



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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# Administration OVERVIEW



6

Full-Time  
Administrative  
Staff

Fairfield Township Administration includes the Township Administrator's Office, Human Resources, Finance, Special Projects and Events, Development Services, and Communications. The primary role of administration is to implement the policies of the Board of Trustees, lead the day-to-day operations of the Township's four major departments, provide oversight and support of the 135 full-time/part-time employees, and prepare the Township annual budget.

## Administration Department Highlights

- Renewed Humana health plan and wellness initiative resulting in net positive results for the Township in 2023 (this marks the 4th year in a row the Township renewal was net positive).
- Managed the Township's risk and liability insurance and workers compensation programs.
- Processed over 4,500 checks and purchase orders.
- Provided administrative support to the Community Improvement Corporation.
- Held many events alongside great community partners with the new Car Show and Concert in Heroes Park being a highlight.
- Increased cyber security training and evaluated insurance for appropriate coverage.
- Purchased scanners and a program to move paperless.
- Conducted annual training for all Township employees to ensure compliance with the Township's Personnel Policy and state and federal laws.
- Provided administrative support for the Township's Zoning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Joint Economic Development District Board.
- Completion and a "Pass the Torch & Grand Opening" for the Veterans Memorial.
- Maintained the Township's website and social media presence reaching over 100,000 social media views annually and an average of 5,000 website views per month.
- Prepared and implemented the Township's \$24 million Annual Budget consisting of 31 different funds.
- Continued the use of CARES, ARPA, and SLFRF funds with concentration on paving.
- Management of significant Township projects throughout the year.

## 2023 ELECTED OFFICIALS



**Michael Berding**  
Trustee Vice Chair



**Shannon Hartkemeyer**  
Trustee Chair



**Joseph McAbee**  
Trustee



**Shelly Schultz**  
Fiscal Officer

# A LETTER FROM JULIE VONDERHAAR

## Township Administrator



**"Great Past, Bright Future!"** This saying never gets old and continues to accurately represent the beautiful and vibrant community of Fairfield Township. It is hard to believe that we are headed into 2024! The past year has been full of success, growth, fun, and work. As we enter into and have already started flourishing in 2024, our motto has been *"We are just getting started as One Team."* The Township continues to increase in population, now at approximately 23,000 residents (and still growing). With this growth brings continual change and the need for increased services - something our staff and leadership have provided year after year. As we embark on our journey into 2024, the community can expect to see continued residential and business growth, new and exciting events, and the excellent Fire, Police, and Public Works services that have always been provided. As our 2024 motto says - *"We are Just Getting Started."* This means that no matter how much great work we have accomplished, there is more to come!

As you read through this annual report many amazing opportunities will be shared. Paving, curb and gutter repair, and catch basin replacement have stayed aggressive. The Public Works Department has doubled in size with 9 plow drivers now out during snow and weather events. Call volumes have increased in both Police and Fire for Fairfield Township and for Mutual Aid with our many surrounding jurisdictions. Like Public Works, Fire has increased in Full time staffing from 3 to 18 (for authorized Fire/EMT/Paramedic positions) with three shift captains, 1 administrative captain, 1 fire Chief for a total of 23 Full time positions and Police from 17 to 28. All of this without the need for a levy in Fire since 2008 and in Safety Services since 2015. Due to intelligent planning and the creation of new income streams, the increase in payroll has been absorbed with little to no impact on the budget. What an incredible story to share!

The additional staffing is significant in that it allows for services to match residential growth while increasing the employees' ability to offer additional services and events. The rapid response and safety of every community member, visitor, and business stays our TOP priority. But with additional staffing also comes the ability to offer amenities and events such as Treat Street, Holiday Lights, Movie Nights at the Park and Touch a Truck which have remained consistent and improved every year. Bridgewater Falls serves as an incredible meeting place for all to come together and enjoy Fairfield Township! The newest and most heavily attended event in 2023 was our First Annual Car Show and Concert in the Park! We look for 2024 to be even bigger and better with fun for all ages.

