

The Council Ledger

Fall 2024

Two New Members Elected for County Council

Summit County Council will have two new members following the General Election in November.

Dr. David Licate (D) a Criminal Justice Professor at the University of Akron and former Stow City Councilman, will now represent Stow, Munroe, Falls, Hudson and parts of Cuyahoga Falls in District 3. He succeeds long-time County Councilwoman Gloria Rodgers who was defeated in the March primary by Republican Jeremy McIntyre. Rodgers' term expires at the end of the year.

Joseph Kacyon (R) will represent constituents in Green, Coventry, Springfield, Lakemore, Mogadore and parts of South Akron in District 8. He was appointed by the Republican Party in August to replace Anthony DeVitis following DeVitis' resignation from Council.

Kacyon is one of three partners at Hoover & Kacyon, LLC, a law firm with three locations in Summit County. He defeated Democrat Matt Shaughnessy for the seat in the November election.

The rest of the eight Council District seats remained unchanged with Council incumbent candidates retaining their seats.

Council President **Rita Darrow (D)** defeated Yulia Gray to represent District 1 which

includes Richfield, Richfield Village, Boston and Boston Heights, Peninsula, Sagamore Hills, Northfield Center, Macedonia, Twinsburg and Twinsburg Township and Reminderville.

John Schmidt (D) (District 2—representing Cuyahoga Falls and Northeast Akron) and **Jeff Wilhite (D)** (District 4 – representing parts of West and Central Akron and Bath) were unopposed.

Brandon Ford (D) (District 5—representing West Akron, Copley, Fairlawn and Bath) defeated Cynthia Blake in the November election. Ford was appointed by the Democratic Party to replace former Councilwoman Veronica Sims who resigned in February to become the 33rd District Representative in the Ohio Statehouse.

Christine Wiede Higham (D) (District 6—representing Tallmadge and Southeast Akron) defeated Nick Rubino in the General Election and **Bethany McKenney (R)** (District 7—representing Barberton, New Franklin, Clinton, Norton and Southwest Akron) defeated Ryan Shank in the November contest.

The remaining three Council at Large seats currently held by Democrats **John Donofrio, Elizabeth Walters and Erin Dickinson** will be up for re-election in 2026.



Summit County Council Members, Dr. David Licate (District 3) left and Joseph Kacyon (District 8) right were elected in the November General Election. They will take the seats of former Councilmembers Gloria Rodgers and Anthony DeVitis.

Inside this issue:

Council Honors Ohio "Teacher of the Year" Daneé Pinckney	2
In the Community...	
Councilmembers attend Rubber City Heritage Trail Dedication	3
Former Councilman Nick Kostandaras Passes Away	3
Council Meeting Calendar	4
Council District Map	4
Council Office Staff Directory	4

Council Honors Ohio “Teacher of the Year”

Prior to the September 23rd Council Meeting, County Council and Executive Ilene Shapiro honored Twinsburg High School 11th and 12th grade English teacher Daneé Pinckney, Ohio’s 2025 Teacher of the Year, an award established to by the Ohio Department of Education to honor the top teacher in the State. Ms. Pinckney created a senior-level course on African American Literature, addressing the need for representation by students and members of the community. She obtained grant funding to support its implementation, and her efforts have enriched educational experiences for all students and staff. Through literature, she aims to inspire her students to take part in community service and activism projects to foster social responsibility and civic engagement. Recently, her students collaborated with students in Ghana and led a schoolwide project that aimed to build global community and empathy. Ms. Pinckney’s dedication to pursuing personal growth as an educator has earned her recognition as a Master Teacher Finalist by the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation and accolades such as the 2023 Twinsburg City Schools Teacher of the Year and a 2023 Fund for Teachers Fellow. A resident of Stow, Ms. Pinkney earned her Bachelor of Arts and Sciences in Middle Childhood Education from The Ohio State University and her Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction: Educational Technology from Ashland University. “Daneé represents the best of what every educator should aspire to be; dedicated and passionate with a perfect balance of high expectations for all students coupled with the will to provide whatever support those students need to be successful. We thank her for her outstanding work and continued commitment to her students and the community,” said Council President Rita Darrow.



2025 Ohio Teacher of the Year, Daneé Pinckney with County Council Members, President Rita Darrow (left), Gloria Rodgers (District 3), Ms. Pinkney’s son, Desmond and County of Summit Director of Community and Economic Development, Diane Miller-Dawson.

In The Community



Photos from left: Councilmembers **Brandon Ford (District 5)** and **Jeff Wilhite (District 4)** support the Akron Pride March in August; Councilman **Ford** at the “Women Supporting Women” event at Hardesty Park in West Akron in September; Councilwoman **Bethany McKenney (District 7)** at the Barberton Kiwanis Club 100th Anniversary Gala and Councilwoman **Christine Wiedie Higham (District 6)** at the Italian Heritage Month Celebration in October.

