

NEWS RELEASE

Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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County Executive and Council pass critical legislation before summer recess

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO—On Monday, June 27, County Executive Ilene Shapiro and County Council took legislative action on several important issues before heading into the body’s July summer recess, with programs and funding targeting rental assistance and essential infrastructure initiatives including stormwater and broadband.

To continue to support residents in need of rental and utility assistance, County Executive Shapiro received Council’s approval to accept an additional \$15 million in Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funds from the federal government. Summit County was awarded additional funds due in large part to its successful distribution of aid since 2020. Most of the funds, \$13.5 million, will go directly to the Summit County Cares program, a partnership between County Executive Shapiro, United Way of Summit County and several other community partners. The remaining amount will fund the administrative cost to operate the program. The new funding must be spent by December 2022. The County previously received and spent over \$16 million in ERA funds for more than 4,000 unique households. Residents in need of rental and utility assistance can apply for aid at <http://www.summitcountycares.org/> or call 2-1-1.

Council also approved legislation for critical infrastructure projects funded with once-in-a-lifetime federal dollars offering through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The County will address stormwater and water quality issues with the creation of Surface Water Management District and take steps to close the digital divide with the construction of a broadband fiber ring and data center.

The Surface Water Management District will help mitigate issues related to stormwater runoff as well as the related water quality impact. The district will initially include the County’s nine townships and the villages of Reminderville, Lakemore, Clinton and Boston Heights. Any local government wishing to join the district will have the ability to do so in the future. County Engineer Alan Brubaker will be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the district and will now begin to assess potential stormwater related infrastructure projects and establish a prioritized list that can be funded with ARPA funds. The ordinance does not yet address fees or create a fee structure. These will be developed through a collaborative process with the local communities. Additionally, an advisory council consisting of the County Executive, President of County Council and one representative of each of the member townships and municipalities. This committee will meet at least semi-annually to review projects and plans of the district, and to make recommendations about future projects to meet the district’s objectives in each community.

Examples of projects the district will consider include a regional stormwater study and mapping to assess current conditions as well as community specific projects like the construction of wetland, stream bank restoration and other improvements in the Copley Meadows Area.

With Council's approval, the Executive's Office can officially begin design of Summit Connects, a highspeed and secure broadband public safety network. The network will initially consist of a 125-mile fiber optic cable ring connecting Summit County and all its 31 city, village and township governments to gigabit speed internet service, and a data center. Included in the approved legislation is a cooperative agreement between Summit County and the City of Fairlawn, formalizing the partnership and entity that will eventually own and operate the data center and fiber ring. The development of Summit Connects is largely funded through the County's allocation of federal APRA monies.

"We are as busy as ever as we seek to improve the lives of Summit County residents. The legislation we passed this week positions us for a better, brighter future," said County Executive Shapiro. "I appreciate the support and collaboration my office receives from our Council members and other office holders. Together, we are making Summit County the best place to live, work and play."

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