



County of Lackawanna

Lackawanna County
Government Center
123 Wyoming Ave
Scranton, Pennsylvania
18503

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Wednesday, July 1, 2026

10:00 AM

Commissioners' Conference Room

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:05am.

Commissioner Thom Welby: Leading us in the Pledge today is Corporal Sam Kuchwara. Kuchwara served in the United States Marine Corps. He was a rifleman from 1971 to 74. He was stationed in Camp Lejeune, Okinawa, Japan, and with the Seventh Fleet, where he conducted missions to Da Nang in Vietnam. Sam is currently a vice commander with the American Legion Post 121 in Scranton, and he serves as a mentor for the Lackawanna County Veterans Court. Sam currently lives in Dickson City with his wife, Gail, and is a lifelong Scranton resident. But Sam also is almost single-handedly responsible for the conversion of the former refreshment stand at Nay Aug Park into a community room, and in converting it to a community room and adding on to the building itself. Sam and his team of volunteers, and a lot of the work that they did was not only on their own time, but much of it also on their own dime. As many of you know that are familiar with some of our military and the American legions and veterans of foreign war posts in the region, many of them have had to close down because of the lack of membership and members passing away. There's one post that didn't have. A lot of them still meet, but they don't have their own physical facility. Sam, in converting the community room, also made it home to an American Legion post that now has a home and they meet there regularly. Sam also is responsible for the meeting and sharing of information among a ton of recovery groups that meet up there all through the week, and through that ability for these people to meet and share. We have a lot of people whose lives have been saved through your support and through your volunteering, Sam.

Present 2 - Chris Chermak and Thom Welby

Absent 1 - Bill Gaughan

Reading and Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Chris Chermak, seconded by Commissioner Thom Welby, that this be Dispense with the Reading and Approve as Prepared. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Thom Welby

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Bill Gaughan

Opportunity for the Public to Address the Board (Agenda Items Only)

No comments

Proclamation Presentation

[26-0189](#) Proclaiming July 1, 2026, as "Valley View Cougars Day" in Lackawanna County.

Presented

Resolutions

[26-0190](#) Ratifying Current Payables

Attachments: [3H50NQ1C](#)

[3H50NQ1E](#)

[26-0190](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Chris Chermak, seconded by Commissioner Thom Welby, that this Resolution be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Thom Welby

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[26-0186](#) Entering into a Cooperation Agreement with the Scranton Chamber of Commerce

Attachments: [Lightcast Resolution and Supporting Docs](#)

[26-0186](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Chris Chermak, seconded by Commissioner Thom Welby, that this Resolution be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Thom Welby

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[26-0187](#) Approving AAA Service Agreements

Attachments: [AAA-Work Session Contract List for June 24 2026](#)
[Legislative Cover Sheet- Dietician Legal Services Personal Care PA](#)
[Medi Adult Day Care Older Adult Advocacy Center AFL](#)
[AAA-Dietician-Linda Steier-2026-2029](#)
[AAA-ELP-Lack Pro Bono 2026-2029](#)
[AAA-PC-Allied 2026-2029](#)
[AAA-PC-GHG 2026-2029](#)
[AAA-PC-IN-HOME PC 2026-2029](#)
[AAA-PC-Interim HH 2026-2029](#)
[AAA-PC-MedStaffers LLC 2026-2029](#)
[AAA-PC-Telespond-ADC-OAAC-2026-2029](#)
[AAA-United Way 2026-2029](#)
[26-0187](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Chris Chermak, seconded by Commissioner Thom Welby, that this Resolution be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Thom Welby

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[26-0188](#)

Entering into a Façade Easement Agreement

Attachments: [2026.06. 22 Easement Facade Vaudville Mural](#)
[2026.06.22 Vaudevill Mural Leg. Cover Sheet](#)
[26-0188](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Chris Chermak, seconded by Commissioner Thom Welby, that this Resolution be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Commissioner Thom Welby: And Maureen, does this, is there a cost on this?

What is the cost of it?

Director Maureen McGuigan: Zero. These, again, are just agreements to protect what we've already paid.

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Thom Welby

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[26-0191](#)

Entering into a Mural Preservation Easement Agreement

Attachments: [2026.06.22 MLK Mural Leg. Cover Sheet](#)
[2026.06.22 MLK Mural Preservation Easement \(003\)](#)
[26-0191](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Chris Chermak, seconded by Commissioner Thom Welby, that this Resolution be Adopted. The motion

carried by the following vote:

Commissioner Chris Chermak: What do we have going on this weekend?

