



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

FEBRUARY 7, 2025

Buckeye Hills Regional Council

AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order** | Ron Moore, Vice President
- II. **Roll Call** | Chasity Schmelzenbach, Secretary
- III. **Consent Agenda** | Ron Moore, Vice President **MOTION** **TAB #1**
- IV. **Management Committee Report** | Ron Moore, Chair **TAB #2**
 - a. FY 2024 Final Audit Report | Denise Keyes, Fiscal Director
 - b. FY 2026 Administrative Budget | Denise Keyes, Fiscal Director **MOTION**
 - c. Purchasing Policy Update | Denise Keyes, Fiscal Director **MOTION**
 - d. Management Committee Report | Angie Lawrence, HR Director **MOTION**
 - e. Evaluation Process Update | Angie Lawrence, HR Director **MOTION**
- V. **Medicaid HCBS ARPA Resolution** | Jennifer Westfall, Aging & Health Director **MOTION** **TAB #3**
- VI. **Executive Director Report** | Chasity Schmelzenbach **TAB #4**
- VII. **Member Round Table**
- VIII. **Legislator and Partner Agency Updates**
- IX. **Citizen Participation**
- X. **Other Business**
- XI. **Adjournment**

THE NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 7, 2024.

**Minutes of the January 10, 2025
Buckeye Hills Regional Council Executive Committee Meeting**

The Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BHRC) Executive Committee meeting was held January 10, 2025. The meeting was held at Buckeye Hills, Marietta, Ohio.

In attendance were:

OFFICERS:	Lenny Eliason, President Ron Moore, Vice President James Booth, Treasurer Chasity Schmelzenbach, Secretary (non-voting member per Bylaws)	Athens County Morgan County Washington County BHRC
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:	Jason D'Onofrio Brian Howard Ken Stewart Mick Schumacher Allen Fraley	Hocking County Meigs County (Private Sector) Monroe County (Private Sector) Monroe County - Alternate Noble County
GUESTS:	Juli Stephens Allie New Austin Ward Jon Hensler Amanda Sutphin Heidi Maxwell	Office of U.S. Senator Moreno Office of U.S. Representative Rulli Governor's Office of Appalachia ODOT Job's & Commerce OhioSE Morgan County Commissioners
STAFF:	Angie Lawrence Aaron Martin Denise Keyes Drew Tanner Emma Yeager Jenny Simmons Julia Hinzman Kelly Isaly Michelle Hyer Melissa Zoller	HR & Payroll Manager Program Manager Fiscal Director Communications Director Development Specialist Executive Assistant Mobility Manager Mobility Manager Program Manager Planner Director

CALL TO ORDER

Lenny Eliason, President, called the meeting to order.

ROLE CALL

Chasity Schmelzenbach, Secretary, conducted roll call.

CONSENT AGENDA

Brian Howard moved to approve the consent agenda which included the minutes from the November 7, 2024, meeting; Statement of Activities; Administrative Expense YTD; Aging and Disability Programs Services and Funding Report for period July 1, 2023, through November 30, 2024, and Division and Director's Reports. Allen Fraley seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE

Jason D'Onofrio moved to approve the 2025 annual renewals for insurance, professional services

and laptop computers in the amount not to exceed \$91,500, presented by Denise Keyes, Fiscal Director. Allen Fraley seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

James Booth moved to approve the Ratification of Action by Executive Committee Officers for the approval of expenditure of Advertising in the amount of \$27,900. Ken Stewart seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Director Schmelzenbach provided the following updates to the committee:

Congratulations in the Region:

- Mayor Patterson elected President of National League of Cities
- Mayor Schlicher elected Second Vice President of Mayors' Association of Ohio
- The Mayor's Partnership for Progress (MPP) has New Leadership:
 - President: Mayor Jennifer Lyle of New Concord
 - Vice President: Mayor Scott Hill of the Village of Racine
 - Treasurer: Mayor Jim Ullman of the Village of Beverly
- Portion of I-77 Noble County Designated as U.S.S. Shenandoah Memorial Highway
- BHRC Mobility Manager Julia Hinzman recognized as Mobility Manager of the Year at Ohio Public Transit Association's 2024 Ohio Needs Transit Conference. Perry County Transit's Mason Dickerson received Community Impact Award.

Congratulations on Funding in the Region:

- State awards Brownfield and Demolition Projects in the region.
- Morgan, Perry Counties received Public Workforce Transportation Grants.
- Athens County Port Authority receives Industrial Park funding.
- Governor DeWine announces CDBG Allocation Funding for Community Development Projects
- Ohio Means Jobs Area 15 part of ARC Workforce Grant to expand apprenticeships.

What's Happening:

- Appalachian History, Heritage, and Culture ACGP Project StoryMap link now available.
- ProCore – ILCAO Project information for Wonderful Waterfronts
- Lame Duck Session Review and the 136th General Assembly preview handout provided in the meeting binder.

State Updates:

- The Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) announced the four MyCare Ohio plans selected to serve Ohioans who are eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare in Ohio's Next Generation MyCare program. The transition to the new program and statewide coverage begins in January 2026. The four managed care organizations selected as the Next Generation MyCare plans are:
 - Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield
 - Buckeye Health Plan
 - CareSource
 - Molina HealthCare of Ohio

MyCare Ohio members will not have any change at this time. Current MyCare Ohio providers will continue to serve MyCare Ohio members as they do today until the transition to the Next Generation MyCare plans in January 2026. At that time, the selected plans will be responsible for supporting Ohioans who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid healthcare coverage in the 29 counties where MyCare Ohio is currently available. Statewide expansion of the program will follow as quickly as possible.

- Broadband Ohio has published Ohio's approved BEAD Initial Proposal Volume II on www.broadband.ohio.gov for review. Volume II of the BEAD Initial Proposal outlines BroadbandOhio's objectives; local and regional broadband planning process and coordination efforts taken to date; the proposed plan for BEAD deployment subgrantee

selection process and activities BroadbandOhio will directly implement; planned steps for workforce readiness, minority/ women business enterprises and labor surplus area firm inclusion, and cost and barrier reduction; climate assessment; low-cost broadband service option and middle-class affordability plan; and regulatory approach and compliance with BEAD requirements.

- Building on the success of the “Shine a Light on Dumpers” initiative, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost is expanding the campaign to include funding for community cleanup efforts. Effective December 5, Yost’s office is allocating \$1 million for new grants aimed at helping local governments clean up illegal dump sites and deter future dumping. County and local governments can apply for up to \$100,000 for dump-site cleanup and up to \$20,000 for preventive measures such as signs, gates or barriers. The application window for the newly available grants is open and runs through February 28, 2025, or until the money runs out. The grants will be awarded on a rolling basis.
- The All-Ohio Future Fund offers Site Development grants to support local communities with site-readiness and preparation to attract economic development projects. Awardees will be expected to find site occupants within five years. Eligible costs include infrastructure costs such as public roadwork, water/wastewater and related infrastructure, design and engineering, demolition, wetland mitigation, utility-gap funding, and other one-time site enhancements. Funding cannot be used for land/site acquisition. Please review the Indication of Interest checklist, narrative form, and data form for guidance on submitting a site development proposal. Proposals can be submitted via email to AOFF@development.ohio.gov and will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis until funding is depleted.
- Fiscal Year 2025 Appalachian Ohio Housing Needs Assessment (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025) released by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency can be found at www.ohiohome.org.

