

County Council of Cuyahoga County, Ohio

Ordinance No. O2025-0007

<p>Sponsored by: <b>County Executive Ronayne/Fiscal Officer</b></p> <p>Co-sponsored by: <b>Councilmembers Sweeney, Miller, Schleper and Houser</b></p>	<p><b>An Ordinance</b> enacting Section 202.11 of the County Code to establish a Building Department under the supervision of the County Executive and the Fiscal Officer to exercise enforcement authority of, and to accept and approve construction documents and conduct inspections in accordance with, the rules of the State of Ohio Board of Building Standards relating to both residential and non-residential construction within the County; and declaring the necessity that this Ordinance become immediately effective.</p>
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**WHEREAS**, Ohio Revised Code (“ORC”) Section 307.38 authorizes a board of county commissioners to create, establish, fill, and fix the compensation of a county building inspector to administer and enforce the residential and nonresidential building codes adopted by the State of Ohio Board of Building Standards (“OBBS”); and

**WHEREAS**, ORC Section 3781.10 authorizes the OBBS to certify county building departments and the personnel of those departments to exercise enforcement authority, to accept and approve plans and specifications, and to make inspections pursuant to the residential and nonresidential building codes of the OBBS (“Building Codes”); and

**WHEREAS**, Cuyahoga County has an interest in ensuring compliance with and the standardized administration of the Building Codes within the County; and

**WHEREAS**, many municipalities within the County face staffing and funding shortages that hinder their ability to operate building departments certified by the OBBS; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a statewide shortage of building officials and other personnel certified by the OBBS due to an aging workforce and a lack of new professionals entering the field; and

**WHEREAS**, communities often rely on third parties for services otherwise provided by a certified building department which can result in delays, increased costs, and reduced responsiveness to local needs; and

**WHEREAS**, the creation of a County Building Department will standardize processes and improve efficiencies in the review of plans and issuance of permits for residential and commercial buildings within the County, and enhance County-wide compliance with rules of the OBBS; and

**WHEREAS**, the functions of a Building Department within the County Fiscal Office will support the mission of the Appraisal Division by providing timely information necessary to the assessment of real property that local building officials are otherwise required to submit to the Fiscal Office under ORC Section 5713.17; and

**WHEREAS**, this model has been successfully implemented in 66 of Ohio's 88 counties, including Summit, Lake, Geauga, Medina, and Portage Counties, and is endorsed by the Ohio Board of Building Standards; and

**WHEREAS**, Article III, Section 3.09(2), of the Charter grants Council the power to establish departments, and divisions and sections within departments, under the supervision of the County Executive, as the Council determines to be necessary for the efficient administration of the County; and

**WHEREAS**, exercising its powers, rights, and privileges as set forth in Article I of the Charter, this Council desires to amend Section 202 of the County Code to enact new Section 202.11 establishing the Building Department to, among other things, support the communities within Cuyahoga County that request the assistance of the County in the administration and enforcement of the Building Codes and enhance the efficiencies of the Appraisal Division within the Fiscal Office; and

**WHEREAS**, it is necessary that this Ordinance become immediately effective in order that critical services provided by Cuyahoga County can continue and to provide for the usual, daily operation of the County.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO:**

**SECTION 1.** That new Section 202.11 of the County Code is hereby enacted to read as follows:

**Section 202.11 Building Department**

- A. The Building Department is hereby established under the supervision of the County Executive and the Fiscal Officer to exercise enforcement authority of, and to accept and approve construction documents and conduct

inspections in accordance with, the rules of the State of Ohio Board of Building Standards applicable to both residential and non-residential construction within the County, as such rules may be amended, revised, or supplemented from time-to-time, within the jurisdictions of the municipalities within the County that have entered into contracts with the County in accordance with Subsection E, below.

B. The Building Department shall be supervised and managed by the County Chief Building Official.

1. The County Chief Building Official shall be certified by the Ohio Board of Building Standards in accordance with rule 4101:7-3-01 of the Ohio Administrative Code (“OAC”).
2. The County Chief Building Official shall be appointed by the County Executive, subject to confirmation by Council in accordance with Section 2.03(2) of the Charter,
3. The County Chief Building Official shall not be an appointing authority for purposes of the Charter or Ohio general law.

C. The Building Department shall include the following divisions:

1. The Residential Division, enforcing the Residential Code of Ohio for new construction, renovations and alterations; and
2. The Non-residential Division.

D. The Fiscal Officer may employ such persons as may be reasonably necessary, within budget parameters established by the Executive and Council, to assist the County Chief Building Official in carrying out the duties and responsibilities of the Building Department; provided that the divisions of the Building Department shall include those personnel as may be required by and certified in accordance with rule 4101:7-2-01, or any successor rule, of the OAC (“Rule”). In addition, the divisions of the Building Department may include those personnel as may be permitted under and certified in accordance with the Rule.

E. In accordance with Section 307.38(B) of the Revised Code, the County Executive, or the Executive’s designee, is hereby authorized to enter into revenue-generating agreements with the municipalities and townships within the County to exercise enforcement authority of, and to accept and approve construction documents and conduct inspections in accordance with, the rules of the State of Ohio Board of Building Standards applicable to both residential and non-residential construction, as such rules may be amended, revised, or supplemented from time-to-time, within the

jurisdiction of the contracting municipality or township. Such agreement shall authorize the Chief Building Official, in consultation with the municipality and the County Geographic Information Systems Administrator (or such other comparable County official, as appropriate), to assign a unique address to each structure for which a permit is issued, in accordance with Section 128.211 of the Revised Code or any successor section of the Revised Code.

- F. The Fiscal Officer is hereby authorized to establish a schedule of fees to be charged the applicant or owner of a project within a contracting municipality or township for the performance of enforcement, inspection, and plan approval as described herein; such schedule to be reviewed and approved by the Administrative Rules Board in accordance with Chapter 113 of this Code.

**SECTION 2.** The County Fiscal Officer is hereby authorized to submit this Ordinance and such other documentation as may be required to the Ohio Board of Building Standards to seek certification of the County Building Department in accordance with rule 4101:7-2-01 of the OAC.

**SECTION 3.** It is necessary that this Resolution become immediately effective for the usual daily operation of the County; the preservation of public peace, health or safety in the County; and any additional reasons set forth in the preamble. Provided that this Resolution receives the affirmative vote of at least eight members of Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon the earliest occurrence of any of the following: (1) its approval by the County Executive through signature, (2) the expiration of the time during which it may be disapproved by the County Executive under Section 3.10(6) of the Cuyahoga County Charter, or (3) its passage by at least eight members of Council after disapproval pursuant to Section 3.10(7) of the Cuyahoga County Charter. Otherwise, it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

**SECTION 4.** It is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council relating to the adoption of this Resolution were adopted in an open meeting of the Council, and that all deliberations of this Council and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal action were in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements, including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

On a motion by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. Sweeney, the foregoing Resolution was duly enacted.

Yeas: Sweeney, Casselberry, Gallagher, Schleper, Conwell, Jones, Turner, Houser, Simon, Kelly and Miller

Nays: None

<u>Dale Miller</u>	<u>11/26/2025</u>
County Council President	Date
<u>Chris Ronayne</u>	<u>12/1/2025</u>
County Executive	Date
<u>Andria Richardson</u>	<u>11/25/2025</u>
Clerk of Council	Date

First Reading/Referred to Committee: October 28, 2025

Committee(s) Assigned: Committee of the Whole

Additional Sponsorship Requested on the Floor: November 25, 2025

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