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# Port authority creating goals

## Official: Organization is 'trying to decide what it is we want to be when we grow up'

By **CHRIS DUMOND**  
BUTLER COUNTY BUREAU

**HAMILTON** — Not many would choose to spend their birthday cooped up with a bunch of government officials debating mission statements, but such is the fate of the Butler County Port Authority.

As port authority Chairman Dick Slagle put it, board members will be spending the morning of Sept. 20 — roughly a year removed from their inaugural organizational meeting — “trying

to decide what it is we want to be when we grow up.”

Authority Secretary John Fonner said board members will be asked to start thinking about a strategic plan for the next five years in terms of the goals the group wants to accomplish, what roles it should play in economic development projects and the type of projects on which to focus.

The port authority was created last summer by the Butler County Board of Commissioners as an independent government body

to work across county and neighboring jurisdictions to encourage job creation and a stronger local economy.

Port authorities, authorized by Ohio law, have broad economic development powers. They may finance projects, issue general obligation and revenue bonds, put tax levies before voters, collect financing fees, make investments, buy property and charge rent.

Although the authority's board had initially planned to invite many stakeholders to the table for the September planning session, Slagle said the group will take a different tack.

“Rather than go out with the

various political entities in the county and ask what the port authority should be, we thought we should develop our own definition of what the port authority should be doing and then take it public with these organizations,” he said.

Fonner said the meeting will be open to the public, although discussion will be limited to board members, staff and advisers.

In other business, representatives from the Cinergy Foundation presented a check for \$10,000 to be used in the Authority's Symmes Industrial Park rail development project.

When complete, the \$80,000 project will improve rail service

to three companies at the park.

The remainder of the money is to be paid for with a \$50,000 commitment from the Ohio Rail Development Commission and reimbursements from CSX Transportation, which owns the track serving the park.

Fonner said he is in talks with the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments and the Rail Development Commission about funding future planning and development of rail projects between Fairfield and Middletown.

Contact **Chris Dumond** at (513) 820-2025, or e-mail him at [cdumond@coxohio.com](mailto:cdumond@coxohio.com).