



# City of Chardon

Chardon Municipal Center • 111 Water Street • Chardon, Ohio 44024-1201

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## CITY COUNCIL

### CITY MANAGER

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## FINANCE

440-286-2470

Fax: 440-286-2658

### Income Tax

440-286-2696

Fax: 440-279-0903

### Water & Sewer Billing

440-286-2949

Fax: 440-286-2658

## PARK & RECREATION

440-286-2630

Fax: 440-286-2658

## POLICE

440-286-6123

Fax: 440-286-2680

## PLANNING & ZONING

440-286-2654

Fax: 440-286-5541

## PUBLIC SERVICE

440-286-2655

Fax: 440-286-5541

### Division of Streets,

### Cemeteries & Parks

440-286-2656

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### Division of Water

### & Wastewater

440-286-2657

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14 October 2020

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **For more information contact:**

Randal B. Sharpe, City Manager, at 440.286.2600

### **Re: Proposed Relocation of Offices for Geauga County Board of Commissioners**

Chardon has served as the County Seat since the early 1800s. As the County Seat, there are specific requirements defined by the Ohio Revised Code for the County Government to have its office located in the County Seat. People expect their County Government to be located at and to operate at the County Seat. This is the usual and normal course of county government as is the case in Ohio's 88 counties. The County, however, is planning and bidding a \$30 million project in Claridon Township, which raised questions about the Commissioners' intent to keep their offices at the County Seat in accordance with the Revised Code and citizen expectations.

City Council has been seeking answers from the Commissioners since 12/10/19 when then Mayor Jeffrey Smock and City Manager Randal Sharpe requested to be heard at the Board of County Commissioners' meeting. On September 3, 2020, City Council requested that the Board of Commissioners commit, in writing, to: (1) maintain a fully staffed and operating office performing real governmental functions in Chardon and (2) specify what departments will be located there, or what functions will be performed by such office, after the occupancy of the new building being constructed by the County.

The Commissioners' answer, however, has been that they are apprised of the Revised Code's requirements; that they intend to keep "an office" at the County Seat; and that they owe the City no explanation as to what that means and what offices, operations, and employees the Commissioners intend to keep at the County Seat. While the Commissioners have refused to provide the City with any clarity, the City has discovered through public-records requests that plans for the new facility show the County Commissioners' offices in the drawing being located outside of the County Seat. This is contrary to previous statements made in press releases and communications to the City.

This has left the City with no option but to institute legal action and seek declaratory and injunctive relief to resolve this controversy and protect the interests of the citizens and taxpayers of Chardon, and indeed all of Geauga County, in having their County Government located and operate at the County Seat as is required by law and expected by citizens.

The City would have preferred to avoid a legal battle with the Commissioners. The City, however, must protect its citizens' rights. It cannot afford to wait until after the Commissioners have created facts on the ground and then try to undo the harm after it has taken place. The negative impact to the business community and the overall economic vitality of the City cannot be ignored.

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