

Election 2023: Cuyahoga County candidates, issues

Editorial Staff

The following is a list of candidates and issues appearing on the Nov. 7 General Election ballot in Cuyahoga County.

This list only includes those candidates and issues in The News-Herald's coverage area.

Candidates

Euclid

Mayor: Daniel J. Burns, Marcus Epps, Taneika L. Hill, Kirsten Holzheimer Gail, Christopher Michael Litwinowicz

Council

Ward 1: Wallace Tanner

Ward 3: Amelia R. Augustine, Don-
tea T. Gresham

Ward 5: Tara Hannum

Ward 7: Maryann Dybiec

Highland Heights

Mayor

Chuck Brunello Jr.

Council

Ward 1: Carol A. Ganser

Ward 2: Frank DiLalla, Shekhar Ganore

Ward 3: Anthony J. DeLisio

Ward 4: Robert E. Goff

Lyndhurst

Mayor: Patrick A. Ward

Council-At-Large: Charles A. LoPresti, Joseph A. Marko, Jeff Price

Mayfield Heights

Council-At-Large: Chad Lichten, King S. Miner, Diane Marzano Snider, Kathy Telban

Mayfield Village

Mayor: Brenda Tedeschi Bodnar, Denise D. Calabrese

Ward 1: Bill Marquardt

Ward 3: Dennis C. Murphy Jr.

Council-At-Large: Jennifer M. Jurcisek

Richmond Heights

Council

Ward 1: Tracy Justice, Tony L. Walker

Ward 2: Frank L. Lentine; Asu Mook Robinson

Ward 3: Cassandra A. Nelson, Cherita Shaw

Ward 4: Shirley McMillan, Brian Silver

School districts

Euclid: Yvette Andre, Steve Johnson Jr., Dolores Trevino Moldenhauer, Tia M. Otoo, Dwayne H. Pringle, Nerissa Scott

Mayfield: Sue Groszek, Al Hess

Richmond Heights: Frank Barber, Linda M. Pliodzinkas

Issues

Cuyahoga County College District: 10-year, 2.1-mill renewal levy and 0.4-mill increase for operating educational services expenses

Euclid Library District: 30-year, 1.5-mill additional levy for the purpose of renovating, remodeling, furnishing, equipping and otherwise improving the site

Euclid Library District: 5-year, 5.6-mill renewal levy for current operating expenses

8/16/23

NH

MAYFIELD

SUN 8-24-23

Theft Beta Drive

A woman exited Health 360 Aug. 12 and found that the passenger window on her vehicle had been smashed and a tote bag was missing from the vehicle.

She said the only thing of value in the bag was a pair of wireless earbuds.

Later that day, two smash-and-grab incidents were reported at Parkview Pool.

One victim said a diaper bag had been gone through, but nothing of value was taken. The second victim reported her purse stolen and said it included credit cards and her driver's license.

All incidents are under investigation and believed to be related to similar recent incidents in the village.

General assistance SOM Center Road

A woman reported at 6:04 p.m. Aug. 12 that she was locked inside of CVS with no employees and an alarm was sounding in the background.

She was able to get out of the store, but the doors were left unsecured until officers could make contact with a key holder for the business.

Police blotter

Fraud Wilson Mills Road

A resident reported Aug. 9 that she was the victim of unemployment fraud. There was no monetary loss attributed with the incident.

Impaired driving SOM Center Road

Officers observed a vehicle run a red light at Glenview Drive around 2 a.m. Aug. 11. The vehicle was stopped, and an immediate odor of alcohol was detected on the driver.

The Shaker Heights man, 34, was subsequently arrested for OVI and cited for having expired plates and running the red light.

Suspicious activity Wilson Mills Road

A caller reported the morning of Aug. 11 that two people were sleeping in tents in the village gazebo.

Officers located the suspects, who were packing up and leaving as they arrived. They were offered advice on how to find places to camp.

Troy NH 8-21-23 announces \$200K for recycling

By Chad Felton
cfelton@news-herald.com

State Rep. Daniel Troy, D-Willowick, recently announced that Mayfield Village has received a \$200,000 Recycle Ohio Grant from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

The grant will fund a curbside recycling program that collects leaves and yard debris.

As a result of the process, yard waste stays out of landfills and local waterways, Troy noted.

