



County of Lackawanna

Lackawanna County
Government Center
at The Globe
123 Wyoming Ave
Scranton, Pennsylvania
18503

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Wednesday, September 1, 2021

10:00 AM

Moosic Borough Building

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10am.

Commissioner Chermak: Moment of silence for the service members who died in Afghanistan.

Commissioner Domenick: thank you to Moosic Borough for allowing us to be here today: James Segilia – Mayor; Stan Kania – Council President; Charles Maurer – Council Vice President; John Tilberry – Councilman; Bob Besecker – Councilman; James Norton – Councilman; James Thomas – Councilman; Scott Flanagan – Councilman; Borough Manager – Jane Sterling and Borough Solicitor – Atty. John Brazil.

Present 3 - Chris Chermak, Debi Domenick and Jerry Notarianni

Reading and Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Chris Chermak, seconded by Commissioner Jerry Notarianni, to dispense with the Reading and Approve as Prepared. The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye: 3 - Chris Chermak, Debi Domenick and Jerry Notarianni

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

No comments

Proclamation Presentation

Commissioner Domenick: State representative Bridgette Kosierowski, State Representative for 114th district, and a friend of mine- I'd like to call you to give a proclamation.

State Representative Bridgette Kosierowski: Good morning, everyone. I'm pleased to be here today to award this proclamation to my good friend Jason Kavulich. Many more whereas' I will be reading here this morning for him, unbelievably well deserved. Jason was an invaluable source for us here in Lackawanna County. During COVID-19, so it is an honor for me to do this today for you. Whereas the House of Representatives of Pennsylvania is always pleased to acknowledge those individuals who, through professional excellence, bring great credit to themselves in this commonwealth. Jason Kavulich is being honored with the 2021, friend of County Government award by the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, CCAP. The Friend

of County Government Award is lauded as a highest honor CCAP bestows upon a nonmember currently serving as current director of Lackawanna County Area Agency on Aging. Mr Kavulich was selected to receive this award for his leadership, commitment and creation of the programs and response to COVID 19 pandemic. Throughout his tenure, he has demonstrated remarkable knowledge, ability, and integrity and carrying out his many responsibilities, thus earning the respect and gratitude of all those who received the benefits of his tireless devotion to duty. The House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, congratulate Jason Kavulich upon his well-deserved recognition, proudly notes, his exemplary reward record of service and contributions, and keeping with the highest ideals of the Commonwealth offers best wishes for his continued, and many worthwhile and beneficial endeavors. So, thank you very much.

[21-0232](#)

Proclamation declaring the month of September 2021 to be “Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month” in Lackawanna County.

Presented

Kathy Wallace: I want to thank everyone for the proclamation. It really means a lot to our Lackawanna County residents who have lost someone to suicide and who fight that feeling of wanting to end your life every day. And I'd especially like to thank Chris Chermak for helping us establish Lackawanna County Suicide Prevention Alliance, of which all the county offices and committee members, almost 100 members of the alliance, in order to make Lackawanna County a safer more welcoming to people who have thoughts of suicide and to families who've lost someone to suicide. So, thank you thank you, Chris, very much.

Commissioner Chermak: You're welcome. I was going to speak on that in a minute. The reason this whole thing got started with our county suicide prevention alliances was Kathy Wallace approached me September 12th of 2020. She said that we would like to create this group and we've been striking out for the past few years. So, we had it in a couple of months with the help of Marie Onukiavage from NAMI and with Maryann Colbert from Behavioral Health here and it just snowballed. We have great meetings and I think we're going to help a lot of people. It gets it gets the information out people today and it's growing every day. Thank you, everybody for all their assistance and I do want to get a picture with the proclamation before we leave. Thank you. What phone number do we use now for the Suicide Prevention Alliance? I know we have the 211 number, but is there another one?

Maryann Colbert: For interested community members who are interested in joining the Lackawanna County Suicide Prevention Alliance, they can call the County Behavioral Health Intellectual Disability program office at 570-346-5741. For any individual who's having thoughts of suicide, they should call 211 or 911. They can also call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1- 800- 273- t-a-l-k . Marie probably has some additional comments.

