

# The Council Ledger

Winter 2023

## Sims and Darrow to Lead Council in 2023

Summit County Council in its first organizational meeting of the 2023 calendar year, nominated and approved **Veronica Sims (District 5)** as Council President and **Rita Darrow (District 1)** as Vice President.

Councilwoman Sims, who formerly served as Council Vice President in 2022, was initially appointed to Council in 2020 to replace Judge David Hamilton, who was elected to the Akron Municipal Court. She was elected to represent District 5 later that year. Councilwoman Sims continues to make history as the first African American female to serve as an officer of Council. She also holds the distinction of having served as an elected official on Akron City Council and the Akron Public School Board prior to Summit County Council. Sims has served on the Council's Plan-

ning and Economic Development (Chair), Public Safety (Vice Chair), Health and Human Services (Vice Chair) and Finance Committees. She also serves as Co-Chair of the Racism as a Public Health Crisis Special Review Committee with former Council President Elizabeth Walters.

Councilwoman Darrow was elected to Council in 2020 to represent District 1. She formerly served on the Macedonia City Council and was a past president there. Darrow serves on the Long Term Planning (Chair), Personnel (Vice Chair), Public Safety and Health and Human Services Committees of Summit County Council. She also serves as third vice president of the Federated Women of Summit County.



2023 Summit County Council Officers, Rita Darrow (District 1) and Veronica Sims (District 5).

## New Clerk of Council Hired

At its January 9th meeting, Summit County Council appointed Lauren Marsh as the new Clerk of Council.

Ms. Marsh comes to the Council office from the Ohio Democratic Party where she was the Northeast Regional Party Affairs Director. An Akron native, she is also the first African American to be hired as Clerk of Council.



New Summit County Clerk of Council  
Lauren Marsh

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# More Than 230 Firearms Collected at Summit County Gun Buyback

On Saturday, December 3, 2022, Summit County Council in conjunction with the Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro, the Summit County Sheriff, the Prosecutor's office and in partnership with the Arlington Church of God and Akron NAACP, hosted a Gun Buyback and Safety Initiative from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the Arlington Church of God, 539 South Arlington Street in East Akron.

More than 230 firearms were turned in during the day and approximately 300 free gun locks were given away to interested participants.

In August 2022, Council adopted legislation creating the voluntary Summit County Gun Buyback and Safety Training Program. Resolution 2022-248 allowed the County Executive to procure up to \$55,000.00 worth of gift cards for a gun buyback, gun locks, educational materials, advertising and other related program expenses and authorized the Sheriff to operate the program.

Gift cards to either Dave's Supermarket or Acme Fresh Market were given out to people who turned in guns - \$150 for operable guns and \$25 for inoperable guns (limit 3 guns per person) no questions asked.

Sheriff's deputies were on hand to safely inspect and

collect the firearms and volunteers from the NAACP, Moms Demand Action and Arlington Church of God were present to pass out gun locks and safety information. Councilmembers **Veronica Sims (District 5), John Schmidt (District 2), Erin Dickinson (At-Large), Jeff Wilhite (District 4) and Gloria Rodgers (District 3)** were also there to welcome participants and answer questions.

"I was extremely pleased with how well this event was received by the community," said Councilman Schmidt. "The Sheriff's Office did an excellent job getting the participants in and out in an efficient manner. Everyone top down from the church officials to the residents dropping off their guns were pleasant and happy to be involved."

"We have experienced so much loss and tragedy in this community due to gun violence. Removing unwanted firearms from our homes goes a long way towards preventing more potential life altering situations and creates a more secure environment for everyone," said Councilwoman Sims. "I'm encouraged by this initial effort and look forward to continuing to educate on responsible gun ownership and eliminating unfortunate injuries and casualties."

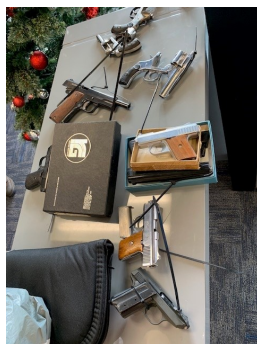
Councilwoman Dickinson, who is an active member of the gun safety advocacy group Moms Demand Action, called attention to sometimes overlooked firearm dangers. "People tend to think of gun crimes such as robberies, assaults, etc.," said Dickinson. "However, removing neglected guns from homes where children could have unsafe access or out of reach from someone who may be considering self-harm is also very significant."

*The County will be hosting another Gun Buyback initiative on Saturday, March 18, 2023 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the House of the Lord, 1650 Diagonal Road in West Akron. \$150 Gift cards for Dave's Supermarket and Acme Fresh Market will be distributed while supplies last. \$25 Cards will be offered for inoperable guns. Once again, there is a 3 guns per person limit for the gift cards. FREE Gun locks and gun safety information will also be available at this event. For more information, please contact the Council office at 330-643-2725.*



Summit County Council Members (from left) John Schmidt, Gloria Rodgers, Jeff Wilhite, Veronica Sims and Erin Dickinson with Summit County Sheriff Fatheree, Arlington Church of God Pastor Myricks, Akron NAACP, Mom's Demand Action and Summit County Prosecutors Office at the Summit County Gun Buyback and Safety Initiative.

