



By David Williamson

department: ohio facilities construction commission

OFCC Recommends Merging with OSFC

The start of every new General Assembly session brings with it the introduction of a new biennial operating budget for the Buckeye State, and 2017 is no exception.

Unlike most state agencies which are dependent on the state budget for the entirety or a substantial percentage of their funding, for the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC), the significant funding for construction comes not with the operating budget bill, but with the capital appropriations bill, which is scheduled for introduction and debate in 2018.

That doesn't mean the operating budget is not important to us. The fiscal and programmatic requests outlined in House Bill 49 (the introduced version of the bill) will continue OFCC's and Governor Kasich's commitment to Building for Ohio's Next Generation by continuing the support to educational programs while streamlining of our operations to run more effectively and efficiently. Additionally, the bill will provide the funds we need to pay principal and interest on the debt service we've been allocated for our building projects. It also provides the Commission's operational funding to deliver our programs and services.

The significant items however, for the Commission, come in the form of recommended programmatic language changes. Most of the language requests will be changes in operations and programs that won't be noticed by most of our education partners. However, the commission has recommended one change that will be of interest to the education community. We are recommending an administrative change to abolish the Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC) structure and fully merge daily duties and operations into a single state commission for facility construction—the OFCC.

Let me state at the outset, there will be no change in the programs, project loads, and

business operations of the commission with this proposal. The major goal of this proposal is to reduce administrative complexity of commission business, eliminate duplication of services, and provide clarity in commission duties and responsibilities.

The OFCC is the state agency designated by law to be responsible for construction actions and activities associated with its three primary stakeholders (K-12 public education, state agencies, and state-supported colleges and universities) that our operating and capital budgets support. All current and future actions with these customers will be accomplished by OFCC.

We have taken steps to ensure there are no impediments that reduce or impact our important work with K-12 school construction or affect districts adversely. In a nutshell:

- K-12 school construction program would continue under the OFCC and the volume of work would depend, as it has in the past, on the amount of funds allocated by the General Assembly.
- Currently, nearly all functions are performed as the OFCC, with some master facilities planning and decisions on funding occurring under the OSFC in name only. The monitoring of construction and any post construction issues are already handled by the OFCC.

Under current law, all staff are already employees of OFCC and the executive director of the OFCC serves as director to both commissions. The abolishment of the OSFC will not impact daily operations. It has the additional advantages of alleviating the potential legal issues that arise from having two separate legal entities—with confusing areas of authority—to file suit against or take action on behalf of. It will



also streamline Commission operations by eliminating a quarterly meeting as well as another set of Commission members. The proposed language changes the OFCC membership from directors of the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) and Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and an appointee of the governor to the directors of OBM and DAS and an appointee of the Governor who is a Cabinet member.

We believe this is an extremely useful and well-developed proposal designed to enable the Commission to provide more uniform standard, timely and responsive facility construction services. We understand that this proposal may generate some questions. Please feel free to contact us at your convenience. We share the goal of making sure our students have quality learning facilities and we look forward to working with you to achieve that goal in an increasingly effective and efficient manner.

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