Director Maureen McGuigan: Oh, I don't know what's going on. No, it's going to be a great weekend in Scranton. So we will kick it off this Friday with the annual Scrantastic Spectacular, presented by Lackawanna County. So that's going to be a great night. Philharmonic at 730, kicks off at 4 with other music and activities. Fireworks at 930. And we have a couple other things to add some flair, because we are celebrating our 250th birthday here in the United States. So we hope everybody comes out. I think it's going to be a great night and lots to do.

Commissioner Chris Chermak: Well, you put a lot of work into it. We're looking forward to it.

Director Maureen McGuigan: Yeah, that's what's nice about it. The whole community comes together. And I think it's a great event when we just celebrate being American as a community.

Commissioner Thom Welby: It's fabulous. And as Chris said, that the work that you and your team have done for this is just awesome. And this year in particular is the spectacle that you have going on over there in the square, which will be followed up with FIFA all weekend long. It's just awesome. I thank you for all that work that you're doing and something else that's free. The kind of tied into that, obviously, we have incredible, incredibly hot weather. And a lot of these are daytime activities in the county, not just not just for these events, but for this high heat that we're experiencing today, tomorrow and through the weekend. The county through the area agency, our county area agency on aging has set up some cooling centers in the county. They include, and I'll just read them real briefly, but they are on, they've been sent out to the media. Hopefully, they'll publish it, but they're on our Facebook page under Lackawanna County. But they include Scranton Senior Community Center on Jackson Street, Fallbrook Senior Community Center in Carbondale, the Mid-Valley Senior Community Center, and that's in Jessup, the Hillside Senior Community Center in Clark Summit on Winola Road, the Dunmore Senior Community Center, North Pocono Senior Community Center, Taylor Senior Community Center, Throop Senior Community Center, and the JCC of Scranton. You are welcome there. Please go there. Cool off, relax, and enjoy, perhaps, some camaraderie, some fun and activities with other people that are also looking to stay cool during this period. We have an opportunity for the public to address the board.

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Thom Welby

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Bill Gaughan

Opportunity for the Public to Address the Board

Joan Hodawanitz, Scranton: Well, I wanna compliment you on addressing this heat wave that we're having. Last night, I was at Scranton City Council, and I asked them, what was the city's plan for our homeless population in Scranton? They weren't aware of any plan. Now, I know that in the wintertime, when the temperature falls below a certain point, I believe it's the county declares a code blue. Is that correct? Okay, and that tells the municipalities that they should exercise their plan blue shelters and other activities so they can protect the public, especially the homeless who need to be protected from the weather. So I said, well, is there a code red? You know, I mean, what do we do when the heat gets, you know, you can have a heat index above 100

degrees. Apparently, heat kills more people than cold. And that's not just the elderly, people who have no air conditioning. It is these people that are gonna be outside all day long. Thank God you read off those places where at least people could get cool. We also need to set up places where they can have access to water.

Commissioner Thom Welby: And that's the questions will be available for all at those locations, yes, free.

Joan Hodawanitz: Now, I probably shouldn't say this, but I'm going to anyway. I see in the winter, a lot of the homeless come to the various libraries in the county because they'll come in there, they'll get warm. They don't cause a problem. They can stay there all day long. Same thing happens during these heat waves that libraries are air conditioned. Unfortunately, the Scranton Public Library will be closed on both Friday and Saturday because of the holidays, the libraries do close. But I would like to see the county give some thought to a parallel code red that maybe they can declare and get some publicity going and put the onus on the municipalities to do something. The only thing that the city was doing was DPW was going to start picking up refuse at 5 a.m. v. 6 a.m. So the DPW workers would be out one hour earlier. But we need to do a hell of a lot more, excuse my French, we need to do a lot more than that. As I told the Scranton City Council, there's a special circle in hell for people who turn a blind eye, whether it's the homeless, the elderly, children, pets, whatever, that we have a moral obligation to make sure we take care of the vulnerable. So I want to give you my compliments for addressing it at today's meeting, thank you.