Federal Updates

- The EPA recently announced its newly released Water Affordability Needs Assessment Report. The report details water affordability among households and utilities across the U.S., summarizes decades of research by utilities, academics, and associations, and includes recommendations to address affordability.
- Appalachian Community Capital is accepting applications now for funding and technical assistance through its new Green Bank for Rural America! Awards will be focused on priority communities within Appalachia, including energy communities, rural communities of color, and Native communities. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and the first awards will be made in the first quarter of 2025.
- The US EPA Brownfields and Land Revitalization Program is offering Technical Assistance Grants (TAG) to support small, rural, and disadvantaged communities. If your community has a population of 15,000 or fewer, is located in a rural area, or qualifies as disadvantaged (with an annual median household income below 80% of the statewide median), Ohio EPA can submit a TAG application on your behalf. Grants are up to \$20,000 each for communities under 15,000 residents, rural communities, and disadvantaged areas at less than 80% of the statewide median household income. The deadline to express interest is January 31. The grant application deadline is March 2025. If your community is interested and eligible to have Ohio EPA submit a TAG application on your behalf, please reach out to Shelby Powell at Shelby.Powell@epa.ohio.gov by January 31, 2025. Shelby is available to answer questions and guide you through the process.
- EPA announced a new, no-cost technical assistance initiative focused on reducing exposure to perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and other emerging contaminants in small or disadvantaged communities. The Tackling Emerging Contaminants (TEC) Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA) initiative will help eligible public drinking-water systems evaluate emerging contaminant issues, conduct initial water quality testing, and identify next steps in 200 small or disadvantaged communities over the next three years. EPA will also share best practices and amplify successes through case studies, fact sheets, webinars,

and other resources regarding addressing emerging contaminants, including PFAS.

Mark Your Calendars

- January 22-24: Advancing Regional Employment Through Strategic Planning hosted by Ohio Valley Employment Resource at the Lafayette Hotel, Marietta
- January 29: District 18 Ohio Public Works Commission Small Government Committee
- RCAP Releases 2025 Training Schedule
 - February 27: GIS Mapping for Small Utilities
 - April 2: Utility Manager Bootcamp
 - April 29-30: 101 Utility Management for Local Officials and 201 Financial Management for Local Officials - Newark
 - May 7: Fiscal Officer Bootcamp - Zanesville
 - May 20: Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater Field Day - Bowling Green
- Buckeye Hills Forward Open House
 - January 3: Marietta
 - January 28: McConnelsville
 - January 30: Athens
 - February 4: Caldwell
 - February 6: New Lexington
 - February 11: Pomeroy
 - February 12: Logan
 - February 20: Woodsfield

MEMBER ROUND TABLE

Each member had the opportunity to share updates from their county. This open-floor format allowed members to discuss their current initiatives, challenges and successes.

LEGISLATIVE & PARTNER AGENCY UPDATES

Allie New, Office of U.S. Representative Rulli, provided updates to the committee.

Julie Stephens, Office of U.S. Senator Moreno, provided updates to the committee.

Austin Ward, Governor's Office of Appalachia, provided updates to the committee.

Jon Hensler, Ohio Department of Transportation Job's & Commerce, provided updates to the committee.

Amanda Sutphin, OhioSE, provided updates to the committee.

Heidi Maxwell, Morgan County Commissioner, introduced herself to the committee to the committee.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

No citizens present wished to address the committee.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business, James Booth moved to adjourn the meeting. Jason D'Onofrio seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Approved By: _____
Chasity Schmelzenbach, Secretary

Date: _____



STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

July 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024

YEAR TO DATE ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE DETAIL

Administrative Expenses for Fiscal Year 2025 totaled \$3,400,474.27 at December 31. This total represents 47.90% of the Council's administrative budget utilized. Total spending for this time period is budgeted to be 50%. Individual line-item budgets and expenses are monitored monthly to ensure funds are utilized appropriately and budget revisions are requested from funding agencies as needed. The cumulative Indirect Cost rate for this period is 44%. The Projected Indirect Rate for Fiscal Year 2025 is 46%.

AGING AND DISABILITY PROGRAMS SERVICES & FUNDING REPORT

The Aging and Disability Division worked with various service providers and helped administer a multitude of direct service programs to eligible residents of our eight-county region. Between July 1 and December 31, more than \$9.3 million in direct service dollars were utilized to provide the units of service listed in the report. BHRC continues to support our provider network to evaluate the needs of the communities and serve area seniors in the best way possible.



Administrative Expense Detail

For the Period July 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024

	2024 YTD Actual	2025 YTD Actual	2025 Budget	% of Budget
Salary	\$ 1,585,737.90	\$ 1,811,480.34	\$ 3,674,155.18	49.30%
Fringe Benefits	\$ 789,547.26	\$ 870,841.35	\$ 2,047,753.49	42.53%
Advertising	\$ 144,140.34	\$ 64,528.65	\$ 128,785.00	50.11%
Audit Costs	\$ 40,220.00		\$ 32,000.00	0.00%
Building Maintenance	\$ 4,467.00	\$ 13,033.73	\$ 26,000.00	50.13%
Communications	\$ 42,908.82	\$ 47,109.92	\$ 101,875.00	46.24%
Conference Registration Fee	\$ 22,022.80	\$ 26,416.02	\$ 44,200.00	59.76%
Contract Services	\$ 19,982.66	\$ 119,841.05	\$ 194,752.76	61.53%
Employee/Governing Board	\$ 16,720.56	\$ 11,378.93	\$ 15,000.00	75.86%
Equipment Purchase/Maintenance	\$ 44,208.53	\$ 7,680.75	\$ 19,800.00	38.79%
Insurance	\$ 21,994.74	\$ -	\$ 41,000.00	0.00%
Legal Costs	\$ 1,831.25	\$ 2,075.00	\$ 4,500.00	46.11%
Organizational Dues	\$ 16,343.20	\$ 16,798.42	\$ 20,180.00	83.24%
Other Costs	\$ 8,577.96	\$ 11,265.23	\$ 13,600.00	82.83%
Postage	\$ 6,054.10	\$ 9,748.72	\$ 13,000.00	74.99%
Printing Costs	\$ 309.00	\$ 1,267.00	\$ 6,000.00	21.12%
Software & Licenses	\$ 60,080.86	\$ 57,121.89	\$ 110,815.00	51.55%
Space	\$ 127,670.43	\$ 127,670.34	\$ 255,340.00	50.00%
Staff Training Fees	\$ 6,835.75	\$ 1,710.60	\$ 9,000.00	19.01%
Subscriptions	\$ 7,119.17	\$ 8,005.17	\$ 8,500.00	94.18%
Supplies	\$ 49,381.30	\$ 37,920.08	\$ 95,966.00	39.51%
Travel - Mileage Reimbursement	\$ 74,326.47	\$ 88,289.58	\$ 137,628.81	64.15%
Travel - Out of Town Expense	\$ 47,764.43	\$ 66,291.50	\$ 100,000.00	66.29%
TOTAL EXPENSES FOR THE PERIOD	\$ 3,138,244.53	\$ 3,400,474.27	\$ 7,099,851.24	47.90%
INDIRECT COST RATE FOR THE PERIOD	48%	44%		