Marie Onukiavage: I just want to echo everyone's gratitude for this Marie Onukiavage with Nami in Scranton, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. We provide support education information to anybody who's struggling with their mental health, individuals, family members, friends, etc. I am so very grateful for how this alliance has taken off, as Commissioner Chermak said, it

was just within a matter of weeks. I believe it was the end of September when we first as a small group and by December we're meeting as a large group. In addition to the number that Maryann Colbert shared we also have a Facebook page which has our meetings pinned to the top of that page. We meet the second Tuesday of each month at five o'clock at the 911 Center in Jessup and anyone with an interest is welcome. Those meetings are also hybrid, so they're also on zoom, you would need to contact the county offices to get access to that link or just show up and introduce yourself at the meetings. We know one in five of us struggle with our mental health and we know that at least that many struggle with either thoughts of suicide or losing someone to suicide, when you know suicide it's not an individual experience. It's an experience that affects everybody. I think I'm guessing most of us here in one way or another have been touched by that. So please, consider being a part of it, or at least supporting our efforts and thank you to everyone.

Kathy Wallace: There is a suicide prevention walk at Nay Aug September 11, at nine o'clock, and we'd like to invite you.

Commissioner Domenick: You three ladies are a wealth of information.

[21-0233](#)

Proclamation declaring the month of September 2021 to be "Blood Cancer Awareness Month" in Lackawanna County.

Presented

Resolutions

[21-0226](#)

Approving Current Payables

Attachments: [3H50E8H6](#)
[3H50E8H2](#)
[Res 21-0226](#)
[signed Accounts Payables](#)

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

Aye: 3 - Chris Chermak, Debi Domenick and Jerry Notarianni

[21-0227](#)

Entering into a Cooperation Agreement with the Borough of Dunmore

Attachments: [Stafursky Agreement](#)
[Chestnut Street-Dunmore Borough](#)
[Res 21-0227](#)
[signed CoOperation Agreement Dunmore Stafursky Paving](#)

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

Aye: 3 - Chris Chermak, Debi Domenick and Jerry Notarianni

[21-0228](#)

Awarding the Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program Grant Construction Contract

Attachments: [Scr Vet Mem Park Phase II Contract](#)
[Res 21-0228](#)
[signed Scranton Veterans Memorial Park Chilewski](#)

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

Aye: 3 - Chris Chermak, Debi Domenick and Jerry Notarianni

[21-0229](#)

Entering into a Web Services Sales Agreement

Attachments: [Revize Website Sales Agreement for Lackawanna County PA 08262021](#)
[Res 21-0229](#)
[signed Web Services Sales Agreement Revize LLC](#)

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

Aye: 3 - Chris Chermak, Debi Domenick and Jerry Notarianni

[21-0230](#)

Approving an Extension with PennDOT

Attachments: [signed PENNDOT Authorization](#)
[4th Street Bridge Extension Sample 2022_Reimb Agmt](#)
[Res 21-0230](#)
[signed PennDOT 4th Street Bridge Replacement Clifton](#)

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

Aye: 3 - Chris Chermak, Debi Domenick and Jerry Notarianni

[21-0231](#)

Entering into a Letter of Amendment

Attachments: [04R100D - Letter of Amendment](#)
[Res 21-0231](#)
[signed PennDOT College Road Bridge Replacement LaPlume](#)

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

Aye: 3 - Chris Chermak, Debi Domenick and Jerry Notarianni

Opportunity for the Public to Address the Board

Jason Kavulich: If I just could have a few minutes, I wanted to say how much I appreciate it this honor today, but it's an honor for all of Lackawanna County and I would not be the person I am without getting up here and telling everyone that this was an entirely a team effort from three commissioners that supported everything we needed to do in our community to take care of our public health to our chief of staff to individuals like Brenda Sacco, Joe D'Arienzo, Rick Notari, behind me, Conio and Tom Arduino back at the building. Mark Dougher and his entire team and all our EMA and emergency management crew, this was a massive effort by Lackawanna County, and we only did it because we all work well together. We worked as a team, and we're provided an environment that we can serve the community the best we can. So, why I'm humbled and appreciative today I could not thank my colleagues and friends and tell everyone what an honor it is to serve with them every day. So, thank you.