Other noteworthy accomplishments in 2023 include the building of several houses in the Five Points area by Habitat for Humanity, continued sewer projects throughout Five Points, a very successful Spring Clean Up Day, and the completion of an amazing and reverent Veterans Memorial. The Veteran's Committee has been instrumental in bringing this beautiful structure to fruition and participated in an official "passing of the torch" to the Township. Several beautiful services were held throughout the year to honor veterans and those who serve.

Please enjoy the information and images in this annual report and look forward to an equally exciting 2024! On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we thank everyone who has been a part of this journey and look forward to working with new residents, businesses, and community partners in the future.

Best Wishes for a safe and prosperous 2024!

Thank you,

*Julie Vonderhaar*  
Fairfield Township Administrator



Treat Street



Veterans Memorial

# Budget & FINANCE

## Township Appropriation Process

The Township's budgetary process begins in the fall by drafting temporary appropriations. This process involves the Township Administrator meeting with Department Heads and the Fiscal Officer to discuss available fund balances, expected revenue and the particular needs of each department. Proposed expenditures are reviewed to ensure alignment with the adopted goals and/or strategies of the Township. All debt will be retired by 2027, with two loans ending in 2024.

The Board of Trustees is presented a draft of the temporary appropriations at board meetings by the Township Administrator and Fiscal Officer. Once reviewed, the temporary appropriations may be modified based on feedback from the Board of Trustees. The temporary appropriations are adopted prior to the beginning of the year or at one of the first meetings of the year. The final appropriations are passed before March 31st after conducting a public hearing, enabling the public to review and provide comment.

## Financial Structure

Fairfield Township's appropriations are made up of 31 different funds. Each fund receives revenues from specific sources, such as property tax levies, and is restricted in terms of permissible expenditures. Each fund carries its own balance and carryovers. The general fund permits the greatest discretionary expenditures. All other funds are known as special purpose funds, which have greater restrictions by state law regarding what they can be used for. It is also important to note the addition of the One Ohio Opioid Fund which will bring money to the Township each year over the course of 18 years for the purpose of drug training and prevention.

The Township's financial structure is best understood as "a la carte" due to the ability of residents, through various dedicated tax levies, to determine the level of services desired. The Township's revenue is primarily received from property taxes with the majority dedicated to public safety (Police and Fire/EMS). ARPA, CARES, and SLFRF federal funding, along with Butler County Grants, allowed for aggressive paving and infrastructure repair in 2023. The Township remains in great financial shape with a continued Aa2 bond rating.