Quarterly Budget Adjustment
For the Period July 1, 2024 -June 30, 2025

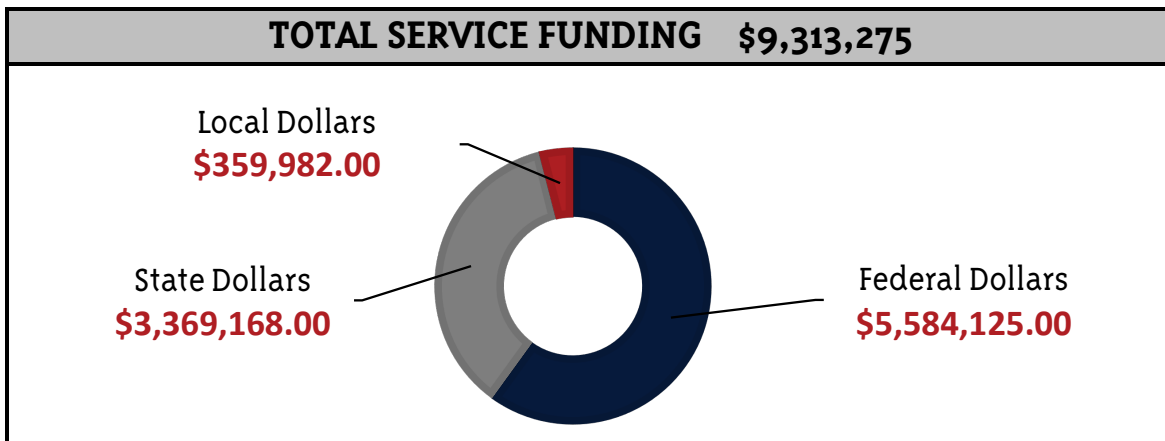
	Original Budget	07/24 - 09/24 Change	10/24 - 12/24 Change	01/25 - 03/25 Change	04/25 - 06/25 Change	Final Budget
Salary	\$ 3,483,759.06	\$ 190,396.12				\$ 3,674,155.18
Fringe Benefits	\$ 2,009,341.12	\$ 38,412.37				\$ 2,047,753.49
Advertising	\$ 128,785.00					\$ 128,785.00
Audit Costs	\$ 32,000.00					\$ 32,000.00
Building Maintenance	\$ 13,000.00		\$ 13,000.00			\$ 26,000.00
Communications	\$ 101,875.00					\$ 101,875.00
Conference Registration Fee	\$ 44,200.00					\$ 44,200.00
Contract Services	\$ 87,700.00	\$ 107,052.76				\$ 194,752.76
Employee/Governing Board	\$ 15,000.00					\$ 15,000.00
Equipment Purchase/Maintenance	\$ 22,800.00		\$ (3,000.00)			\$ 19,800.00
Insurance	\$ 41,000.00					\$ 41,000.00
Legal Costs	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,500.00				\$ 4,500.00
Organizational Dues	\$ 20,180.00					\$ 20,180.00
Other Costs	\$ 13,600.00					\$ 13,600.00
Postage	\$ 13,000.00					\$ 13,000.00
Printing Costs	\$ 16,000.00		\$ (10,000.00)			\$ 6,000.00
Software & Licenses	\$ 110,815.00					\$ 110,815.00
Space	\$ 255,340.00					\$ 255,340.00
Staff Training Fees	\$ 9,000.00					\$ 9,000.00
Subscriptions	\$ 8,500.00					\$ 8,500.00
Supplies	\$ 68,375.00	\$ 27,591.00				\$ 95,966.00
Travel - Mileage Reimbursement	\$ 137,628.81					\$ 137,628.81
Travel - Out of Town Expense	\$ 100,000.00					\$ 100,000.00
TOTAL BUDGET	\$ 6,733,898.99	\$ 365,952.25	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,099,851.24

Buckeye Hills Regional Council

Aging and Health Programs Services & Funding Report

July 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024

SERVICES PROVIDED		
Direct Service Hours Provided	Transportation Trips	Adult Day Service Days Attended
19,985	7,573	1,267
Adult Day Service Miles Traveled	Meals Provided	Home Medical Equipment & Emergency Response Units
12,932	122,361	1,171
Legal Services Contacts	Home Accessibility Modification And Pest Control Jobs	Senior Farmers Market Coupons Redeemed
284	32	26,343
Grocery Shopping and Delivery	Assisted Living Days	Evidence Based Classes
309	9,246	395
Alzheimers Education Contacts		
217		



REGIONAL STATS		
Total Consumers Served	Total Population	Total Population Eligible for Services by Age (60+)
5,431	249,172	65,746

PROGRAM UPDATES

Care Director Case Management Software System | Care Director development continues to make progress. Care Director will be a case management software system owned by an Ohio AAA and utilized by the Ohio Aging Network for the MyCare 2.0 program. The hope of the Ohio AAA network is that all MyCare documentation will be completed in Care Director and the managed care entities will pull data from the single system. This will result in the AAA case management team documenting in a single system instead of multiple managed care systems. The case management software system has the support of Ohio Medicaid. Multiple members of the BHRC team are participating in workgroups and committees in support of the development and implementation of the system.

MyCare 2.0 | The Ohio AAA Network is evaluating RFPs to contract with a consultant company to support the transition of AAAs from PASSPORT and MyCare to MyCare 2.0. The role of the consultant will be to perform a readiness audit and advise the AAA on needed changes.

Older Americans Act Provider Training | On January 16th BHRC hosted a provider training for Older Americans Act providers throughout the region. The training included a background on BHRC, rule updates, fiscal updates and an opportunity for networking and support. The training was attended by providers from all 8 counties and was viewed as a success. The local providers have requested that this becomes an annual training.

The Alzheimer's Respite | The Alzheimer's Respite RFP is being developed for a spring release. This RFP will provide respite services to individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. The public notice will be published in local newspapers and on the BHRC website. The Aging Team is transitioning the RFP application to an electronic submission via Survey Monkey Apply and will only be accepting applications via the online system.

The Regional Advisory Council | The first meeting of 2025 is scheduled for February 26th from 10 am to noon at BHRC's office. This is an open, public meeting with everyone welcome. February's meeting will feature a presentation from a local law office on Estate Planning.

Senior Farmers Market Program | Meeting regarding the future of the Senior Farmers Market Program have been held with the Ohio Department of Aging (ODA). ODA is hoping to take a portion of the region and transition to the modern, electronic program implemented throughout the state in 2024. BHRC has shared the concerns of the region such as limited cell and internet accessibility. The electronic program involves the use of smart phones and QR codes for redemption. We will keep the board and legislature abreast of any decisions made regarding this popular program.

