



# Delaware County Commissioners

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 27, 2018

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### Negotiations Over Old Delaware County Jail Enter New Phase

DELAWARE, Ohio – Today in session, the Delaware County Commissioners voted to reject the bids received in October for the Old Delaware County Jail and surrounding land. Instead, the County will now negotiate the potential transfer of this historic building, located at 20 W. Central Ave., to the Delaware County Land Reutilization Corporation, which in turn will be able to negotiate with potential buyers.

A land-reutilization corporation, often referred to as a “land bank,” is a public entity that is best known for helping communities return abandoned or blighted properties to productive use. But state law also enables the counties that have established land banks to transfer property they own to those land banks for sale and redevelopment.

“The Old Jail and surrounding land is a perfect opportunity for redevelopment of property in downtown Delaware,” said County Administrator Mike Frommer. “And that makes the DCRLC the perfect organization for the County to work with on this.”

A land bank’s statutory powers provide it “with a greater array of tools to negotiate with a wider pool of buyers,” explained Brad Lutz, Delaware County’s Director of Business Operations and Financial Management, who will represent the Commissioners in negotiations with the DCLRC. Lutz said the Old Jail, which dates from 1878, could be sold to the DCLRC for a dollar amount. The DCLRC would then be able to seek a buyer for the site.

Part of the rationale for pursuing the land-bank option, Lutz said, is that the DCLRC has broader powers than the County in negotiating and setting terms for the sale and repurposing of the property. The County, Lutz said, was limited to consideration of “straight price” in evaluating bids. This is the second round of bidding that the Commissioners have voted to reject. The first round in May attracted two bids, the highest of which was from a local law firm for \$156,000 to create legal offices. The second round in October attracted four bids but also included additional parcels of land on Court Street: That round attracted a high bid of \$183,500 from Columbus developer Connect Realty for a mixed-use proposal.

“The Board of Commissioners has zero desire to see the building torn down and wishes to preserve the historic nature of the city’s downtown,” Lutz said. “We expect this factor will be part of the terms of the transfer.”

Lutz also emphasized that, with this new phase, only the Old Jail and surrounding land would be included in the discussions with the DCLRC. If the transfer is completed, the previous bidders would be able to work with the DCLRC if they are still interested.

For more information about the Delaware County Land Reutilization Corporation, go to [https://co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/12\\_28\\_17.pdf](https://co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/12_28_17.pdf) (Resolution 17-1364).

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