## EMPLOYMENT & Payroll

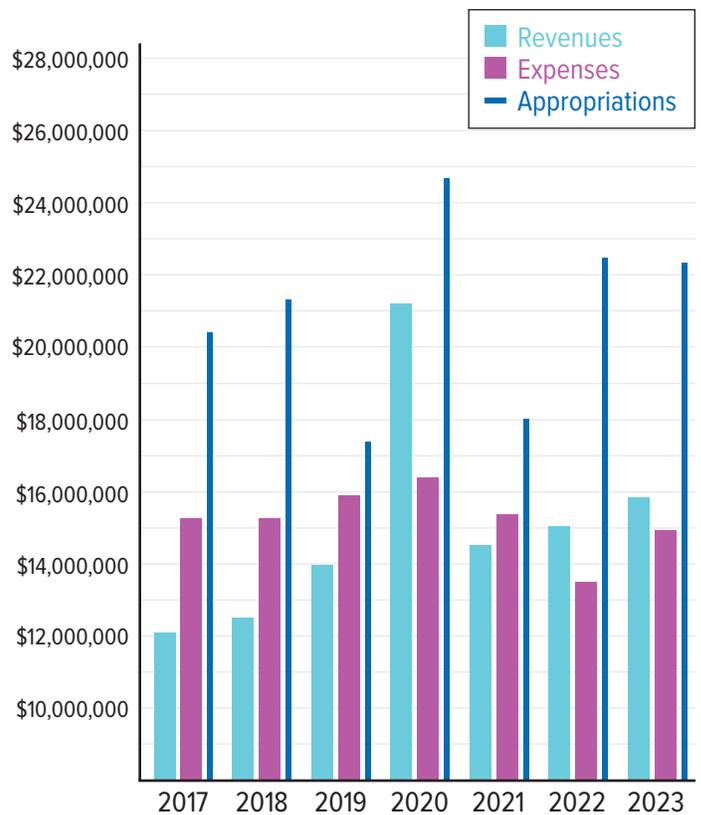


**\$5,785,944.92**  
2023 Wages



**135**  
2023 Employees

## FINANCIAL RECAP 2017-2023



**\$15,885,669.92**    **\$14,964,506.51**    **\$22,369,452.93**  
2023 Revenues    2023 Expenses    2023 Appropriations



# Economic DEVELOPMENT

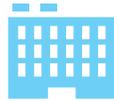
2023 was a very productive year for the Fairfield Township Zoning Department. The Zoning Department processed 459 Zoning Certificates, which is more than any year in the past 10 years. Significant residential and commercial improvements took place throughout the Township. New home construction is underway in several new residential subdivisions—the Zoning Department issued 167 zoning certificates for new residential units, including 104 for Single-Family Homes and 63 for Multi-Family Units. These numbers were considerably higher than zoning certificates issued in 2022 which consisted of 56 for single family homes and 34 for multi-family units. 58 Zoning Certificates were issued for commercial improvements, including new constructions, tenant finishes, remodels and new/updated signage.



459  
Zoning  
Certificates  
Issued



167  
New Residential  
Units



58  
Commercial  
Improvements

## Zoning and Property Maintenance

In 2023 the Fairfield Township Zoning Department received 282 complaints and by the end of 2023 resolved 294. Fairfield Township continues to stay active with property maintenance and zoning violations. If you see anything you would like us to look at feel free to report the issue on our website or contact the Administration Building at (513) 887-4400.

## School Travel Plan—Ohio Safe Routes to School

In 2022, Fairfield Township was awarded \$50,000 by the Ohio Department of Transportation for the development of a School Travel Plan as part of the Safe Routes to School Program. The Safe Routes to School Program provides funding for infrastructure improvement to create and promote safer pedestrian corridors for students to and from school. Partnering with Fairfield City Schools and Burgess & Niple and focusing on Fairfield North and East Elementaries, an official School Travel Plan was developed towards the end of 2023. Fairfield Township hopes to secure funding for the development on the planned pedestrian infrastructure.



## Residential Development Highlights

**Timberhill Subdivision** – Timberhill Drive, included in this section, has become the primary access road to Butler County MetroParks Timberhill Area of Rentschler Forest north of the development. Located off of Route 4 near Greenlawn Road and East of Rentschler Estates. Site development and infrastructure improvements for Section: One, Block A, of 17.348 acres have been completed by M/I Homes. Houses are continuing to be constructed in the development.

**Timber Trails** – Located north of Routh 4 on the west side of Liberty-Fairfield Road. New single family home construction began in 2022 and continued into 2023. Site development and infrastructure improvements for Section Two were finished in the development. When complete, the subdivision will include 137 single family residential lots on the 64.4 acres.

**Walden Springs** – Located between Bob Evans and Speedway on the north side of Route 4. Site Development of phase one was complete early in 2023 and the construction of 11 duplexes were completed in 2023 by Ryan Homes. When complete, the subdivision will include 62 duplexes comprised of 124 units on 37.665 acres.

**Windsor Pointe** – Located on the west end of Princeton Road. Comprised 4-unit and 5-unit residential buildings, the Windsor Pointe Development will be completely built out in the early part of 2024.