O4A Advocacy Conference | O4A Advocacy Conference is March 4th and 5th at the Renaissance Columbus Downtown Hotel, 50 N. 3rd Street, Columbus. The agenda will include information regarding advocacy efforts,

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state budget and include visits to legislators. A Legislative Reception will also be held on the evening of March 4th. If you have an interest in attending, please reach out to Jenn Westfall, Aging & Health Director at jwestfall@buckeyehills.org. The hotel block tends to book up fast.

PASSPORT AND ASSISTED LIVING CASELOAD REGIONWIDE

PASSPORT: 809 individuals

Assisted Living Waiver 62 individuals

CONTACT: Jenn Westfall, Aging and Health Director | jwestfall@buckeyehills.org | 740-376-1038
Dawn Weber, Home Care Director | dweber@buckeyehills.org | 740-376-1041

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PROGRAM UPDATES

HEAP Outreach | Regular HEAP promotion began in October and will continue through the winter and spring heating season. Using our annual HEAP grant, outreach is being conducted through outdoor advertising (billboards) throughout the region, bi-weekly social media content, and press releases. The first press release was distributed to local media on October 3. Additionally, brochures about the program are distributed at in-person outreach events and included in the Long-Term Care Consultation guides that are provided when our Assessors are visiting individuals in their homes. Ohio Department of Aging has become more prescriptive in its social media outreach guidance, so our social media content will look a little different than it has in the past to comply with their guidance.

Aging Outreach | Over 650 pocket calendars containing fraud prevention information have been distributed to Assessors and Care Managers to distribute to consumers. These were purchased using funding from the Senior Medicare Patrol grant. Updated materials are being produced during the winter months in preparation for the spring season of outreach events. Upcoming outreach events include:

- March 14- Perry County Senior Expo (Silver Sponsors)
- March 26- Matter of Balance Presentation
- April 4- Hocking County Senior Expo (Silver Sponsors)

If there is an upcoming outreach event in your community that we should attend or a civic group that would like to have a speaker on Aging topics, please contact Amanda Reeder at areeder@buckeyehills.org.

Medicare Outreach | General Medicare posts and information on Extra Help, Medicare Savings Programs, and Preventative Services are running on a weekly basis across our social media channels. As part of our MIPPA grant, ads about the Medicare Extra Help Program will be placed on pharmacy prescription bags throughout the region beginning early this calendar year. We have secured a total of nine different pharmacies in seven counties in our region that will be using our pharmacy bags. We will be using the rest of our budget on newspaper ads in the remaining county. We are continuing our partnership with Senior Medicare Patrol and educating seniors about Medicare Fraud and Safety measures.

Hills & Highways Winter-Spring Edition | The Winter-Spring Edition of Hills and Highways, our mobility newsletter, has been completed and is now being distributed to all Mobility Managers across our counties and throughout our region. This edition highlights key transportation updates, regional initiatives, and resources to support mobility efforts in our communities.

Recent Executive Orders | The Communications Team is working with BHRC leadership to keep members, partners, consumers, and providers up-to-date regarding the potential impacts of recent executive orders and memoranda from the White House on the federally-funded programs that we administer to serve our region. Please watch the News section of our website for updates and watch your email for the latest in our Member & Partner Updates. These updates will typically come from info@buckeyehills.org.

Buckeye Hills Forward | The Communications Team has assisted Development over the past several weeks to publicize and promote registration for the series of upcoming Buckeye Hills Forward Open Houses in each of our eight counties, which runs through February. The sessions to invite feedback on our updated Comprehensive

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Economic Development Strategy have been promoted through local media releases, our website, email newsletter, and social media. To date, more than 120 individuals have registered to attend an open house.

Ohio Economic Development Association Conference Proposal | The Communications Director, working with the Executive Director, Development Director, and Development Specialist Jada Riley, prepared and submitted a response to the Ohio Economic Development Association's request for proposals to host its 2025 or 2026 summit in Southeast Ohio. While the proposal was not accepted, we are awaiting feedback from OEDA regarding what would have made the proposal stronger and how we might be able to host other OEDA programs in the region in the future.

Ohio Valley Employment Resource Conference | The Communications Director, working with the Executive Director, assisted the Ohio Valley Employment Resource with the promotion and planning of their January 22-23 Summit, as well as the design of materials, including the invitation and program.

RECENT MEDIA

- **January 7, 2025 – River Cities Tribune & Register (Meigs):** Surface Transportation Block Grant applications due Feb. 14
- **January 7, 2025 – AVC News (YourRadioPlace.com – Monroe, Noble):** Buckeye Hills Regional Council Accepting Transportation Grant Applications
- **January 9, 2025 – Logan Daily News:** Buckeye Hills hosts open houses to share development strategy, seek input
- **January 9, 2025 – AVC News (YourRadioPlace.com – Monroe, Noble):** Buckeye Hills hosts open houses to share development strategy
- **January 10, 2025 – Marietta Times:** Buckeye Hills hosts open houses to share development strategy, seek input - Marietta Times
- **January 10, 2025 – River Cities Tribune & Register (Meigs):** Buckeye Hills hosts open houses to share development strategy
- **January 12, 2025 – Logan Daily News:** Surface Transportation Block Grant application now available
- **January 14, 2025 – Marietta Times:** Surface Transportation Block Grant Applications Due Feb. 14
- **January 15, 2025 – Marietta Times:** Call for Nominations: District 18 Ohio Public Works Commission Natural Resources Assistance Council
- **January 15, 2025 – Athens Independent:** Call for Nominations: District 18 Ohio Public Works Commission Natural Resources Assistance Council
- **January 22, 2025 – Morgan County Herald:** Buckeye Hills to host open houses to share development strategy
- **January 22, 2025 – Athens Independent:** Buckeye Hills hosts open houses to share development strategy
- **January 27, 2025 – The Journal-Leader (Noble):** Buckeye Hills hosts open houses to share development strategy
- **January 28, 2025 – The Times Leader:** Big Changes Coming to Monroe County
- **January 28, 2025 - WTOV9:** Monroe Theatre renovation project kicks off with \$4 million grant

CONTACT INFO: Drew Tanner, Communications Director | dtanner@buckeyehills.org | 740-376-1030

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CURRENT INITIATIVES

Buckeye Hills Forward Prepares for Public Comment Period | After two years of planning, community engagement, and research, BHRC is ready to share the 2025 rewrite of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) entitled "Buckeye Hills Forward." The 30-day public comment period will kick off on January 25 with eight (8) public comment sessions in our counties and an online component. All sessions are 4:00-5:00 p.m.