Commissioner Thom Welby: Thank you. And the compliments deservedly go to the team, the different departments in the county, and they certainly don't do it for acclimation and publicity, but because they feel there's a need and they continue to do it just by natural response. And we have so many people within this county and so many departments in this county that address that specifically and are always watching out for the good of the community. And I feel proud, and I know Chris Chermak and Commissioner Gaughan and the team that you have sitting here feels the same way and is proud to be able to sit here and serve the community. Anyone else to address?

Francis McHale: I live in the 700 block of Moosic Street in South Scranton. And I was here during the winter, I was here to talk about ICE, and unfortunately I have to come back and talk about them again because on Sunday morning, they were roaming around my neighborhood and they were seen by multiple people. In the yards between South Webster and South Irving, as you're going up Mosaic Street, on the left-hand side, so if you were coming up the expressway heading from downtown Scranton to 81, and you look to the right as you're going up there, so it was in that area. And I don't know, I just wanna try to put this in context a little bit from during my time here. I brought in an autobiography of Teddy Roosevelt. I just wanna quote, as he was up here many times before he was president, during his presidency, and after his presidency. He really liked this area. So here he is at one point. Meanwhile, the governor of Pennsylvania had all the Pennsylvania militia in the anthracite region, although without any effect upon the resumption of mining. So the entire militia was up here during the coal strike in 1902. And then in another area, he talks about finally on October 3rd, this would have been 1902, the representatives of both the operators and the miners met before me in pursuance of my request. The representatives of the miners included as their head and spokesman, John Mitchell, who kept his temper admirably and showed too much advantage. The representatives of the operators, on the contrary, came down in a most insolent frame of mind, refused to talk about

arbitration or other accommodation of any kind, and used language that was insulting to the miners and offensive to me. I think that what we have here is, it's a question of power, okay? Powerful people going after the weak. And I think we have history repeating itself here. And I couldn't let this pass. I don't wanna be here. I'd rather be home. But one of my best friends lives right there. And I called him yesterday and he told me, because I heard it from someone else a few days before on Monday. And he confirmed that it absolutely did happen. And Roosevelt talked about the militia here. And I don't know what ICE is. They're not the Army. They're not the Pennsylvania State Police. They're not the local Scranton police. And I guess they're border patrol. But what are they doing roaming around the neighborhoods of Scranton? The Second Amendment talks about a well-regulated militia. I don't consider these so-called agents well-regulated, given their past performance. You know, these people don't wanna be here. A big reason why they're here is the Hispanic immigrant community. And I know them well, because I live in South Side my entire life. I belong, as I told you before, to our church. They're part of our parish. They come here because these countries are unlivable. Mexico, the guns that are flooding in, into Mexico. Claudia Sheinbaum has begged President Trump to do something about the guns. He won't do it, because he's captive to the gun lobby. We had a radical Supreme Court decision in 2008, Heller versus the District of Columbia. And basically, they interpreted the Second Amendment as giving, they unmoored it from the militia. And so now, everyone has a private right to carry arms. That's fine. You have a right to be armed in self-defense. But what we have now is, as far as I'm concerned, it's destabilizing South and Central America. And we have to do something to change it. I appreciate your attention in this matter. Thank you.

Commissioner Thom Welby: I appreciate your compassion regarding this. And I'm familiar with the area you speak of. It's just across the street and up from Wizard Car Wash there, between there and the expressway. I haven't heard, nor has anyone talked to me about this. I did have some people asking me this past week. They thought ICE was up for an incident in mid-valley, up in the Archbald area. But as that turns out, that was law enforcement doing arrests of two people accused of murdering a young man from Scranton up there. But they had a huge team up there from law enforcement officers that were misunderstood as being ICE agents. But it was, as far as I'm concerned, for the good. But your comments and your passion and compassion for this issue is appreciated.

Commissioners' Other Business

Commissioner Chris Chermak: Thank you for coming, everyone. Thank you for your comments. Especially thank you to Sam for coming today. Welcome home. Thank you for your service. Appreciate you being here. And thank you to all our veterans for your service and your sacrifice. Again, just to expand, well, not expand, but to talk about the Scranton Spectacular on Friday night. I'm looking forward to it. It's going to be, it should be a great show. Maureen's put a tremendous, and her team has put a tremendous amount of work into that. And it's going to be a great, great night. So I hope everybody can make it. And the FIFA fan zone is going to be incredible. I just can't wait to see how that goes. It's something brand new to us. So I guess the big boy left this morning. 10 o'clock, he was supposed to leave. That was unbelievable, the amount of people that that attracted. I think the numbers are a little over 80,000 since it's been here. So that was incredible. And it was a great economic boost to our area. So just a phenomenal, phenomenal event. And seeing that was

great. So that was awesome. And congratulations to our Valley View Cougar Girls on their proclamation and on their big win. So all good. But that's all I got.