## Retail Projects

Development is moving along in the 13-acre Bridgewater Landing Commercial Development. **Casey's General Store**—opened in April of 2023 and is providing a convenient new location to fuel up. **Starbucks** opened in September of 2023. Construction is underway for Raising Canes Chicken Fingers and Tidal Wave Auto Spa. **Raising Canes Chicken Fingers** is scheduled to open by June 2024 and **Tidal Wave Auto Spa** is scheduled to open in the summer.

The newly constructed **Christian Brothers Automotive** located on Menards Boulevard opened in February of 2023. **Teriyaki Madness** and **Tropical Smoothie** are both located in a newly constructed multi-unit commercial building opened in November of 2023.

In 2024, several new businesses are scheduled to open in Bridgewater. Next to Carter's, **Crumbl Cookies** is scheduled to open early in 2024. Just down from the Crumbl Cookies, **Sharkey's Cuts for Kids** is scheduled to open by mid-2024.

**Burlington Coat Factory** is renovating the 26,500 square foot space that was used by Bed Bath & Beyond and will also open by mid-2024.



## Industrial Development continues on Seward Road

Construction on the 501,000 square foot building was complete in 2023. Maersk, Latitude 36 Foods have made building tenant improvements to buildings in the development.

# Public Works DEPARTMENT

The year 2023 has been another eventful year with settling into the new facility. We have come up with a tentative cleaning regiment to keep everything in working order. Along with the building the addition of new employees has been beneficial to the workload provided by the residents of the township. We continue to make the Public Works building a prize for the residents, along with the work needed at Heroes Park, Shafor Run Park, and the pocket park at corner of Lennox and Fairfax. There will be construction of a new pocket park on Milton near intersection of Lennox.

The department has also acquired new tools in which to provide a more efficient means to provide necessary requests from the township. The Public Works department has acquired a new hot box to heat material and keep it at an optimum temperature. Making more permanent repairs possible. The department also received a new pickup to add to the fleet, used for everyday operations.

This year the township spent \$813,168.84 on material and labor for blacktop within the township. Along with that the township also spent an additional \$128,088.50 on concrete curbs and gutters on the roads that were to be repaved. This infrastructure work is vital to the township's ability to serve its residents.

Along with these infrastructure projects the department has also completed forty-four catch basin repairs, that has doubled from last year. The department has recently started an inspection process to catch problems before they go beyond our expertise. The catch basin repairs will continue to grow as the years progress due to the age. The department was also able to make repairs to seven different storm pipes with two of them being new installations. In the future the department hopes to have more equipment to aid in the inspection process.

The winter of 2021-2022 was what I would say a mid-winter. We had a few heavy snows but all in all not as bad as it could have been. The department used approximately 671.09 tons of salt and approximately 2325 gallons of brine mix. For the winter of 2022-2023, the department has requested another 1300 tons at the cost of \$90.31 a ton. The department uses approximately 56 tons per round of salt.

The township hosted many events that the department was involved in, by setting up, tearing down, or even manning. Each of which presented their own challenges that the department was able to overcome. Public Works looks forward to assisting in any future events.



## REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

*by the Numbers*

**\$813,168.84**  
Spent on Paving

**\$128,088.50**  
Spent on Curbs & Gutters

**44**

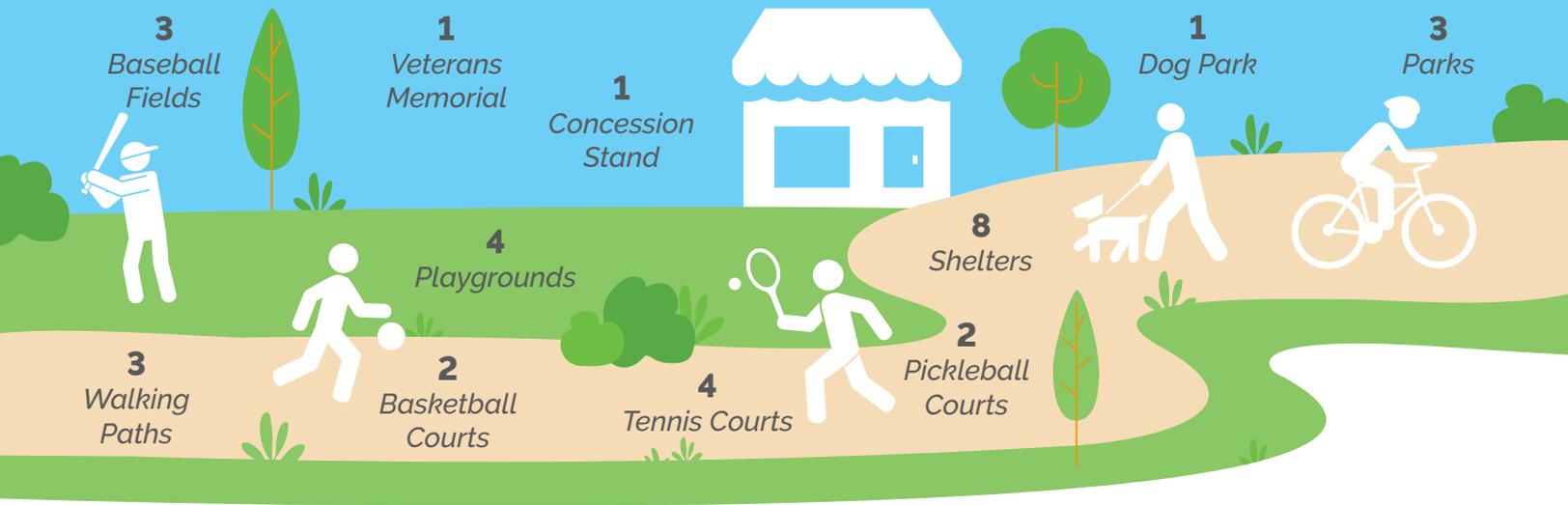
Catch Basin Repairs

**671.09 tons**  
Salt Used

**2325 gal.**  
Salt Brine Used

**\$90.31/ton**  
Salt Price





# PARKS & Recreation

Park maintenance is a year round job and one that involves many different tasks. The restrooms have remained in working order and cleaned daily. Garbage pick-up and additional receptacles serve to keep litter to a minimum. The baseball fields are heavily used by local teams who work on a schedule to assist all. Annually, the playgrounds are checked for safety while new opportunities such as shading, benches and flooring are considered and/or added. Landscaping was a focus in 2023 and has made a significant difference in the beauty of the parks. The Public Works Department continues to take great pride in our parks and works continually to keep them in great condition. The Township also built a pocket park in Five Points and added new landscaping and amenities to Shafers Run and Heroes Park.



## Veterans MEMORIAL

The completion of construction on the Veterans Memorial at Heroes Park wrapped up over 7 years of effort, passion, and work. Several beautiful events and parades were held in 2023 to honor veterans. A dedication was held in 2023, along with a thank you to the Veterans Memorial Committee and “passing of the torch” to the Township.



# Police DEPARTMENT



**Robert Chabali**  
Police Chief

The Fairfield Township Police Department is a full-service Police Department that provides patrol, investigations, and problem oriented policing services. In addition, our personnel participate in the Butler County Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT), the Serious Traffic Accident Reconstruction Team (START), and the Butler County Operating a Vehicle Under the Influence of Alcohol and/or Drugs (OVI) Task Force. We also have one School Resource Officer (SRO) assigned to, and funded by, Butler Tech.

In 2022, we obtained approval to increase our fulltime sworn staffing level from twenty-three (23) to twenty-eight (28) to meet the increased call-load. We continue to hire new personnel to meet our new authorized strength. All of our new officers are vetted through a stringent hiring process and are required to be certified through the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission (OPOTC). Both new officers and lateral entry personnel are required to complete a challenging Field Training Program and a one-year probationary period.

