



County of Lackawanna

Lackawanna County
Government Center
123 Wyoming Ave
Scranton, Pennsylvania
18503

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Wednesday, September 3, 2025

10:00 AM

Dunmore Community Center

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10am.

Jim McHugh was selected to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Jim is a member of VFW post 121, in the dog park in Scranton. Jim served for three and a half years as a Bosun Mate, third class in the United States Navy from 1970 to 1973, serving his time on the USS aircraft carrier Forrestal during the Vietnam War. He currently lives in Dunmore, Pennsylvania.

Present 2 - Chris Chermak and Bill Gaughan

Reading and Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Chris Chermak, seconded by Commissioner Bill Gaughan, 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 Bill Gaughan

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

No comments.

Proclamation Presentation

[25-0215](#)

Proclamation declaring the month of September 2025 to be "Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month" in Lackawanna County.

Presented

Commissioner Chris Chermak: I want to mention the 988 number. That's the National Suicide Hotline, if anybody's ever having a crisis, you know, that number is available. And the veteran suicide, you know, that I think what brought me it was when I was first a commissioner, I lost a very close friend. And that was one of the driving forces for me to put together the Suicide Prevention Alliance. And in the last year and a half, we lost three veterans that were close to me.

Resolutions

[25-0220](#)

Approving Current Payables

Attachments: [3H50M38W.pdf](#)
 [3H50M38U.pdf](#)
 [Res 25-0220.pdf](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

25-0213

Approving financing by the Redevelopment Authority of certain projects for the benefit of the Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System, Inc.

Attachments: [Legislative Cover Sheet_Scranton Catholic School.docx](#)
 [Res 25-0213.pdf](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

25-0214

Approving a DCED Election Security Grant

Attachments: [Legislative Cover Sheet-Election Integrity Grant.docx](#)
 [Res 25-0214.pdf](#)

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

Commissioner Bill Gaughan: On the question, I just want to take this opportunity to thank our Director of Elections, Beth Hopkins, and her staff for doing a great, great job. I've been a commissioner now for almost two years. And, it's clear to me, and even talking with officials in the state that we do have one of the best, most efficiently run, elections departments in the whole entire state of Pennsylvania. By accepting this grant today, it's another crucial investment in the democratic process in Lackawanna County. These federal funds, as Director Hopkins mentioned, will strengthen our ability to run elections that are secure, transparent and accessible, covering everything from staffing and training to physical security, ballot printing and voter registration. Administration here in the county, and especially in the context of the, chaos going on nationally in terms of elections, we are reaffirming our commitment to impartial, fair elections grounded in fact, not fear. This grant is more than just a financial boost. It's our pledge that we will stand against politicization, politicization and conspiracy. And we will ensure that every citizen, whether you're voting by mail or voting in person, can participate in a process that they can trust. Thank you.

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

25-0216

Approving an Agreement for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Attachments: [EDSI FINANCIAL AGREEMENT #WIOA-01-PY2025-PY2027 with Payment Schedule for Commissioners - 8-20-2025.pdf](#)
[Legislative Cover Sheet for EDSI WIOA Contract Extension for 7-1-2025 - 6-30-2027.docx 8-20-2025.pdf](#)
[Res 25-0216.pdf](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0217](#)

Entering into an Agreement with Arbor Employment and Training

Attachments: [Equus FINANCIAL AGREEMENT #WIOA-02-PY2025-PY2027 with Payment Schedule for Commissioners - 8-20-2025.pdf](#)
[Legislative Cover Sheet for Equus Workforce Solutions Contract Extension for 7-1-2025 - 6-30-2027.docx 8-20-2025.pdf](#)
[Res 25-0217.pdf](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0218](#)

Entering into an Agreement with Educational Data Systems Inc.

Attachments: [EDSI FINANCIAL AGREEMENT #EARN-01-PY2025-PY2027 with Payment Schedule for Commissioners - 8-20-2025.pdf](#)
[Legislative Cover Sheet for EDSI EARN Contract Extension for 7-1-2025 - 6-30-2027.docx 8-20-2025.pdf](#)
[Res 25-0218.pdf](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0219](#)

Entering into an Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreement

Attachments: [2025 COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT.pdf](#)
[Legislative Cover Sheet Cooperative Agreement PDF.pdf](#)
[Res 25-0219.pdf](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0221](#)

Entering into a Postage Lease Agreement

Attachments: [Postage Pros Plus - 5-Year Lease - Election Bureau lackcounty - 8-27-2025.pdf](#)
 [Postage Pros Plus - 5-Year Lease - Mailroom lackcounty - 8-27-2025.pdf](#)
 [Postage Pro Plus Coversheet.pdf](#)
 [Res 25-0221.pdf](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

25-0212

Appointments to the Lackawanna County Literacy Committee

Attachments: [Appt 25-0212.pdf](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Chris Chermak, seconded by Commissioner Bill Gaughan, that this Appointment be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote.

