

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
DEAN FRANCHUK, Chairman  
NEAL MESSER, Vice-Chair  
BERNIE MARSH  
PAUL CLARYS  
CORY WHITE



**AUDITOR**  
KAREN RICHARD

**DEPUTY AUDITOR**  
Lana Jahner

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE STARK COUNTY COMMISSION**  
**July 8, 2024**

Chairman Franchuk called the special meeting of the Stark County Board of Commissioners to order at 8:00 a.m. Commissioners Present: Dean Franchuk, Paul Clarys, Bernie Marsh, Neal Messer, and Cory White. Department Heads Present: Auditor Karen Richard, Park Director Lisa Heiser, State's Attorney Amanda Engelstad, Veterans Service Officer Jessica McClellan, Road Superintendent Al Heiser, and Sheriff Corey Lee.

Franchuk calls for approval of the agenda.

**MOTION BY:** Messer **SECONDED BY:** White

To ratify the agenda as presented.

All voted aye, motion carried.

Richard presents to the commission the 1<sup>st</sup> 6 months of 2024 financial data, including revenue and expenses. Messer asks when they will start doing department head/portfolio budget meetings. Richard advises the end of July or early August. Discussion was held on the health insurance potential increase, victim witness grant, and whether departments are fully staffed.

Richard then asks the commission for direction in preparing the budget. Messer states under wages and compensation one of the options needs to be a zero increase as the property tax measure could change how we function. He would also like to discuss potentially treating employees differently than department heads, as we have some department heads who are capped out in compensation. Richard asks about performance-based raises or if we are going to continue with the same amount across the board. Franchuk feels this falls on the department head. Messer responds that with merit pay the negative part is that all employee personnel files are public information, and he understands the hesitancy with the evaluation, and he doesn't feel there are accurate evaluations because of that. Lee advises that last year the Sheriff Dept. started doing performance-based raises and they are continuing to build on that this year. Clarys states that it sounds like performance-based raises are not happening and there are reasons why, but shouldn't the department heads know who is and isn't performing in their department? Messer asks the 2 largest department heads – Lee and Heiser – if you offered full merit-based compensation, what challenges would you have and what kind of reaction would you get from your staff. Lee responds they are working on retention and one of the complaints is that the high performers are getting the same raise as everyone else, so that is why they are taking the steps they currently are to institute merit-based raises. Heiser says in his department he doesn't have anyone that lags and for him to say that one performs better than another, he can't do that in his department. He doesn't feel he would want to give one person more than the other. White states that it is a cola increase if it is across the board. Messer advises the last 12 months' inflation rate is 3.36% nationally. Richard asks for clarification on what percentages the commission would like to see in their columns. Messer would like 4 columns – a dollar amount, a percent amount, a zero budget, and then maybe some zero amount for department head and dollar or percent for employees.

**MOTION BY:** White **SECONDED BY:** Messer

To put columns 0%, 1.5%, and 3% on the budget.

Roll call, all vote aye, motion carried.

Commissioner Clarys made a **MOTION** to adjourn at 8:30 a.m., Commissioner White **SECONDED**, Adjourned.

  
Karen Richard, Auditor

  
Dean Franchuk, Chairman