Our community engagement continues to expand to make our personnel more accountable to the community they serve. The Fairfield Township Police Department is gradually shifting to the Stratified Model of Problem Solving, Analysis, and Accountability as an approach to crime reduction. Our Officers are routinely interacting with our community members by attending neighborhood meetings, identifying their concerns, and working as a team with other personnel and community resources to address those concerns. This is a worthwhile and significant commitment to our community which results in excellent information sharing.



**691**  
Arrests



**839**  
Charges



**958**  
Traffic Citations



**1,477**  
Incident Reports



**509**  
Crash Reports



**14,219**  
Calls for Service

## Additional Successes

- Captain Doug Lanier, Assistant Chief of Police, continues to update our documentation in maintaining Full Compliance Law Enforcement Certification status on (1) Use of Force; (2) Recruiting and Hiring; (3) Community Engagement; (4) Bias Free Policing; (5) Investigation of Employee Misconduct, and (6) Vehicular Pursuit. Additional certification will be sought as needed. This certification was originally obtained in 2020 and requires constant update. We were able to obtain recertification in 2023.
- Training time increased in the department to address risk management and contemporary concerns. Additionally, the state of Ohio continued to mandate 24 hours of mandated training for all personnel in 2023.
- In November, officers held the annual Fill-A-Cruiser event at Walmart, which yielded a significant amount of donated goods for families in our community.



## Equipment Use & Upgrades

- On October 2023, we began migrating to the new Sundance reporting software, which is significantly more robust than our older RMS system. Reports can now be authored on their in-car computers in the marked units in addition to being able to search the computer aided dispatch (CAD) system which we could not do before. This ability allows us to obtain dispatch call data.
- In 2023, our Department continued to use the in-car cameras acquired in 2018 and in 2021 we were approved to purchase body worn cameras for all sworn personnel. These technologies provide accurate documentation of events, actions, conditions, and statements made during law enforcement activities.

# Fire DEPARTMENT



**Timothy J. Thomas, Sr.**  
Fire Chief

## A message from Fire Chief Timothy J. Thomas Sr., OFE OFC:

This will be my final annual report on the activities of the Fairfield Township Fire Department. It has truly been a pleasure to serve as the Fire Chief. When I began serving on November 26, 2012, the Department was desperately seeking to recover from a lot of unpleasant events. I was tasked by the Board of Trustees to bring the Department back on track. As many of the long term members know, that would prove to be a major task.

I am happy to say that thanks to the support of the members of the Department over the last 11+ years, we have certainly changed directions. With the support of the Board of Trustees, we were able to go from 3 full-time members to an authorized 22 potential full-time positions. We have been able to update most of our equipment during my tenure. Only a few pieces of apparatus are older than 2011 and we continue efforts to move forward with the capitol equipment plan. The opening of the new Station 212 on Gilmore was certainly a long time coming, as well.

I will remember the time I have spent here fondly and will certainly miss the people who have made it such a terrific place to finish my career. To the new Fire Chief, Chief Berter, you have a great bunch of people to help you succeed as you take the reins of his wonderful organization. Best of luck and continued success.

## Equipment Use & Upgrades

- In 2023, all vehicles were in service with the exception of Engine 212, which has been out of service for approximately 6 months due to a catastrophic Turbo issue.
- We implemented new iPads and switched from Verizon to T-Mobile, resulting in a significant cost savings.
- New cell phones were placed on the medic units for improved communication with hospitals.
- Fire Manager was updated to streamline tracking vehicle and station repairs.
- New Phillips AEDs were put into service across all Township Departments.
- For our 2023 Fiscal Year, the Department appropriated \$35,659.82 to purchase non-capital EMS supplies. Total EMS supply expenditure was \$27,659.04.