- **January 23:** Washington County - Buckeye Hills Regional Council, 1400 Pike Street, Marietta, OH 45750
- **January 28:** Morgan County - Kate Love Simpson Library, 358 E. Main Street, McConnelsville, OH 43756
- **January 30:** Athens County - Athens Public Library, 30 Home Street, Athens, OH 45701
- **February 4:** Noble County - Caldwell Public Library Annex, 517 Spruce Street, Caldwell, OH 43724
- **February 6:** Perry County - Perry County District Library, 117 S. Jackson Street, New Lexington, OH 43734
- **February 11:** Meigs County - Meigs County Economic Development Office, Farmers Bank Conference Room, 238 West Main Street, Pomeroy, OH 45769
- **February 12:** Hocking County - Hocking County Public Library - Walnut Room, 230 East Main Street, Logan, OH 43138
- **February 20:** Monroe County - Generations Complex, 47115 Black Walnut Parkway, Woodsfield, OH 43793

Nominations Due for Natural Resources Assistance Council | Buckeye Hills Regional Council is accepting nominations for individuals to serve on the District 18 Natural Resources Assistance Council for a three-year term. Nominations are due by 4:00 p.m. February 28. District 18 includes Athens, Belmont, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, and Washington Counties in Ohio. There is one vacant position to be filled on the NRAC committee. Nomination forms can be requested by contacting Kylee Nichols at knichols@buckeyehills.org or 740-376-1033.

NEWS

Program & Service Updates

ODNR Recreational Trails Program and Clean Ohio Trail Deadline | Applications are now being accepted for two recreational trail assistance programs designed to enhance the non-active transportation connections throughout Ohio. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) is offering funding through the Recreational Trails Program and the Clean Ohio Trail Fund Program. The Recreational Trails Program will fund up to \$150,000 with a 20% match required.

The Clean Ohio Trails Fund is a reimbursement program for a total funding amount of \$500,000 with 25% match required. The program is State funded and administered by the ODNR. Cities, villages, counties, townships, special districts, state/federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations are eligible for both funding opportunities. The deadline to apply for both programs is March 15, 2025. Public participation is a key scoring criterion.

ARC INSPIRE Letters of Intent Due | New or existing projects that promote economic opportunities for Appalachians recovering from SUD are eligible to apply now for funding through the Appalachian Regional *Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.*
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Commission's Investments Supporting Partnerships In Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative. ARC staff will be available to answer questions at a pre-application webinar on January 28. Letters of intent to apply for INSPIRE funding are due February 14, and applications are due March 10.

DOE Funding Available for School Energy Improvements | The U.S. Department of Energy is now accepting submissions for the 2025 Renew America's Schools Prize to promote the implementation of clean energy improvements at K-12 public schools across the country. Local educational agencies can apply for nearly \$90 million. Likely, recipients will receive funding awards across the program's three phases. Applications are due April 3, 2025, at 5 p.m.

Join the office hours and informational webinars held from January to March 2025. Visit the program website to learn more about eligibility, application requirements, and resources for prospective applicants.

Buckeye Hills Publishes Catalog of Projects from ACGP in Need of Funding | The [Southeast Ohio Regional Revitalization Report](#) outlines a catalog of projects that, with additional investment, could deliver long-lasting benefits to the region's economy. With a focus on transformative initiatives born out of the state's Appalachian Community Grant Program, the report highlights projects in key areas of downtown revitalization, outdoor recreation, community centers, arts, culture, and workforce development. While these projects did not receive implementation funding from the ACGP, many received significant support for planning and design, making them well-positioned for implementation. This report is being shared with state agencies and legislators as the next biennium budget takes shape. BHRC members and partners are welcome to use this report in their own advocacy as well.

All Ohio Future Fund Applications Accepted on Rolling Basis | The 2024-2025 state operating budget (Ohio House Bill 33) established the All Ohio Future Fund (AOFF) with a historic \$750 million investment to support local communities with site-readiness and preparation to attract economic development projects. The Ohio Department of Development will work in coordination with JobsOhio, other state agencies, and the Ohio General Assembly to establish more project-ready sites for economic development opportunities across Ohio. Please review the Indication of Interest checklist, narrative form, and data form for guidance on submitting a site development proposal. Proposals can be submitted via email to AOFF@development.ohio.gov, and will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis until funding is depleted.

STAFF UPDATES

- **Michelle Hyer** has been working closely with staff on the Appalachian Community Grant Program (ACGP) with the administration of 16 projects. She has been also working on completing several reports for the development division.
- **Kylee Nichols** has been working closely with the Southeast Ohio History Center, the villages of Chauncey, Caldwell, McConnelsville, Beverly, and the city of Marietta on their ACGP-funded projects. She has also been working on the environmental review for the Canaanville project.
- **Jada Riley** has been hosting the Buckeye Hills Forward Open Houses and aggregating feedback received from those sessions.
- **Emma Yeager** has started building out the application and timeline for the Appalachian Regional Commission Area Development Pre-application for fiscal year 2025-2026.

CONTACT: Sam Miller, Development Director | smiller@buckeyehills.org | 740-376-1028

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PROGRAM & SERVICE UPDATES

USEPA Brownfields Assessment Grant Program Update | To date, the USEPA Brownfields Assessment grant awarded to Buckeye Hills has provided services to 13 projects in 6 of the 8 BHRC counties. Projects have been completed in Athens, Hocking, Morgan, Noble, Perry, and Washington Counties and have included 9 Phase I ESAs, 2 Phase II ESAs, 1 Document Review, 4 Remedial Action Plans, 3 HAZMAT reports, 2 Asbestos Reports, and 1 Site Sampling and Analysis Plans. 4 of the 10 projects were included in applications to the Ohio Department of Development Brownfield Remediation and Building Demolition and Site Revitalization programs. Additional projects are being provided services and quarterly reporting is up to date.

STAFF UPDATES

- **Melissa Zoller (Planning Director)** has been actively engaged in several key initiatives throughout January. She has participated in collaboration meetings alongside Buckeye Hills Regional Council staff, County EMA Directors, and County Engineers, leading to the Planning Department drafting a PROTECT Planning Application, which is due in late February. Melissa attended the Mayors Partnership for Progress (MPP) meeting, where a presenter demonstrated GIS information relevant to local communities. She also took part in the first in-person meeting of the steering committee for the Hocking County Active Transportation Plan. Additionally, she and Eric met with Mayor Abdella to discuss upcoming projects for the City of Belpre. Working closely with Senior Planners, she contributed to the completion and submission of the draft Rural Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) to ODOT for review. Furthermore, Melissa has been approached by communities and counties seeking assistance with mapping infrastructure and is collaborating with other agencies to determine the most effective approach.
- **Christa Myer (Transportation Planning Manager)** actively participated in several initiatives and meetings. She attended BHRC's Hocking County Active Transportation Plan stakeholder meeting led by Toole Design, a virtual planning meeting, the Hocking Valley Scenic Trail meeting in Logan, and BHRC's Forward session in Marietta. Alongside Melissa, she shared information with Older American Act providers on regional mobility and transportation. Christa participated in the Ohio Mobility Manager virtual meeting to plan for Legislative Day (February 11) for Ohio Loves Transit and listened to the Rural and Tribal Transportation NOFO informational webinar, sharing updates with mobility managers and transit agencies. She conducted a ride-along with Logan Public Transit, engaging with both riders and drivers, and is coordinating additional ride-along in the BHRC region for January and February, inviting others to join. Christa collaborated with Amanda, mobility managers, and transit staff to prepare social media posts for Ohio Loves Transit Week. She also distributed the online version of the regional mobility and transportation newsletter, *Hills and Highways*, to stakeholders and submitted the quarterly report to ODOT for the Regional Mobility Coordinator position.
- **Kate Dunn (Senior Planner)** has continued to administer the US EDA grant awarded to the Athens County Port Authority for the construction of their Speculative Building at the Bill Theisen Industrial Park in the Plains, Athens County. She has also continued to administer the USEPA Brownfields Assessment grant awarded to Buckeye Hills. Additionally, Buckeye Hills staff are currently awaiting the next round of funds from both the Ohio Department of Development Building Demolition and Site Revitalization program and the Ohio Department of Development Brownfield Remediation program to begin for both Noble and Hocking Counties. Kate has worked with ODOT to cure the applications for both Noble and Hocking County and is