Commissioners' Other Business

Commissioner Notarianni: I just want to thank Moosic Borough officials, suicide prevention awareness, blood cancer. People don't realize what went on in Lackawanna County with this vaccination program. It's the fact that is other than the two counties that had hospital systems. No one even came close to Lackawanna County and that was due to the efforts of Brian Jeffers, Jason Kavulich and a whole bunch of other people that were the spearhead of it and it made a difference. I mean, as difficult as COVID is, it's not going well. It is a surge and someone who works with Jason and Bill Browning has begun to create and Human Services Health Department and they have hired a legitimate epidemiologist. There was a meeting Monday and she said it's a real concern, we should be cautious in what we do and if we can get the rest of the people vaccinated it will be very helpful. We have three offices in the building now that have cases and they're all vaccinated but they're not in the hospital and they're not getting deathly, however they're still getting COVID. This is this is a serious event, and we can't let our guard down. We're going to keep fighting and again thanks to Brian Jeffers, Jason and a whole bunch of other people. Hopefully we're going in the right direction, other than that, I just want to thank everybody and have a nice day.

Commissioner Chermak: I want to thank everybody for coming as well on this nice rainy day. Last meeting, we tabled a motion that I wanted to start reading correspondence from public via email. So, I'd like I'd like to make a motion to un-table the motion. I'd like to do that today.

Commissioner Notarianni: I think the way this is trending; we may very well be back in virtual and be back on the zoom meeting. I don't have an issue with this, but I think that we wait and see before we get to that point, so that's all I have to say about that.

Commissioner Domenick: I mean, I think that we should keep the Status Quo which is in person while we're in person and then if we go to virtual, we will go back to accepting emails. That's my opinion as well.

Attorney LaBelle: Frank, correct me if I'm wrong but if Chris made a motion to

un-table his previous motion, I believe that must be voted on?

Attorney Ruggiero: Well, it does. If there's a second, so there's a motion on the table if there's a second then we would discuss obviously on the question and then take a vote. So, there's a motion. I don't know if there's a second.

Commissioner Domenick: No.

Commissioner Chermak: We still have my email address if anybody has any concerns. Its Chermakc@Lackawannacounty.org . Secondly, it goes back to the delinquent taxpayers in Scranton. There's a situation, we must find some answers, but I got multiple liens that were filed, and they were all sent to 388 Ocean Ave, Revere Massachusetts. I don't understand if these were filed incorrectly or if they all went there and these are just 15 or so samples here. If these people were not properly served, I just don't know so we must get an answer to that.

Attorney Ruggiero: I can say, Commissioner Chermak did apprise me prior to the meeting that he had received that email and I indicated to him that I would certainly look into it. I don't know Commissioner if it's a matter of the liens were filed against obviously city properties and the owner of those properties is in Massachusetts. I don't know if that's the case, but I will get an answer to the question.

Commissioner Chermak: They're all different people. It seems to be a computer issue or, I have no idea what it is.

Attorney Ruggiero: I will get an answer on that.

Commissioner Chermak: In the paper the other day was the upset sale and there was no property from Scranton listed there. I continue to say we're treating these people in Scranton different than the people in the rest of the county. It's just something that we need to look into and make sure that everybody is being treated fairly. And again, we must make sure that these liens and notices are all sent to the proper addresses and these people were properly notified. We'll look into that.

Commissioner Notarianni: City of Scranton is treated differently because the city of Scranton is different than any other city in the Commonwealth. It's a class 2A city. That's what the state law says, we've gone over this.

Commissioner Domenick: I feel like it's Groundhog Day.

Commissioner Notarianni: It is the only current city that can we do that with, and they've asked us to do it. They drafted the legislation. They passed the legislation. They signed the legislation. This is not something we just made up. Mr. Chermak voted yes on this one. Now it becomes a political football. We tried to have a meeting.