In 2023, Fairfield Township Fire Department continued our commitment to public safety, professional development, and community engagement. Training was at the top of the list for the Department and we would like to extend a huge thanks to the Township Administration for allowing us to utilize the "Train Station" (formerly Station 212) to conduct trainings in a more realistic setting. This asset is so valuable that other Departments such as Liberty Township, Hamilton, and Butler Tech, have utilized it for training their members.

EMS also participated in 12 hours of direct medical director-led continuing education with topics including pharmacology, cardiac arrest management, trauma resuscitation, respiratory distress, and pediatrics. The Department currently has several members in different stages of Paramedic training who will graduate and become state certified Paramedics in 2024.

In late December 2023, Captain Ryan Berter was selected to replace Chief Thomas upon his retirement in April 2024. Chief Berter's focus will be on several key areas, ensuring that the Department stays financially sound, building our relationship with the community, and focusing on professional development for our members.



**116**  
Fire  
**72**  
Haz Con



**2,859**  
EMS  
**164**  
Assist Invalid



**139**  
Vehicle Crashes  
**5**  
Entrapments



**268**  
Service Calls



**352**  
Good Intent



**195**  
False Alarm



**4**  
Weather

# Our COMMUNITY

Fairfield Township prides itself on the invaluable partnerships formed with our many community members. We've worked with Fairfield City Schools, Butler County, and the Cities of Fairfield and Hamilton on economic deals. We've also formed partnerships with Butler Tech, the Fairfield and Hamilton Chambers, the Fairfield Community Foundation, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Butler County, the EMA, Energy Alliance, Butler County Sheriff's Office, the County Commissioners, One Way Farm, Fairfield Rotary Club, Bridgewater Falls, Walmart, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Cincinnati, Matthew Twenty Five Ministries, Ohio EPA, local churches, the Butler County Land Bank, the Butler County Port Authority, the many Butler County Departments and the Butler County Engineer, Fire Corp, CPAA, Parks Committee, Veterans Memorial Committee, scout troops, elected officials and many local restaurants who have donated food and time to Township events. And so many more. Our success is directly related to the incredible partnerships and help received along the way!

## Community Improvement Corporation (CIC)

The Fairfield Township Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) acts as an economic development agent for the Township, promoting, advancing, and encouraging economic growth in the area.

## Aggregation & Safety

It's all about savings to residents and businesses. In November 2015, the community voted to add an aggregation program through Energy Alliances, Inc. That same month, a \$2.9 million safety levy was approved, affording \$1.6 million to improve Fairfield Township.

The aggregation program was renegotiated in 2022 when the best prices could be locked in. Customers will continue to see savings on their monthly bill, in spite of rising prices for gas and electric.



## Aggregation Comparisons to Consider

It is true that electric utility rates during the winter months are lower for those that cross a usage threshold. In Duke, the threshold is 1000 kWh. If you are on Duke's Standard Service Offer (SSO), the rate you pay for the first 1000 kWh used is higher than for the kWh used above 1000 kWh. On a per rate basis (\$/kWh), someone that uses 2000 kWh on Duke's SSO will have a "lower" price to compare (PTC) in the winter than someone that uses 1000 kWh on Duke's SSO in the same month. When you have extreme weather in the winter we could temporarily see low PTC's on the bills.

However, aggregation performance is a marathon and not a sprint. In the summer, there is no "discount" for using more than 1000 kWh. Residents pay the same amount for EVERY kWh they use. That same customer that used 2000 kWh in January would see a higher per rate bill in July if they used 2000 kWh even though they used the same amount of energy.

This situation shows the need for evaluating the performance of the aggregation across all months with Energy Alliances preferring to use a rolling 12-month average to assess the strength of a program.

# Community Events AROUND THE TOWNSHIP



Butler County Fair



Career Fest



Touch a Truck



Spring Clean Up



6032 Morris Road  
Fairfield Township, OH 45011

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

*Around the Township*



*Treat Street*



*Letters to Santa*



*Car Show*

