

# **The Construction Conversation**

## **Ohio's Legislative, Administrative, and Judicial Two-Way Newsletter**

January 2025

A Service of Luther L. Liggett, Attorney at Law  
LLiggett@columbus.rr.com

### **Legislative: New Leadership**

Both the Ohio House and Senate have chosen their leadership for the two-year session beginning January, 2025 and ending December 2026 after statewide elections. (Cont'd p. 2.)

### **Legislative: Expedited Building Appeal Bill Stalls**

On December 12, 2024, with only a few legislative sessions remaining, Senate Bill 41 passed the House on a unanimous vote, to create expedited appeals to the Board of Building Appeals. (Cont'd p. 2).

### **Administrative: Governor's Election**

Current incumbents are term-limited for Governor, Attorney General, Auditor, Treasurer, and Secretary of State. The race has begun for a new officeholder in each office, to be voted on Tuesday, November 3, 2026. (Cont'd p. 2).

### **Legislative: Public Works Commission Ballot Initiative**

The Ohio General Assembly passed House Joint Resolution 8 by wide margins, to request voters to renew Ohio Public Works Commission's funding with issuance of \$2.5 billion in bonds over ten years. (Cont'd p. 3).

### **Administrative: OFCC Collaboration**

In partnering with various construction industry interests, the Ohio Facility Construction Commission's Mission stresses collaboration. (Cont'd p. 3).

### **Administrative: Franklin County Engineer**

Adam W. Fowler is the new Franklin County Engineer, a Democrat who won a contested race. He is a licensed professional engineer and surveyor. (Cont'd p. 4).

### **Administrative: Auditor to Run for Attorney General**

Former Senate President Keith Faber (R, Celina) and current State Auditor who is term limited, announced his candidacy for Ohio Attorney General, being vacated by the incumbent who is running for Governor. (Cont'd p. 4).

### **Administrative: Building Code Leadership**

Ohio's Building Code is administered by the Ohio Board of Building Standards, the Ohio Board of Building Appeals, and by local building department heads represented by the Ohio Building Officials Association. (Cont'd p. 4).

# The Construction Conversation

January 2025

Page 2

## **Legislative: New Leadership (Cont'd)**

The House majority Republicans chose Matt Huffman (R, Lima) as Speaker. Being newly-elected after retiring as Senate President, Huffman could serve 8 years, or 4 General Assemblies through 2032.

The House minority Democrats returned Representative Allison Russo (D, Upper Arlington) as Minority Leader, who is term limited after this biennial session.

Senate Republicans elected Senator Robert McColley (R, Napoleon) as Senate President, while Democrats returned Senator Nicki Antonio (D, Lakewood) as Minority Leader.

Legislators are paid a base salary of \$72,000.00, while the Speaker and Senate President are paid \$112,766.00 annually.

While the House will hold its first session on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Senate will not meet until February 12<sup>th</sup>.

Legislators have been assigned to committees in both chambers, with Republicans appointed as chairs of all. Uniquely, Senator Kristine Roegner (R, Hudson) was appointed Chair of both the General Government Committee and Higher Education Committee, and also will serve as Vice Chair of Senate Ways and Means (taxation).

## **Legislative: Expedited Building Appeal Bill Stalls (Cont'd)**

Introduced in January, 2023, the legislation originally proposed expedited appeals of building code department decisions, with a hearing in five days. The bill passed the Ohio Senate with a unanimous vote on March 29, 2023.

With unanimous passage in both chambers, the House created a “Christmas tree” by adding the language of four bills not seen as moving, covering changes to the law relating to real property, securities, public utilities, employment, energy efficiency, broadband, and taxation, and to name a portion of the act the Pay Stub Protection Act.

With House amendments, the bill required Senate consent to the amendments. But the Senate adjourned before taking such action. Accordingly, after two years and unanimous approval, the legislation expired.

With Senator Roegner returning to the Senate, she re-introduced the legislation as Senate Bill 6.

## **Administrative: Governor’s Election (Cont’d)**

Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted was expected to lead the Republican candidates for Governor. However, with a crowded field, Husted accepted Governor DeWine’s appointment to the U.S. Senate seat vacated by J.D. Vance, now Vice President.

Current Attorney General Dave Yost (R, Delaware) announced his candidacy for Governor on January 23, 2025. Previously elected Delaware County Auditor and Prosecutor, State Auditor in 2010, and Attorney General in 2018, the 68-year-old last reported campaign funds of \$1.5 million.

Current Treasurer Robert Sprague (R, Findlay) served as City Auditor and Treasurer, State Representative, and elected in 2018 to statewide office. A graduate of Duke University, the 52-year-old last reported campaign funds of \$2.2 million.

# The Construction Conversation

January 2025

Page 3

Vivek Ramaswamy left the White House-appointed role in the “Department of Government Efficiency” to run for Ohio Governor, expecting the support of the new President. The 40-year-old biotech entrepreneur was born in Cincinnati, and lives in Upper Arlington.

Heather Brazell-Hill graduated Ohio University and in 2004 was elected to the Morgan Local School Board. She announced her bid for Governor as a Republican.