Included among the 230 plus firearms collected were (left to right) shotguns, pistols and revolvers, and a semi-automatic weapon. More than 300 Free Gun-Locks were distributed as well. (bottom right).



# Commendations

Winter 2023



Prior to the January 23, 2023 Council Committee Meeting, Council President **Veronica Sims (District 5)** and County Executive Ilene Shapiro honored Fairlawn Mayor Bill Roth on his recent retirement. Roth retired in December 2022 as the longest-serving mayor in Summit County. Roth became mayor in 1996 and led Fairlawn with distinction for nearly three decades. While mayor, Roth spearheaded countless projects, including the creation of Fairlawn Gig, the city’s municipal broadband utility. Mayor Roth was a valuable partner to Summit County and played a major role in the construction of the Criminal Justice Fiber Ring, the creation of the Council of Governments to build and operate a joint emergency dispatch center and the creation of the Council of Governments for the Summit Connects fiber project.



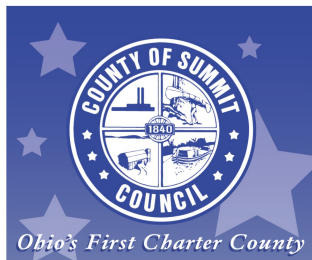
Also that evening, Council and the Executive honored the Copley Girls Soccer Team for winning their first OHSAA Division II state championship. After ending the regular season ranked first in the Ohio State Soccer Coaches Association poll for Division II and winning a district title, Copley finished with a 22-0-1 record, the only undefeated team in the state regardless of gender. The team finished the season ranked 15th in the country, and their Coach Wally Senk was recognized as the National High School Girls Soccer Coach of the Year. Senior midfielder, Emma Stransky, who scored the lone goal in the Championship game, was named “Ms. Soccer” in the State of Ohio. She will resume her career this fall at Bowling Green State University. Coach Senk (left) and Ms. Stransky (right) were also presented commendations for their outstanding achievements.



Prior to the January 30, 2023 Council Meeting, the Council honored Lamar Sperling for being named “Mr. Football” in the State of Ohio for the 2022 Season. Sperling finished the season with 3,857 yards rushing and scored a State record 59 touchdowns in leading the Knights to the State Championship Game. He will take his talents to the The University at Buffalo this fall.. Councilman **Jeff Wilhite (District 4)** presented the Commendation to Lamar and his parents.

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Saturday, May 20, 2023**





**Summit County Council**

Ohio Building  
175 S. Main St., Ste. 700  
Akron, OH 44308-1314  
Phone: 330-643-2725  
Fax: 330-643-2531

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

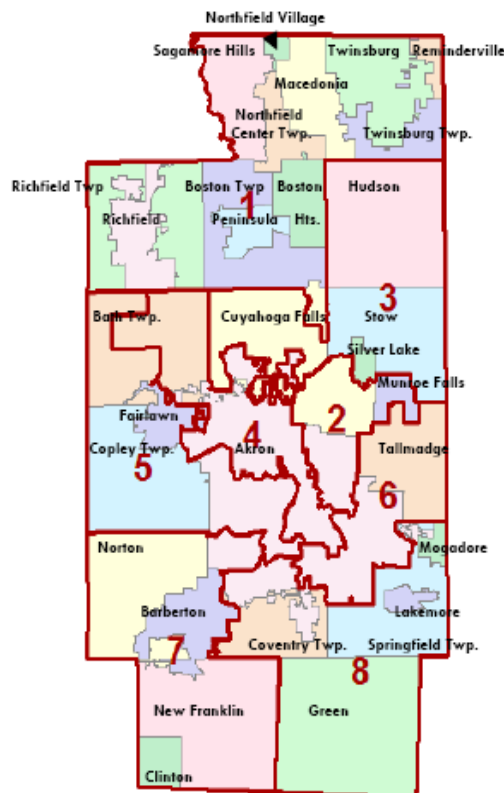
W. Kent Starks II — Editor  
Phone: 330-643-2074  
E-Mail: [kstarks@summitoh.net](mailto:kstarks@summitoh.net)

**2023 Council Meeting Calendar**

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME
February 13	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
February 20	<b>COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR PRESIDENTS DAY</b>		
February 27	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
March 6	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
March 13	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
March 20	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
March 27	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
April 3	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
April 10	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
April 17	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
April 24	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
May 1	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
May 8	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
May 15	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.

**2023 County Council Members**

- \*Veronica Sims**  
*President*  
District 5
- Rita Darrow**  
*Vice President*  
District 1
- John Schmidt**  
District 2
- Gloria Rodgers**  
District 3
- Jeff Wilhite**  
District 4
- Christine Wiedie Higham**  
District 6
- Bethany McKenney**  
District 7
- Anthony DeVitis**  
District 8
- John Donofrio**  
At -Large
- Elizabeth Walters**  
At -Large
- Erin Dickinson**  
At -Large



**County Council Staff**

**Mark Potter**  
Chief of Staff

**Lauren Marsh**  
Clerk of Council

**W. Kent Starks, II**  
Senior Research Analyst

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