"I am pleased to announce this funding," he said. "Using an innovative recycling concept, yard waste will be collected and repurposed as mulch."

The funds come from \$2 million.
RECYCLING » PAGE 4



SUBMITTED

State Rep. Daniel Troy,
D-Willowick

Recycling

FROM PAGE 1

lion authorized by the Ohio General Assembly for recycling

and litter prevention in Northeast Ohio.

Local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations will use the money to implement recycling, litter prevention, market develop-

ment, and scrap tire recycling programs, Troy confirmed.

Mayfield Village Mayor Brenda Bodnar expressed gratitude to Troy for the grant.

"The (curbing leaf) equip-

ment is very expensive and this (grant) will allow us to continue our popular leaf collection program each fall, which keeps an estimated 600 tons of yard waste from ending up in a landfill or lo-

cal waterway each year," she said.

Troy serves as the ranking member of the Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development, and Natural Resources, which over-

sees the EPA.

"I encourage all residents of Mayfield Village to be environmentally conscious, participate in this program and help keep Northeast Ohio beautiful," he said.

MAYFIELD

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Village gets grant for yard waste recycling program

Jeff Piotrkowski Special to Sun News

State Rep. Dan Troy, D-Willowick, announced that Mayfield will receive a \$200,000 Recycle Grant from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, which Mayor Brenda Bodnar said will be used to purchase two new curbside leaf collection machines.

The funds come from \$2 million allocated by the Ohio EPA and authorized by the Ohio General Assembly for recycling and litter prevention in Northeast Ohio.

The grant is intended to fund a curbside recycling program to collect leaves and yard debris that is later returned to residents as mulch. This process helps keep yard waste out of landfills and local waterways.

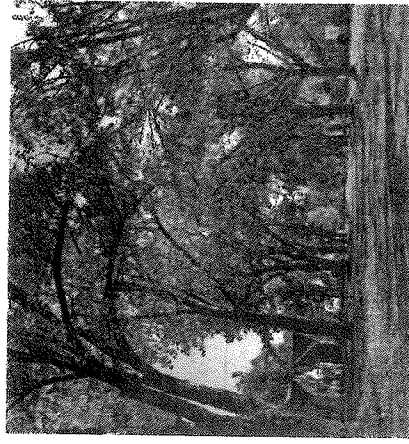
"I am pleased to announce this funding going to the Village of Mayfield," Troy said in a press release. "Using an innovative

recycling concept, yard waste will be collected and repurposed as mulch. I encourage all residents of Mayfield Village to participate in this program."

Also in the release, Bodnar said: "We are so pleased to be receiving a \$200,000 recycling grant from the Ohio EPA that will be used to purchase two new curbside leaf machines. The equipment is very expensive, and this grant will allow us to continue our popular program of collecting leaves and yard debris from residents each fall and returning it to them in the form of mulch in the spring."

"Our leaf collection program keeps an estimated 600 tons of yard waste from ending up in a landfill or local waterway each year," she said.

Troy is the ranking member of the Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development and Natural Resources, which oversees the Ohio EPA.



Too soon? The leaves are going to fall and Mayfield will have two new curbside leaf collection machines to take 'em away thanks to a \$200,000 Recycle Grant from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. Advance Local

MAYFIELD SCHOOLS

\$20M capital improvement plan in motion

Money to pay for projects coming from cash reserves

Jeff Piorkowski *Special to Sun News*

As summer comes to a close and the new school year nears its start Aug. 24, Mayfield Schools administrators continue to be busy planning several improvements to school buildings and grounds.

Five major improvement projects have taken place, are taking place, or will soon get underway. The capital improvement plan totals \$20 million and, according to Schools Treasurer Scott Snyder, the good news for taxpayers is that the improvements will be paid from Mayfield City Schools' carryover cash reserves, meaning there will be no increase to taxpayers to pay for these improvements.

The five major projects are:

- › The realignment with Miner Road of the driveway leading onto Mayfield High School grounds is scheduled for completion in December or January. The origin of this project dates back to August, 2019, when Mayfield Schools traded the Olde School House, 784 S.O.M. Center Road, to Skoda Construction for Skoda-owned property east of the high school, 6116 Wilson Mills Road, so that the school's driveway could align with Miner Road. The change is expected to help smooth traffic flow on Wilson Mills.
- › Construction of an 8,000-square-foot addition at the Mayfield Innovation Center so that CEVEC (Cuyahoga East Vocational Education Consortium) can be relocated at the high school campus to better align academic initiatives and consortium program offerings. This work should be completed by October or November, allowing programs to possibly transition in winter, 2024.