Commissioner Bill Gaughan: On the question, I just want to thank all of the members of the literacy committee. I have to thank the, previous administration, including Commissioner Cermak, for having the, foresight to create this committee. They're doing really, really good work. When you, Virginia, get up and talk about workforce, it's hard to get a job when you're when you don't know how to read. We see people with severe literacy problems in our prison. We see them coming through our doors in terms of the Office of Youth and Family Services. So this committee is working feverishly to improve the literacy rates across the county, which is in turn going to help us throughout different departments. And had this conversation with Bob Durkin, the head of the Chamber of Commerce, all the time. It's going to help them, too, and it's going to help our workforce. So I just want to thank Sandy Lamana, and all the board members who have done a absolutely tremendous job, in the work they've done.

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

Opportunity for the Public to Address the Board

Janet Brier: I want to thank the commissioners for coming today. It's great. And especially thank Mark Cordelli for keeping us well informed all the time he comes to our meetings. That's great. That's really good information. Oh, so that's that's helpful to do, especially because we have, what, 5 or 6 precincts here. So anyway, the reason I wanted to talk to you guys is I was at the panel discussion last night at Marywood, regarding the data centers, and they, they, they talked about it being a community meeting. There was no one from our communities there. You know, no one from the affected communities. And, I mean, they were there. They just were not able to speak. So, we were also very, very concerned in Dunmore with Senate Bill 497 that would take away, our ability to zone. So I was just wondering what your thoughts were. I mean,

so far, they have the data centers have not come to Dunmore. I'm an accountant. I don't know if they're good, bad or indifferent. All I know is that I think it's being fast tracked a little bit too quickly. And we, especially in Dunmore, but certainly Lackawanna County already have a pretty high pollution load, you know, due to having the largest landfill in the state, located right here in Dunmore. So, I mean, it makes you skeptical of some of these things that seem to be moving at a very quick pace. And I am very, very worried about legislation that would take away our zoning. We just went through a ten year process for SAPA. But we're, you know, we have nine municipalities. It's an ideal situation. And we adopted it two years ago for our zoning. And, it doesn't address data centers. So, my concern is that it's moving too quickly and that there isn't any community input, particularly in the affected communities. But when I say affected, it's going to affect, it's just because it's it affects the grid, the electrical grid and affects, you know, our water supply. So I was just wondering what your thoughts were on, on some of that stuff.

Commissioner Bill Gaughan: So few things. Number one, I totally oppose that Senate bill because I was a councilman in Scranton. And one of the most powerful things that you have as a local, elected official is your zoning board. And the fact that you can control what comes in and will come, what comes out of your, your neighborhood. So I think that, is outrageous that they would even consider that number one. Number two, I think everyone's got to pump the brakes on these data centers. From my research on them, there's two major things people have to worry about. Number one, the consumption of, electricity. So in other parts of the country, our utility rates are already very high here. And that's one of the number one complaints that I hear from people is their power bill is outrageous. My fear is that the data centers come in. There's a number of construction jobs in the interim, which is great long term. There's really not a ton of jobs connected to them. And then your utility bills could potentially skyrocket. The other thing I worry about is the consumption of water. So depending on what type of data center is built, it's my understanding that they use an awful lot of water. So I would be concerned about our water bills and our sewer bills skyrocketing as well. I also am paying close attention to what's happening in North Pocono and in the Mid Valley. And I feel like, the voices and the rights of the people really are being ignored. And then a developer up in the Mid Valley essentially, you know, suggested that he would leave a dump, on the property if he didn't get approval for the data center. I just think that's like that anytime big business comes in and flashes a big check and says, this is great, that should automatically cause people to take pause. So I have serious reservations about it.

Janet Brier: What what can you do? I mean, as commissioners, I don't even know, you know, what powers you have.

Commissioner Bill Gaughan: So we have, our planning department will serve in an advisory role. And, Don, I don't know if you want to shed any light on that, but I don't believe that we have any. There's there's really no teeth to that.

Solicitor Don Frederickson: Yeah, really. It's a local zoning issue with the county really has no authority over that. There's no legislation enacting the authority with the county.

Commissioner Bill Gaughan: But I do think that where we can be effective is to continue to speak out and to support the communities throughout Lackawanna County who, quite frankly, are being trampled over right now.

Janet Brier: It's pretty scary. It's reminiscent of past, progress. Is it to take advantage of us without the tax return?

Mike Giannetta, Scott Township: I'd like to address the issue of the vacant county commissioners seat. The people are really tired of all of the lawsuits and the appeals and this whole issue dragging on, and we need to have a special election and let the taxpayers, the people of this county, decide who the next commissioners should be for the next two years. You know, I ever since Matt McGloin left, I heard from everybody they wanted a special election. They didn't like the court making the appointment. They didn't like any backroom deals. They thought there should be a special election. And I see where the Democratic Party is now going into court with another lawsuit trying to stop a special election and take the right of the people away from deciding who the next commissioners should be. And, the issue seems to be that the legal issue seems to be that the Board of Elections doesn't have the authority to schedule a special election. Well, I think the Board of Commissioners has that authority. And, I would like to see the Board of Commissioners right here, right now pass a motion authorizing a special election, so that the voters of the township, or, excuse me, of voters of Lackawanna County. I'm so used to always referencing the township, but no, I think that, you have the authority. If you passed a resolution scheduling or a motion scheduling a special election. I think that makes, the decision by the Board of Elections moot. And I think the special election goes forward, and the taxpayers, voters of the township would have the township. I mean, the county, would have the final say on who gets the appointment, or, you know, to fill out the remaining two years. And I'd like to see you do that today. Thank you.