Council Members Participate in Rubber City Heritage Trail Dedication

Fall 2024



County Councilmembers **Brandon Ford** and **Christine Wiedie Higham** (far right) join other City of Akron, Summit County, State Elected Officials and partners to dedicate the new Rubber City Heritage Trail on July 26. Photo and story details courtesy of Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition.

County Council Members **Brandon Ford (District 5)** and **Christine Wiedie Higham (District 6)** joined in the dedication and ribbon cutting for the first section of the Rubber City Heritage Trail along with the City of Akron and Summit County officials, residents, and project partners. Phase I of the trail connects the current Goodyear World Headquarters to just behind the former headquarters off of East Market Street and is about a mile long. Once complete, the trail will be 6 miles long and connect the neighborhoods of Goodyear Heights, Middlebury, the University of Akron, Downtown Akron, Firestone Park, Summit Lake and Kenmore. The trail follows the former portion of the Akron & Barberton Cluster Railroad that once served B.F. Goodrich, Bridgestone, Firestone, General Tire, The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company and more.

Former Council President Nick Kostandaras Passes Away

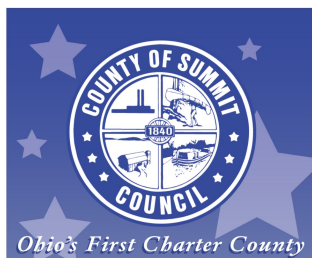
Former County Councilman Nick Kostandaras, who represented District 1 from 2006 to 2016 passed away on August 27 at the age of 87. While on County Council, Kostandaras sponsored more than 600 pieces of legislation and attended more than 8,000 meetings with residents, businesses and local communities throughout Summit County, the state of Ohio and the United States.

Kostandaras was formerly a member of the Richfield City Council, former President and Legislative Director of Ohio Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union and a former Sheriff's Deputy in Cuyahoga County, Ohio. Kostandaras was also proprietor of Nick's Automotive Auto Service and Musketeers Bar and Grill in Richfield, Ohio.

In 2007, Kostandaras served as interim County Executive for the County of Summit, and he served several terms as Vice President and President of Summit County Council. He also had the honor of serving as President of the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) in 2014.

"We remember Nick for his commitment, diligence, integrity and dedication to public service, representing the residents of District 1 in the Cities of Macedonia and Twinsburg, Boston Heights, Northfield, Peninsula, Reminderville and Richfield Villages, Bath, Boston, Northfield Center, Richfield, Sagamore Hills and Twinsburg Townships and part of the City of Akron. He was passionate about his work with CCAO and he had the utmost admiration and respect from his colleagues on Council through his professionalism and devotion to his family, friends, colleagues and community. We appreciate his tireless efforts to make our communities better places to work and live and urge all citizens to join in honoring his memory," said Council President Rita Darrow (District 1).





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The Council Ledger is a quarterly publication of the Summit County Council Office produced by Council Staff.

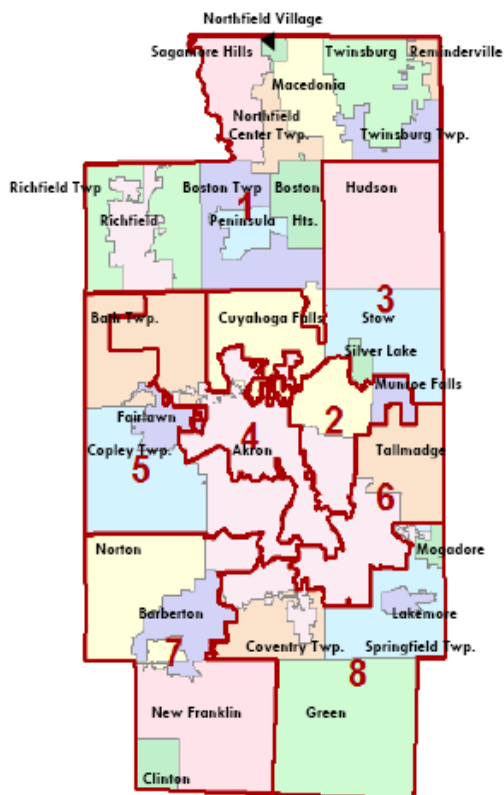
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2024-25 Council Meeting Calendar

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME
November 28-29	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING		
December 2	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
December 9	Committee/Council Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
	<i>(Last Council Meeting Before Winter Break)</i>		
December 24-25	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY		
January 1	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY		
January 6	Council/Organizational Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
January 13	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
January 20	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR MLK DAY		
January 27	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
February 3	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
February 10	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.

2024 County Council Members

- *Rita Darrow**
President
District 1
- Erin Dickinson**
Vice President
At Large
- John Schmidt**
District 2
- Gloria Rodgers**
District 3
- Jeff Wilhite**
District 4
- Brandon Ford**
District 5
- Christine Wiedie Higham**
District 6
- Bethany McKenney**
District 7
- Joseph Kacyon**
District 8
- John Donofrio**
At -Large
- Elizabeth Walters**
At -Large



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