SUN 8-24-23

› At Lander Elementary School, 1714 Lander Road, facility improvements now complete include internal renovations and reorganization of classroom spaces, the addition of an elevator to address the needs of the district's special education students, and renovation of the school's media center.

› Center Elementary School facility improvements, also complete at 6625 Wilson Mills Road, include construction of a 3,600-square-foot addition to allow for four new classrooms, internal

SEE MAYFIELD SCHOOLS, A5

MAYFIELD SCHOOLS

\$20M capital improvement plan in motion for district

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renovation and reorganization of classroom spaces, and the addition of an elevator to address the needs of special education students. Only minor work remains to be completed at Lander and Center schools.

› A reconfigured main entrance is planned for Gates Mills Elementary School, 7639 Colvin Road, to provide secured access and improved visibility, similar to other schools within the district. This project is now before the Architectural Review Board and is slated to begin this fall, or early winter.

"These projects are tied to the district's ongoing commitment to safety and security, infrastructure and program enhancements," said Mayfield Schools Superintendent Michael Barnes, entering his third year leading the district. "The condition and design of facilities and classrooms plays an important role in the student's ability to learn and connect with others. These skills are directly linked to long-term success."

Snyder said that, while projections had the district seeking a levy increase in 2023, such a request from residents will not come about until 2024 at the earliest.

"We are hoping to be off the ballot this current school year," Snider said. "We'll

likely be considering something in the fall, but the (Mayfield Board of Education) hasn't made that final decision. Our target has been in calendar year '24 to be on the ballot.

"It will have been eight years since our last levy (passed in 2016), so it will be eight years if we (seek a levy) in calendar '24." The earliest Mayfield Schools could be on the ballot would be in March, 2024, although Snyder emphasized that the school board has not made such a decision.

Speaking about the \$20 million in cash reserves spent on the improvement projects, Snyder said, "These are cash reserves that can only be spent one time—not necessarily resources that come in annually to offset expenditure growth annually.

"So what we are attempting to do, and what we are doing, is taking these one-time cash dollars and investing them one time into our physical facilities so we can support the changes in student learning, the way kids learn, the atmospheres that are conducive to kids coming in."

As opposed to years past when students sat in rows facing a blackboard with a book on their desk, Snyder explained that today's students sit in a variety of spaces and places and have with them a learning device that gives them access to far more information than students in past decades.

Mayor cites financial challenges in state-of-the-city

Jeff Piorkowski *Special to Sun News*

Highland Heights Mayor Chuck Brunello Jr. delivered his third state-of-the-city address Aug. 24 in City Hall's City Council chambers, recounting the accomplishments of city workers and council members over the past year.

He also discussed the financial challenges that lie ahead.

At the conclusion of his 48-minute address, when asked his greatest takeaway from the past 12 months, Brunello said, "The exceptional staff and our council — a really good council — and all the work they've done."

On the subject of finances, Brunello told the audience of about 20 people that the city has a cash reserve of approximately \$8 million.

However, as in Mayfield a short distance away, the after-effects of COVID-19 — particularly as they apply to Progressive Insurance — have caused Brunello and city leaders to ponder what the next couple

of years will bring.

On July 26, Progressive — Mayfield's largest employer — announced that it would be vacating its Campus 1 at 6300 Wilson Mills Road, just across the road from Highland Heights. Progressive has not mandated that its workers to return to its offices post-pandemic, costing Mayfield great income tax losses.

Mayfield Mayor Brenda Bodnar said the village, in the short term, won't see a great impact from the Campus 1 closing, but that the loss of income tax revenue will continue to eat into Mayfield's \$42 million cash reserve.

In her state-of-the-village address in April, Bodnar said: "The village suffered pretty drastic revenue losses in 2022, primarily because most Progressive Insurance employees continued to work from home in the aftermath of the pandemic. Our income tax collections totaled approximately \$9 million, a decrease of \$10.3 million from 2021."

