partnership has allowed Clermont County Recorder's Office and Auditor's Office to cut costs by alleviating the need to purchase two sets of public use equipment.

Discussion was held in regard to the current legislation which would make adjustments from "May provide funding" (ORC 317.321 (C)(1)(A) of this section, the board of county commissioners shall approve, reject, or modify the proposal and notify the county recorder of its action on the proposal.) to "Shall provide funding" (HB59 wording: ORC 317.321 (C)(1)(A) of this section, the board of county commissioners shall approve, ~~reject, or modify~~ the proposal and if the proposal includes the estimates required by divisions). This would take away the Boards' discretionary ability to make fees optional, the amounts of those fees to change with the budget available, and changes in economic climate. Ms. Clepper stated that she does not believe the Clermont County Recorder has been slighted, however she does not want to worry in future years about the ability to have funds available to run the office. It was further discussed as to the burden that this bill would put on all counties in the future.

Ms. Clepper expressed her concerns regarding cutbacks that have taken place since 2008, and the problem that the Commissioners have with HB59 is that it makes it a SHALL instead of a MAY, which commits all future boards regardless of future hard times of equipment funding of \$8. This Board feels that they have been generous as far as the funding and allowing the Recorder Equipment funds to be charged up to \$7. Our Board would like to see the language remain as MAY. The Board noted that our Recorders office has done an exemplary job at digitizing our records.

Ms. Clepper stated that there are currently no issues in Clermont County but she feels that there are issues in other counties throughout the State of Ohio that this bill will dramatically affect.

Commissioner Uible noted that Clermont County is technology forward and we need to be focused on Clermont County's issues and commended the Clermont County Recorder's Office on the great job that they do in implementing technology and being conservative with the budget.

The Commissioners noted that they think our Recorders office does an excellent job and they are grateful for the partnership which has been built.

#### **Conclusion/Follow-Up Action Needed -**

It was noted that better communication is needed between the elected officials and the Commissioners prior to the Commissioners voting on issues that affect individual offices.

Ms. Clepper noted that she is assessing her needs prior to addressing the Board in October in regard to the Special Equipment Fund. Right now the fee Clermont charges is \$4.00. The maximum fee that can be requested is \$7.00.

**Adjournment**

Informal Regular Session was adjourned.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
CLERMONT COUNTY, OHIO**

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**EDWIN H. HUMPHREY, PRESIDENT**

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**DAVID H. UIBLE, VICE PRESIDENT**

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**ROBERT L. PROUD, MEMBER**

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**THOMAS J. EIGEL, ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

05/22/13  
**DATE APPROVED**