Commissioner Thom Welby: That's great. And the Valley View Girls, I mean, we have a relatively small community with small school districts and a lot of hometown values here. And to see another one of our teams making it to the state finals, and this one bringing back that state championship is pretty gosh darn cool. I know that we're all incredibly proud of them. And it's been a pretty crazy couple of weeks. And we have some more in front of us with all of the activities and with big boy just leaving this morning. And people will have the opportunity to see that huge, massive, incredible locomotive moving down the tracks. It's heading down towards Duryea as we speak. And we'll continue and wind up in Philadelphia for the celebration of our 250th birthday. And in fact, I'm a big fan Sunday mornings of CBS News Sunday morning at 9 o'clock. And it's just, I think, one of the top news shows on. And there was Scranton, Pennsylvania as one of the top stories in that story this morning. And our superintendent, Jeremy Comas, who is a 30-year Navy veteran, is also a veteran, former Navy SEAL. There he was talking about Scranton, Pennsylvania and Steamtown National Historic Site. It's pretty exciting to have all of those people, upwards of 80,000 or 90,000 people, visiting us over the last two weeks. And now we have Scrantastic on Friday with just an incredible lineup of activities that Maureen and her team have put together. And by the way, I'm not sure the weather is a little iffy. But if it should rain or there should be a storm activity that precludes the fireworks from going off on Friday night, they will go off the following Saturday. So that's around the 9th or 10th? 11th, close. Thank you. So if they have to be postponed, it'll be on the following Saturday, the 11th. For FIFA, Saturday and Sunday, it's going to be awesome on the square. And a lot of work has gone into that with so many activities and so much support from the national organization selecting Scranton as a site for that. Three locations in Pennsylvania being selected, Scranton being one of them. And so the games that we have this weekend are the 4th and 5th. And there'll be a huge screen in front of the federal building. And so from Courthouse Square, you'll be watching it from Courthouse Square, looking towards the federal building. It will be a massive screen there. There will be four other large screens, not quite as large as that, peppered around the square, including at least one of them in Spanish, which, of course, we want to see with the fans that we have visiting from the area that will be here for it. A lot of kids activities there for it, too. The Anvil Kid Zone with inflatable soccer games and soccer target games, obstacle course and slide, skills and drills clinics, an LED soccer simulator, which is very cool. The America 250 Experience is coming into town for this. Of course, we have all of our shops and pubs and restaurants open and celebrating with us on the square. I suppose, Chief, that it might not be appropriate for me to be doing a commercial, but there'll be a Michelob Ultra Beer Garden on Washington Avenue as well. And they are one of the primary sponsors and are heavily responsible for our having that in our area. But it's going to be a great weekend. And it starts off 11 o'clock Saturday morning, goes till 8 o'clock with live bands, including a tribute band to Taylor Swift at 11 o'clock. And they're called Cruel Summer, a live tribute to Taylor Swift. At 1 o'clock is the first knockout game, and that's Canada versus Morocco. 5 o'clock is our second knockout game, which is Paraguay versus France. On Sunday, it starts at 2 o'clock with live music from Echo del Sur. At 4 o'clock, it's our next knockout game, which is Brazil versus Norway. And then we have live music from the Wankers. That's 6 o'clock Sunday, Saturday, Sunday. And then our last game

for Sunday is the knockout round for match two. Following two weeks from that, we have the actual finals for World Cup Soccer. Saturday, July 18th, starting at 3 o'clock in the afternoon with live music from Hanson. Then 3 o'clock, the bronze game will be aired on the square and on the building. Sunday, the 19th, 1 o'clock till 6, live music from Tony, and then the World Cup final. Sunday, the 19th at 3 o'clock. And it's going to be a great time. We're really enjoying all the activity in the Pocono Northeast, and hope that you are too. And please stay well, stay cool, and meeting adjourned.

Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned at 10:44am.