SEE HIGHLAND HEIGHTS, A7



Highland Heights Mayor Chuck Brunello Jr. delivered his annual state-of-the-city address Aug. 24 in City Council chambers. Jeff Piorkowski, special to Sun News

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Continues from A1

In its office buildings, Highland Heights had far fewer Progressive workers than Mayfield. Still, the insurance company once had seven operating buildings in Highland Heights. Just two of those seven are still active. Some of the five closed buildings are in the process of being sold.

"I would be remiss if I did not address the current situation with Progressive Insurance and how the building vacancies financially impact the city of Highland Heights," Brunello said in his address.

"Progressive Insurance withholding (income tax revenue) was down \$1,744,000 in 2022 compared to 2021, and down \$2,196,000 from 2020, which was before the work-from-home model began.

"Employee withholding from employers in the city was 82 percent in 2020 and is now only 71 percent. We have seen an increase from resident collections go from 12 percent in 2020 to 14 percent currently.

"The resident collections still have not equaled out to the lost revenue from people not working in our city."

Brunello said that 92.5 percent of what the city collects in income taxes goes into the general fund and 7.5 percent into the city's debt service fund. About 75 to 80 percent of a city's general fund is used to pay its employees.

"With people working from home, and the uncertainty of income tax collections, we continued to take a conservative approach to our spending," Brunello said. "Our expenditures for 2022 were about \$1,161,000 less than budgeted. Our 2022 revenues were up about \$298,000 over estimate. Expenses exceeded our revenue by \$431,000."

Another financial challenge is the fact that a bond that brought the city \$6.2 million for capital improvements expires at the end of this year. Brunello said he has kept \$1 million in reserve for capital improvements for 2024.

After his address, Brunello and Finance Director Joseph Filippo said that care was taken in using money

from the bond to purchase needed equipment for the safety forces and other departments, so that, as of now, road repair work looks to be the only capital expense to be faced in the near future.

"Our directors have been very good in keeping to their budgets," Brunello said.

In addition, Brunello spoke of the ballot issue that Highland Heights voters turned down last year by a 68 percent to 32 percent margin that would have increased millage to help pay for safety force pension liabilities the city must pay, as mandated by the State of Ohio.

The current rate of .6 mills Highland Heights residents pay has been unchanged since that levy went into effect in 1967.

The new levy was on the ballot because the Ohio Legislature has a proposal under consideration to raise contributions that municipalities make to the fund over the next five years. The increase would raise the portion Highland Heights pays by \$47,000 the first year, escalating by the fifth year to \$265,000.

"While I remain optimistic that our state legislators understand how crucial this issue could be, if passed, we need to continue to be proactive as we prepare for the future," Brunello told the audience.

"I plan to revisit the topic with City Council shortly into my next term."

Brunello, who is up for re-election this fall, is unopposed on the ballot. He said the .6 mills produces \$266,000 annually, vs. the \$800,000 the city now contributes yearly to the pension fund.

Brunello concluded his speech by stating, "As your mayor, I remain invested in the continued success of our city, and I give you my word that we will continue to remain financially strong by remaining fiscally responsible during these ever-changing and challenging times.

"My focus will always be to provide the very best services to the residents and businesses of our community."

Police
Blotter
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SUN

MAYFIELD

Suspicious activity *Beta Drive*

A woman said Aug. 16 that her son called from his place of work in the village and said he was on the phone with someone from a cartel. That caller told her son to send money or a family member would be harmed.

Officers responded to the business and advised the man that it was a scam. They also spoke to the caller and told him to stop contacting the man.

Suspicious activity *Highland Road*

The pastor's wife at Mayfield Village Baptist Church said Aug. 16 that her daughter had seen a woman carrying a box to their door earlier in the evening.

She said the woman quickly retreated to her car and sped away when she saw she was being watched.

Officers advised her to call police if the woman is seen again.

Impaired driving *Wilson Mills Road*

A Middlefield man, 43, was arrested for OVI after his vehicle was stopped for a red-light violation near Hanover Road around 1:30 a.m. Aug. 18.

Impaired driving *SOM Center Road*

A Chester Township woman, 47, was arrested for OVI around 10 p.m. Aug. 18 after her vehicle almost struck an officer's cruiser.

General assistance *Foxboro Drive*

A resident said Aug. 21 that she believed her driver's license may have been stolen and used fraudulently. Officers provided her advice.