Attorney Ruggiero: We're patient with the city as far as setting a meeting we're willing to do that the city's willing to do that and that's our plan to do that. We're just literally logistically trying to coordinate we tried to do it yesterday. We tried to do it today. The plan is to do it hopefully within the next week. We're just waiting to hear back from the city now on some proposed dates.

Commissioner Notarianni: And again, they collected much more money than they did in previous years.

Commissioner Domenick: 700,000 to \$750,000 and we anticipate them making somewhere around 6 or \$7 million by the end of the year.

Commissioner Notarianni: They paid private firms to do this collection.

Commissioner Chermak: I would like to be a part of this meeting; I knew nothing about a meeting.

Commissioner Domenick: It hasn't been scheduled yet. The last meeting was held with the attorneys and our chief of staff, and I made it I personally clear that I think that we need us officials, the commissioners and the mayor will have to be present for the next meeting. You will get notice of it.

Attorney Ruggiero: You will commissioner as well everyone, everyone's been copied on the email string. So, literally we are just simply looking to schedule the meeting and we have requested all elected officials be present, the three county commissioners as well as the mayor

Commissioner Domenick: Stacey Lange was very nice with WNEP. She did a little segment last night on my police training. I just wanted to get it out there again. So, the county partnered with Lackawanna college for a police training which is going to address six areas: Behavioral health and substance abuse de-escalation, individuals of special needs and mental health, issues with human perceptions and how they affect behavior communications, bias, profiling and procedural justice, sensitivity, diversity, and inclusion. Basically, in a nutshell, we're trying to address de-escalation and giving the police the proper tools to not only keep situations, regardless of if they're at somebody's home or if they're pulling somebody over, but that they have the proper tools to make sure that the situation does not escalate into an issue of violence. The main parts that I really wanted to focus on in which we are the de-escalation, the racial profiling and bias because sometimes there is conscious or unconscious bias and people with mental health and substance abuse, or police officers need to understand that these people have illnesses and that they need to be addressed in a certain way. So last night she did interview Scranton Chief of Police Leonard Namiotka. He plans to send his officers to the training. So, I'm just asking for all the other chiefs in the county to please send your officers to this training. Right now, we have four dates. September 13th, 20th, 24th and the 27th. Monday the 13th and Monday the 20th is 3:30pm until 8pm and then the 24th and the 27th are 8:30am to 1:00 pm. It's at our 911 Center, food and beverages will be provided. We're also when I attended the Chiefs meeting one other issue was who's going to pay for the overtime or the backfill when they send their officers to this training, we are , so first anyone who wants to attend this training has to pre-register on our website and on our Facebook page. The Chiefs will have to ,submit a form with Brenda Sacco, The Economic Development Department, for reimbursement of any overtime or backfill so there's really no downside. It's four and a half hours of CLE's and are MPOETC approved which means that they will go toward their continuing education. It was funded by Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Lackawanna County Economic Development Office through the economic development community development initiatives grant program. So please if

you know anyone or no police officers or the Chiefs just get the word out and please have them sign up hopefully if it's successful schedule dates in the future. Right now, we're targeting the police officers in the county but we're hoping to then move on to Sheriff's Department, our correctional officers, and our detectives in the DA's office. Anyone who comes into contact with the general public who may have any type of issue, we never had an issue like George Floyd or all those other incidents of violence that you see on the news, and we don't ever want to have one. This is just a being proactive. We have great police officers, but you can always learn something. That's what we're hoping to accomplish here.

Marie Onukiavage: I'm not sure how this works. Can I add something to that?

Commissioner Domenick: Sure.

Marie Onukiavage: For community awareness we do have a CIT program. We have had a Crisis intervention Team program in our in northeast Pennsylvania since 2010. We've trained over 600 officers. CIT is a 40-hour evidence base internationally recognized program Mental Health First Aid. This Sounds like it would be a compliment to that 40-hour program we've offered reimbursement in the past. We've had law enforcement corrections officers, detectives and DAs as Commissioner Dominic said, anybody whose job takes them into contact with somebody who might be in a mental health crisis. Law enforcement officers are trained to recognize mental health issues. They're trained in de-escalation. They get six hours de-escalation and then four hours role playing of those skills that they learn. They're exposed to individual who live with mental illness exposed to family members. There's a site visit that's involved. That's existed since 2010. I'm happy to hear that we have another program that may come implement that, but I just wanted to let folks know that Lackawanna County, it started in Scranton and spread to other counties. We have trained Park Rangers from the Delaware water gap and up. We've trained our Lackawanna County Prison heads.

