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## Rankey Asks Delaware County Commissioners for Hardship Bonuses for Employees

**DELAWARE, Ohio (June 23, 2022)** – Delaware County Treasurer Donald E. Rankey Jr. has requested that the Delaware County Commissioners grant a one-time, \$1,500 hardship bonus to county employees.

Under the request, all non-union, full-time employees and all full-time, part-time employees would be eligible for the bonus.

Rankey said the request is needed to help county employees offset the U.S. inflation rate of 8.6 percent.

Rankey made the request in a June 22 letter to Commission President Barbara Lewis. In his letter, Rankey requested an emergency meeting agenda item at the June 23 Commissioners meeting. That agenda item was denied.

“Our rank-and-file county employees are taking a beating in this current economic environment,” Rankey said. “I strongly recommended a 6-percent salary increase for county employees to the Commissioners last year, but that request fell on deaf ears. Now, we’re seeing the painful impact on our employees.”

Rankey made the pitch for a 6-percent raise during budget deliberations in October. At the time, the inflation rate was 5.4 percent. The commissioners gave county employees a 4-percent raise.

“Our employees only received a 4-percent raise, and at the same time their healthcare insurance premium increased by 14 percent,” Rankey said. “Our dedicated county employees lost money simply by remaining in their jobs, and now they’re struggling to purchase food, gas and other necessities. How is that fair?”

Rankey pointed out that the U.S. inflation rate for the 12 months ending in May was 8.6 percent, the largest increase in more than 40 years, according to the U.S. Labor Department.

The Treasurer's Office oversees all the interim funds held by the county, which average about \$315 million. Chief Investment Officer Rick Karr is projecting \$3.6 million in interest earning in 2022, an increase of \$1.3 million over the original budget forecast of \$2.3 million, and a 195-percent increase over 2021.

That increase would virtually cover nearly all of the hardship bonuses. Rankey said 756 county employees would receive the bonus at a total cost of just over \$1.36 million.

"In my estimation, Delaware County has some of the finest public servants in the state of Ohio," Rankey said. "We ask 100 percent of them every day, so we need to stand up and do what is right on their behalf."

Donald E. Rankey was elected Delaware County Treasurer in 2020. He is the county's chief investment officer and responsible for collecting more than \$660 million in annual property taxes from more than 90,000 parcels. His office also oversees an investment portfolio in excess of \$325 million.

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