Mainline Democrat candidates have yet to announce. Dr. Amy Acton, 58-year-old former Health Department Director during COVID, filed to run, but with no statewide elective office campaign experience.

## **Legislative: Public Works Commission Ballot Initiative (Cont’d)**

Voters will decide to renew the funding at a Special Election to be held May 6, 2025.

Sponsored by Representatives Scott Oelslager (R, N. Canton) and Dan Troy (D, Willowick), only Senator Niraj Antani (R, Miamisburg) voting against it in the Senate. Antani announced a run as Republican candidate for Secretary of State.

A companion bill in the Senate similarly passed earlier, Senate Joint Resolution 4, paving the way.

Funding will be used for the State Capital Improvement Program, for roads, bridges, wastewater treatment systems, water supply systems, solid waste disposal facilities, storm water and sanitary collection and treatment facilities.

Local projects are selected by the

bipartisan district public works integrating committees, from applications by local governments.

The ballot language will read, “to enact Section 2t of Article VIII of the Constitution of the State of Ohio to permit the issuance of additional general obligation bonds to fund public infrastructure capital improvements.”

## **Administrative: OFCC Collaboration**

Its Mission Statement reads, “To lead collaboration with our partners in the planning, design, and construction of public facilities through quality service, expertise and knowledge sharing.”

On Thursday, January 23, 2025, the OFCC Chief of Projects addressed the Ohio Chapter, American Society of Landscape Architects at their annual Statehouse Day. Craig A. Weise emphasized OFCC’s commitment to collaboration with industry representatives.

Landscape Architects are one of three licensed professionals authorized by R.C. 3791.04 to seal blueprints to obtain plan review and a building permit. Architects and Professional Engineers also are included in this authority.

Mr. Weise began his State service in 2007 in what used to be the State Architect’s Office. Licensed in 2000 as an Ohio architect, Craig spearheaded the consolidation efforts to merge the State Architect’s Office and the Ohio School Facilities Commission to form what is now the OFCC.

Today, Craig is responsible for leading the design and construction of \$3 billion in active K-12 schools, higher

# **The Construction Conversation**

January 2025

Page 4

education, and state agency capital projects annually for OFCC.

He graduated top of his class from Lawrence Technological University in Southfield Michigan, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture. He received his Master's Degree in Architecture from the University of Michigan, and his MBA from the Wisconsin School of Business.

## **Administrative: Franklin County Engineer (Cont'd)**

Engineer Fowler graduated from The Ohio State University with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. He began public service with ODOT's Material Management and Roadway Design sections. He then worked for the City of Columbus as Area Engineer and Surveying Manager.

Adam grew up in Westerville, and resides in Worthington with his wife and two sons.

## **Administrative: Auditor to Run for Attorney General (Cont'd)**

In his 18 years in the General Assembly, Faber sponsored the Public Records legislation that expedites dispute resolution in the Ohio Court of Claims for a \$25.00 filing fee. The process includes Court decisions giving precedent and guidance to others who have to fight public agencies for records.

In his 8 years as Auditor, Faber participated in the convictions of more than 100 public officials, and spearheaded audits that identified billions in unemployment fraud and abuse.

Faber earned his undergraduate degree from Oakland University and his

Juris Doctorate from the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law.

## **Administrative: Building Code Leadership (Cont'd)**

Attorney Regina S. Hanshaw serves as Executive Secretary of OBBS, where the Building Codes are drafted and enacted. OBBS also certifies local offices and personnel to serve as building departments and inspectors. The Board's 15 members represent all sectors of the construction industry, appointed by the Governor.

Susan R. Steer serves as Executive Secretary of OBBA, taking appeals from across the state for variances and resolution of local differences over enforcement. Of the 5-member Board, Karl H. Schneider serves as Chair, an attorney who previously served with the Ohio Attorney General. Board member Steven P. Regoli is a licensed architect who spent his career with the Board of Building Standards. OBBA meets three times a month, typically with 4 or 5 matters at each meeting to consider.

The Ohio Building Officials Association coordinates with ten component chapters covering the full scope of subject interests in building code enforcement. Association David Molnar serves as OBOA President, and as Chief Building Official for the City of Canton, Ohio. Charles Huber of Lakewood coordinates OBOA's legislative information.

- 30 -

# **The Construction Conversation**

January 2025

Page 5

Join us in

## **The Construction Conversation Call-In**

on

**Thursday, February 13, 2025**

**3:30 pm**

Luther L Liggett is inviting you to a  
scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

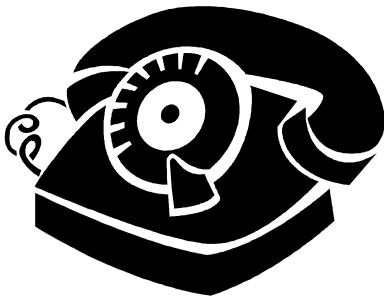
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83515477529?pwd=JBYkqayQO7ZO3w35XLkZ9xu54s898s.>

1

Meeting ID: 835 1547 7529

Passcode: 416455

1 305 224 1968 US



# **The Construction Conversation**

January 2025  
Page 6