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currently awaiting grant agreements for both counties. Kate has also worked alongside her fellow planning staff on the PROTECT application that will be submitted in partnership with the County Engineers and EMA directors across the region. Kate, alongside Planning staff, are also exploring funding opportunities to support infrastructure mapping efforts in the BHRC counties.

- **Eric Wade (Senior Planner)** recently returned from paternity leave. Since his return he has actively participated in multiple RTPO efforts such as helping finalize and submit a draft copy of the Rural Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) to ODOT and USDOT for review. Planning is also working with the county engineer's and EMA directors to finalize a PROTECT grant application and begin a BRIC FEMA application—both of which are regionally focused. Eric has led an application process for the RTPO to receive another active transportation grant from ODOT to conduct a regional walk/bike safety study in the Buckeye Hills region. The project will be completed by Toole Design and the planning division will serve as the project managers. This effort pairs well with our active transportation planning project in Hocking County and the work the regional mobility coordinator and local mobility managers are doing in the communities they serve. Eric is also working internally and externally on multiple GIS projects.
- **Kelly Isaly and Julia Hinzman (Mobility Managers)** Throughout January, the Mobility Managers have been working to rewrite the Coordinated Transportation Plans for Monroe, Noble, and Washington counties. These plans will cover the period from 2025 to 2029, with annual updates to ensure they remain responsive to the evolving needs of each community. This extensive effort involves analyzing current transportation systems, identifying gaps and duplications in services, and consulting with stakeholders to create actionable strategies that address community priorities. The goal is to develop plans that improve transportation access, foster regional collaboration, and meet the unique challenges of each county.

Mobility Managers have been actively preparing for **Ohio Loves Transit Week**, a statewide initiative to promote public transportation. As part of these preparations, they have been reaching out to State Representatives and other key decision makers scheduling meetings. These meetings aim to educate about the critical role of transit services in supporting communities, particularly in rural areas, and to emphasize the urgent need for increased funding. By sharing data and personal stories, the Mobility Managers hope to highlight the positive impact that expanded transit resources can have on economic development, access to healthcare, education, and overall quality of life. Ohio Loves Transit Week, The Mobility Managers presented to the commissioners in all three counties to request the signing of proclamations in support of "**Ohio Loves Transit Week,**" **scheduled for February 9–15, 2025.**

CONTACT: Melissa Zoller, Planning Director | mzoller@buckeyehills.org | 740-376-1027

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ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET

July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026

Revenue

Federal Grants and Awards	\$3,840,397
State Grants and Awards	\$2,914,495
Local Cash	\$185,274
Contract Income	\$144,961
Total Revenue	\$7,085,127

Expenditures

Personnel	\$3,831,897
Fringe Benefits	\$2,060,661
Operating Expenses	\$1,192,569
Total Expenditures	\$7,085,127

Revenue Sources

Appalachian Regional Commission	\$239,400
Economic Development Administration	\$70,000
Fee for Service Contracts	\$144,961
Local Cash	\$185,274
Ohio Department of Aging	\$5,423,554
Ohio Department of Transportation	\$577,522
Ohio Department of Development/Governor's Office of Appalachia	\$364,416
Ohio Public Works Commission	\$ 80,000

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PURCHASING POLICY UPDATE SOLICITATION REQUIREMENTS

Solicitation Requirements

It shall be BHRC's practice to solicit bids from prospective vendors for goods and services in order to obtain the highest quality product and service at the best price. No purchase shall be divided in such a manner as to avoid any of these requirements. Funding must be available and appropriated prior to awarding a contract and issuing a purchase order.

- 1) Formal bid. For goods or services where an estimated value is **in excess of \$50,000** 75,000, a formal bidding process must take place. The Executive Committee will be informed of the intent to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP). The **Program Division** Director will initiate the process.
 - a) A Request for Proposal (RFP) must be developed that identifies the goods or services to be solicited at allows at minimum, 10 days for prospective bidders to respond.
 - b) Management staff shall normally select the lowest cost bidder meeting the minimum qualifications, unless it can be demonstrated that accepting a higher cost proposal will provide substantially better product or service that would justify the higher cost.
 - c) Once a successful vendor has been identified, a contract must be negotiated. Once a contract has been negotiated, the Executive Committee must approve it.
 - d) No work shall commence or goods ordered until a contract has been approved by the Executive Committee and executed by the Executive Director.
- ~~2) Informal bid. For goods and services where the estimated value is between \$10,000 and \$49,999, an informal bidding process may take place, although a formal bid process may be used. The Program Director will initiate the process.~~
 - ~~a) A list of criteria for the material or services must be developed.~~
 - ~~b) Three written (original, fax, email, etc.), verbal, or online quotes must be obtained and documented based on the criteria developed.~~
 - ~~c) Management and staff shall normally select the lowest cost quote meeting the minimum qualifications, unless it can be demonstrated that accepting a higher cost proposal will provide substantially better product or service that would justify the higher cost.~~
 - ~~d) No work shall commence or goods ordered until the purchase has been approved by the Executive Committee.~~
 - ~~e) Once a successful vendor has been identified, the typical purchase order process will be utilized~~

Information from the informal bid process must be included in the vendor contract file.

- 3) Small purchases. For goods or services where the estimated value is **between \$5,000 exceeds 10,000 and but not \$10,000** 75,000, ~~no bidding, either formal or informal, is required.~~ BHRC staff will ~~utilize~~ obtain 3 quotes to ensure comparative pricing ~~when practical~~ and follow the typical purchase order process.
- 4) Micro purchases. Micro purchases with an estimated value **up to below \$5,000** 10,000 may be made without utilizing comparative pricing when BHRC staff considers the price to be reasonable based on research, experience, purchase history or other information.