Michelle Tierney, Glenburn Township: I agree with Mike. It's time. We the people have waited long enough. I think it's very important for us to understand what a special election means, what the time frame is. And I think it's time for a special election. And Mrs. Hopkins is here. Could you share with the community what you shared with me? In the event that if you choose to be a candidate running for the seat, what that means. Thank you.

Director Beth Hopkins: So when a special election is called, each major political party gets to, use a nomination certificate to put their candidate on the ballot. So it's a little bit of different paperwork. Anyone else who's interested in getting their name on the ballot would have to, disaffiliation from one of the major political parties. And switch their party to either an independent, no affiliation. And then they would, circulate what's called nomination papers. They are required to get 863 signatures. They can get those from any registered voter in the county, regardless of their party affiliation. The reason the amount of signatures is 863, you take 2% of the last highest vote, in a municipal election, and that was in 2023. And it was Coroner Tim Rollins. So it would be 2% of that highest vote, 41,000 something. I don't have that number off the top of my head right now. All that paperwork would be due in our office by 4 p.m. on September 15th. If anybody has any further questions about it, they should contact our office. They can come down and talk to us in person. We're happy to give them the paperwork.

Andrew Payne, Old Forge: Want to talk with you about a proposed, anti-discrimination ordinance, county wide, similar to the ones in Dickson City and Scranton. And I want to talk about the necessity for that to be a county wide ordinance and not, you know, municipality by municipality, because when you do it, municipality by municipality, it leads to a patchwork of different, you know, policies where, you know, you live right in here, you're protected, you live half a block down, you're not. And a good case study of this is Snyder Avenue in Taylor Borough, where two houses that are right next to each other, 1254 Snyder and 1258 Snyder, their next door neighbors. One of them happens to live in the city of Scranton, the other in Taylor Borough. Now, I don't know about the commissioners or anyone else here, but I personally don't think that, you know, you're whether or not you have anti-discrimination protections should depend on what side of the street you happen to live on. So I'd love for the commissioners to vote in favor of a broad based anti-discrimination ordinance for Lackawanna County. Thank you.

Commissioner Bill Gaughan: Solicitor Frederickson is in the process of putting together a memo to Commissioner Chermak and I, because he is currently doing research on that very point that you just brought up. Because when we were down in Moosic having our commissioners meeting, there were several people who stated what you had just said. So he hasn't issued that yet but I believe that will be coming his research and that will be coming soon, and then we'll be able to to act on it or not act on it. Thank you.

Alec Walker Serrano, Binghamton: Hi. I was here about a month ago. Also speaking about a nondiscrimination ordinance for Lackawanna County. My name is Alec Walker Serrano. I live in Binghamton, New York, but I work and volunteer in Lackawanna County. I was born and raised here, and all of my family lives here. So I just wanted to share a little bit about a canvassing experience that I had last weekend. We went to canvass and knocked on doors in Taylor to talk to people about how they feel about a nondiscrimination ordinance, whether they think it's something that they need and we had a bunch of in-depth conversations with many of our neighbors who indicated they definitely want this policy and they personally need it, because either they themselves are part of the LGBTQ community or part of their family is, and they've personally either experienced or witnessed somebody that they care about going through discrimination. I also spoke last time about friends who are having difficulty finding housing simply because they are transgender and their name that they use in their everyday life doesn't match what's on their paperwork. It's not because they don't have enough money. It's not because they don't have a job. It has nothing to do with that. It's just the fact that they're a little bit different than you are. I, so I really just want to be up here to speak for people who weren't able to be here today. Several of the people whose doors we knocked on, it was the first time I was ever talking to them. I don't personally live in Taylor. But they indicated they would have like to be here, if they were able to. But they have other obligations. It's difficult to be at a 10:00 meeting. It's easy for myself because this is my job to represent and stand up for my community. So I also want to highlight, though, that we're not just talking about protecting LGBTQ folks. We're not just talking about protecting people based on things like their race or ethnicity or their disability, but also their housing status. I have friends and I have myself personally experienced bouts of homelessness, and that has made it really difficult for myself and others to have a record of being housed. And then even if you have a job, even if you have the money to rent a place or buy a place simply

because you haven't been housed, you don't have that record of being home housed. You might be discriminated against even if you have the ability to afford that place to live. So I want to make sure that our unhoused neighbors are also considered in this, especially, in the context of Keystone mission closing, of housing costs, rising, more people than ever in the United States and in Pennsylvania at risk of homelessness. So it's important for us to ensure that even those who are unhoused, those are often forgotten, are included in this policy. Thank you.

Commissioners' Other Business

Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned at 10:51am.