

# Byers, Minton and Associates

This Week at the Statehouse

February 8, 2019

## Around the Square

### Transportation Advisory Panel Review

Members of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Transportation Infrastructure met on Wednesday to discuss recommendations for the upcoming transportation budget. The panel appeared to agree that a gas tax increase would be necessary to address revenue shortfalls for infrastructure projects, however no specific increase was mentioned. More than two hours of public testimony and statements from Ohio Department of Transportation Director Jack Marchbanks were included in the meeting discussions. The ODOT Director warned that the state's infrastructure projects are facing an impending crisis unless further revenue is generated.

### PUCO Chair Announced

On Monday, Governor Mike DeWine announced that Sam Randazzo, a former industry lawyer and political independent, will lead the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio. Randazzo will replace Tom Johnson and serve out his term until April 2024. The governor's statement coincided with current PUCO Chairman Asim Haque's announcement that he would be resigning on March 1 to join PJM, a regional transmission organization, as the executive director of external affairs.

## Political News and Notes

### Chambers Fill Vacancies

Vacancies in both the House and Senate were filled this week. Speaker Larry Householder announced that Retired U.S. Marine Corps Colonel Adam Holmes would be appointed to fill the 97th House District vacancy. He replaces Senator Brian Hill, who was appointed to the upper chamber earlier this year. In the Senate, Representative Theresa Gavarone was selected to fill the 2nd District vacancy left by recently appointed Chancellor of the Department of Higher Education Randy Gardner. Her departure from the House will allow for another vacancy in the 3rd House District.

### Leadership Announced

In addition to vacancies, the House and Senate determined leadership positions throughout the week. The Senate elected Senator Matt Huffman to serve as Majority Floor Leader and Senator Jay Hottinger to serve as Majority Whip. The House also confirmed Representatives Butler, Seitz, DeVitis, Edwards and Lanese as Speaker Pro Tempore, Majority Floor Leader, Assistant Floor Leader, Majority Whip and Assistant Majority Whip respectively. Previously announced minority leadership positions in the House were also confirmed this week. Official committee assignments and leadership designations are expected to be announced next week along with legislative priorities.

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