Sole Source Non-Competitive Procurement

~~Goods and services where the estimated value is between \$10,000 and \$49,999 that can be obtained from only one vendor are exempt from competitive bidding. Sole source purchases may include proprietary items sold directly from the manufacturer, items that have only one distributor authorized to sell in this area, or a certain product or service for which no acceptable alternative should be available.~~

~~Other needs for sole source procurement may include compelling urgency such that BHRC's work progress would be inhibited or jeopardized if the competitive bidding process were observed. Should this be the case, the Division Director must furnish to the Executive Director a precise statement, in writing, of the advantages to the work of the Agency, and the potential adverse consequences of using competitive bidding.~~

~~A noncompetitive procurement may be used only when one or more of the following circumstances apply:~~

- ~~a) The acquisition of property or services, the aggregate dollar amount of which does not exceed the micro-purchase threshold.~~
- ~~b) The item is available only from a single source.~~

- c) The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from publicizing a competitive solicitation.
- d) The Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity expressly authorizes a noncompetitive procurement in response to a written request from BHRC Division Director.
- e) After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.

All ~~sole-source noncompetitive~~ purchases shall be supported by written documentation signed by the Division Director and approved by the Executive Director and the Executive Committee. Documentation must then be included in the vendor contract file.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT



MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

January 11, 2025 through February 7, 2025

RESIGNATIONS/TERMINATIONS

None

RETIREMENTS

None

NEW HIRES

Robert Tackett	Care Management Coordinator	1/21/25
Colleen Belisky	Care Management Coordinator	1/21/25

PROMOTIONS

None

TRANSFERS

Billie Prunty	From Office Coordinator to Clinical Assistant	2/3/25
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EVALUATION PROCESS UPDATE

EVALUATION PROCESS

Employees may receive salary increases or one-time merit pay for superior performance. Performance evaluations will be given yearly. Salary increases or one-time merit payments will be based on those evaluations and will be approved and awarded as budgets allow. All salary increases or one-time merit payments are based on the performance evaluation and approved by the Executive Committee, to be made effective in January. Exceptional performance may be recognized by a supervisor through a pay increase at any point throughout the year. The supervisor will present the case for an employee pay increase in writing to the Executive Director who will make the final determination. However, any salary increase that exceeds the mid-point of the salary range for that position must obtain prior approval from the Executive Committee.

Employees who were promoted on any date between January 1 and June 30 (inclusive of those two days) of the evaluation period are eligible for an increase in pay associated with a promotion or a raise as a result of the performance evaluation process covering the second half of that evaluation period, but not both. The employee will receive whichever amount is the greater of the two, within budget constraints.

However, employees promoted on December 31 or prior to that date back to, and including, July 1 of that same year of the evaluation period are eligible for any raise received as a result of their evaluation covering the first half of the evaluation period in addition to any increase in pay from their promotion, within budget constraints.

New employees hired prior to September 1 will be eligible for a performance evaluation and any salary increase attached to the performance evaluation at the end of the evaluation period of June 30 the following year, within budget constraints.

Employees hired on or after September 1 will not be eligible for the standard January 1 salary increase. Instead, they will receive an interim performance evaluation upon reaching one year of service. This evaluation will be a pass/fail assessment, and employees who receive a passing evaluation will be awarded a \$1,000 salary increase, effective immediately. Employees who do not pass will not receive an increase but will be eligible for the next standard evaluation cycle.

Employees who are at the maximum rate of their position's pay range are not eligible for a salary increase. Instead, they may receive a one-time merit payment in lieu of a salary increase based on their performance evaluation and within budget constraints. This payment will not increase the employee's salary rate and will be paid in a one-time, lump-sum amount.

Questions about the Compensation Plan, pay ranges or salary increases should be addressed and/or directed to your supervisor, Human Resources, or the Executive Director. Timekeeping and direct deposit questions should be addressed to the Fiscal Department.

Hired		60-Day Eval		1-Year Assessment Pass/Fail (\$1000)		Annual Evaluation		Payraise
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January-25		March-25		January-26		July-26		January-27
February-25		April-25		February-26		July-26		January-27
March-25		May-25		March-26		July-26		January-27
April-25		June-25		April-26		July-26		January-27
May-25		July-25		May-26		July-26		January-27
June-25		August-25		June-26		July-26		January-27
July-25		September-25		July-26		July-26		January-27
August-25		October-25		August-26		July-26		January-27
September-25		November-25		September-26		July-27		January-28
October-25		December-25		October-26		July-27		January-28
November-25		January-26		November-26		July-27		January-28
December-25		February-26		December-26		July-27		January-28



RESOLUTION OF THE BUCKEYE HILLS REGIONAL COUNCIL TO APPROVE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAID HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES SUBGRANT

Resolution #2025/02-01

WHEREAS, Buckeye Hills Regional Council is designated as the Area Agency on Aging for the eight counties making up the Buckeye Hills Region (Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, and Washington counties) by the Older Americans Act (OAA), and in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM); and

WHEREAS, ODM establishes objectives, methodologies and budget to implement the region's Home and Community-Based Service (HCBS), American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds for the enhancement, expansion, and strengthening of HCBS for Ohio Medicaid beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, Buckeye Hills has the responsibility for the implementation, coordination and administration of the proper expenditure of HCBS funds allocated under ARPA as appropriated by ODM in accordance with all state and federal laws; and

WHEREAS, Buckeye Hills has reviewed the ODM HCBS Subgrant Agreement objectives, requirements and budget to include approximate allocations of \$482,156 for Software Development, \$20,187 for a Learning Management System, \$60,500 for Project Consultant, and \$200,000 for Start-up Costs totaling \$762,843;

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Executive Committee of the Buckeye Hills Regional Council to hereby approve the acceptance of the ODM Home and Community-Based Services Subgrant Agreement in the amount of \$762,843, representing the time and activities for the performance period of January 1, 2025, through April 1, 2026; and further approve the Executive Director to expend the funds as outlined above.

Passed this seventh day of February 2025

Lenny Eliason, President

Ron Moore, Vice President

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Federal Funding Review | On January 29, the White House rescinded the Office of Management and Budget's January 27 memo on the "Temporary Pause of Federal Agency Grant, Loan, And Financial Assistance Programs." The memo had raised concerns about the availability of committed federal funds for programs serving our region.

The White House clarified that while the memo has been rescinded, the previous Executive Orders requiring a review of current federal program budgets are still in place, and agencies are conducting those reviews.

Based on our continued conversations with state and federal partners, it is our understanding that Buckeye Hills Regional Council's programs and services will be largely unaffected. At this time, we do not anticipate any service interruptions.

We appreciate your patience as we worked to clarify these developments. We understand the uncertainty these events caused for our partners and providers. If you still have specific questions about a particular program or service, please don't hesitate to reach out to our staff.

Washington and Monroe Counties Implement NG-911 | On January 22, Governor Mike DeWine announced that Washington and Monroe counties are the first in the state to fully implement Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1). Governor DeWine made the adoption of NG9-1-1 across Ohio a priority of his 2024-2025 Executive Budget to improve emergency response times and ultimately save lives. NG9-1-1 technology provides citizens with advanced communication capabilities when calling for emergency services, such as text messaging. NG9-1-1 technology also supports more efficient emergency management by reducing the number of call transfers between 9-1-1 call centers with more precise identification of the location of callers using cell phones. Washington and Monroe counties are among ten pilot counties joining the initial migration to NG9-1-1, a list that also includes Athens, Carroll, Champaign, Columbiana, Hardin, Harrison, Morgan, and Union counties.