Commissioner Domenick: Can ask you a question? Where do they find information on it?

Marie Onukiavage: You can call me. Marie Onukiavage from NAMI. I'm one of the coordinators of this program. My phone number is 570-342-1047

Commissioner Domenick: Will they receive or are there MPOETC approved credits for that?

Marie Onukiavage: There's not MPOETC approved credits for that. We worked on you know trying to get them for them for Mental Health First Aid but it's a free 40-hour evidence-based program that does address mental health, folks with intellectual disabilities and does address drug and alcohol and we do have a cultural awareness and element to the program. It was chosen in response to the shooting death of Brenda Williams in 29. As a program that best fit our community's needs because of its flexibility, we are having a larger group of older adults in our community so we can make sure that we address older adults and mental health and autism. We can have somebody come in and it's all Local presenters who are doing it so not only do they get the experience and the information, but they learn about the real sources that are in the community. Scattered though out the 40-hour week, we have folks from

area agency on aging folks from community intervention center from all different resources of the community that can come in and do little talks about their resources, so officers are more aware of what's available to them. We know very often it's a mental health crisis but here's something else driving that crisis and so if they can get them help and get them get connected to those services. Folks from Scranton Counseling Center are educated in the mental health procedures act and so the officers understand what criteria needs to be met for somebody to be involuntarily hospitalized because we found that was a great frustration and was a real roadblock for officers not understanding that act and once, they had a greater understanding and once they had access to resources, it helps them to respond to those folks better.

Commissioner Domenick: Thank you. I know as an attorney and Frank and Donny can speak to this continuing legal education courses can be somewhat painful at times. I mean nobody likes to do it but, that's why we made sure that these were MPOETC approved. It shouldn't be the sole motivation for these officers to go but we tried to give the added benefit because they work hard and I get them, not wanting to have to go to the additional training additional time away from their family. That's why we did that, and we did work very closely with John Chiliary from Lackawanna County College to make sure these courses are very progressive and that they're not duplicative of what is offered in Act 120. I love your idea as well and hopefully we can get the police officers motivated and just be proactive and prevent any problems from happening.

Chief of Staff Brian Jeffers: Commissioner Notarianni had already mentioned we met on Monday and the reason we met on Monday with Dr. Charles and other county officials was that Sunday night, Lackawanna County it was the last county to be raised into the high category for transmission rates. We are border line right now, but it is project to rise continuously as Dr. Charles does data every day. We'll continue to monitor this going into Friday. We'll probably have another meeting on Tuesday the day after Labor Day and see where we are. They'll end up coming back with recommendations for the commissioners to put into place like if we're going to be moving to virtual meanings. There has been some breakthrough case as Mr Notarianni had said it's individuals who've had runny nose and stuff like that got tested and they tested positive, however, we still must have them out of work. Our vaccination rate for 12 years old and above is 71% at this point, our target date for 80% fully vaccinated for 12 years old and above is November 1. We have a clinic coming up this Friday, September 3rd from 12pm to 4pm at the farmers markets in Scranton 900 Barring Avenue. As everyone could hear, we can hear the rain pounding the top of the roof, the 6am meeting that we had today about National Weather Service is predicting 4 to 6 inches of rain in our county.

Commissioner Domenick: So, we are going to keep our eye on the ball going forward and make determinations as to whether we will switch to zoom or a staggered staff?

Chief of Staff Jeffers: Yes. We will know probably the week after Labor Day.

Commissioner Domenick: Please we are encouraging you to get vaccinated so we can move forward.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerry Notarianni, seconded by Commissioner Debi Domenick, that this be Adjourned at 10:55am. The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye: 3 - Chris Chermak, Debi Domenick and Jerry Notarianni