Athens, Noble Counties Receive ODOD Housing Grants | On January 21, the Ohio Department of Development announced \$22.4 million in grants to 27 communities to improve access to housing and provide homeownership and rental assistance for low- and moderate-income families. The Community Housing Impact and Preservation (CHIP) program partners with communities to preserve and improve Ohio's housing stock through various housing-related initiatives such as home renovation and repair, rental assistance, and more. Awards in the Buckeye Hills region include:

- **Athens County:** \$1.05 million grant to rehabilitate seven owner-occupied homes, repair 15 owner-occupied homes, rehabilitate two renter-occupied homes, repair one renter-occupied home, and include a fair housing component. The county will partner with the cities of Athens and Nelsonville.
- **Noble County:** \$400,000 grant to rehabilitate four owner-occupied homes, repair six owner-occupied homes, and include a fair housing component.

Bricker Graydon Procurement Seminar for Public Entities on May 8 | Procurement was a topic of interest and conversation during BHRC's Community Development Summit in August. Bricker Graydon recently announced their 17th Annual Construction Procurement Seminar for Public Entities in Ohio on May 8. This full-day seminar,

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specifically designed for Ohio public entities, covers the project delivery methods available for public construction projects, as well as requirements and best practices for administering procurement processes, competitive bidding, and the design and construction phases. The seminar features presentations from the Bricker Graydon team, including attorneys whose practices focus on construction and bidding. The seminar concludes with a workshop, guided by the presenters, to explore alternative delivery methods and bidding issues. Registration details are available under the “Insights” tab at brickergraydon.com.

Call for Nominations: District 18 Ohio Public Works Commission Natural Resources Assistance Council | Buckeye Hills Regional Council is accepting nominations for individuals to serve on the District 18 Natural Resources Assistance Council for a three-year term. Nominations are due by 4:00 p.m. February 28. District 18 includes Athens, Belmont, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, and Washington Counties in Ohio. There is one vacant position to be filled on the NRAC committee. Please see the News section of buckeyehills.org for details or contact Development Specialist Kylee Nichols at knichols@buckeyehills.org or 740-376-1033

CURRENT INITIATIVES

BHRC Surface Transportation Block Grant Applications | Buckeye Hills Regional Council is accepting applications for Surface Transportation Block Grant funds through February 14. Eligible applicants must be a public agency within Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Morgan, Monroe, Noble, Perry, or portions of Washington County legally allowed to enter a contract with ODOT. Non-profit organizations, school districts, and non-public organizations are not eligible applicants but may coordinate/partner with an eligible applicant. The sponsoring agency must own, hold an easement, or acquire the land on which the project is located. The sponsoring agency must approve a resolution or other legislation committing the agency to the project. Eligible projects must:

- Be listed in the current or can be added to the BHRC Long-Range Transportation Plan or
- Be listed in the current BHRC Regional Transportation Improvement Plan or
- Be listed in a regionally developed plan, such as a Local Road Safety Plan or Active Transportation Plan.

The application is available online at buckeyehills.org/about/requests-for-proposals. For more information about the program, contact Eric Wade at ewade@buckeyehills.org.

Buckeye Hills Forward Open Houses Continue Through February 20 | Buckeye Hills Regional Council is continuing to host community open house sessions to provide the opportunity for individuals, local officials, private industry, and other stakeholders to review Buckeye Hills Forward, a set of economic development goals and objectives that will help shape Southeast Ohio over the next five years. Buckeye Hills Forward was drafted with the input gathered from residents in a series of Community Workshops that Buckeye Hills hosted in early 2024. Open Houses have taken place in Washington, Morgan, Athens, Noble, and Perry counties since late January, and attendance and participation has been strong. The remaining open house dates are below.

Local officials and the general public are invited to register at buckeyehills.org/forward to attend one of the open house sessions. Each open house will take place 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

- **February 11: Meigs County** - Meigs County Economic Development Office, Farmers Bank Conference Room, 238 West Main Street, Pomeroy, OH 45769
- **February 12: Hocking County** - Hocking County Public Library - Walnut Room, 230 East Main Street, Logan, OH 43138
- **February 20: Monroe County** - Generations Complex, 47115 Black Walnut Parkway, Woodsfield, OH 43793

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Questions regarding Buckeye Hills Forward should be directed to Jada Riley, Development Specialist, at jriley@buckeyeohio.org or 740-376-7636.

STATE UPDATES

March 15: ODNR Recreational Trails Program and Clean Ohio Trail Deadline | Applications are now being accepted for two recreational trail assistance programs designed to enhance the non-active transportation connections throughout Ohio. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) is offering funding through the Recreational Trails Program and the Clean Ohio Trail Fund Program. The Recreational Trails Program will fund up to \$150,000 with a 20% match required.

The Clean Ohio Trails Fund is a reimbursement program for a total funding amount of \$500,000 with 25% match required. The program is State funded and administered by the ODNR.

Cities, villages, counties, townships, special districts, state/federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations are eligible for both funding opportunities. The deadline to apply for both programs is March 15, 2025. Public participation is a key scoring criterion.

Second Round of Brownfield Remediation Program | The Ohio Department of Development released program guidelines for the second award period of the Brownfield Remediation Program. The department will host an informational webinar to cover updates, eligibility requirements, and the application process at 10:00 a.m. February 12. You can register for the webinar at development.ohio.gov/community/redevelopment/brownfield-remediation-program.

Governing Essentials for Local Elected Officials | Ohio University's Voinovich Academy is once again offering its "Governing Essentials for Local Elected Officials" program. The program begins February 28. More information is available at ohio.edu/voinovich-school/academy/training.

FEDERAL UPDATES

February 11: ARC READY Nonprofits Pre-Application Webinar | READY Nonprofits provides Appalachian nonprofits with seven weeks of no-cost, cohort-based virtual training in fundraising, programs, operations, and more. Join the Appalachian Regional Commission on February 11 for a pre-application webinar to learn more about READY Nonprofits and how to put together a successful application. Details are available at arc.gov/ready/nonprofits.

February 14: ARC INSPIRE Letters of Intent Due | New or existing projects that promote economic opportunities for Appalachians recovering from SUD are eligible to apply now for funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission's Investments Supporting Partnerships In Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative. Letters of intent to apply for INSPIRE funding are due February 14, and applications are due March 10. Details are available at arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities/sud.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES & EVENTS:

- **February 12, 9:00 a.m. – Monroe County Transportation Advisory Committee** | The Generations Complex, Woodsfield

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- **February 13, 10:00 a.m. – Noble County Transportation Advisory Committee** | Allwell Behavioral Health Services, Caldwell
- **February 18, 10:00 a.m. -Washington County Way2Go Transportation Advisory Committee** | Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Marietta

CONTACT INFO: Chasity Schmelzenbach, Executive Director
cschmelzenbach@buckeyehills.org | 740-376-1034

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