



County of Lackawanna

Lackawanna County
Government Center
123 Wyoming Ave
Scranton, Pennsylvania
18503

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Wednesday, October 1, 2025

10:00 AM

Commissioners' Conference Room

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10am.

Leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance is Melissa Hughes, currently working for the Department of Defense, serving as a special agent for the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency covering the northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. Melissa is also a member of the American Legion Post 411 Michael Steiner in Jessup, Pennsylvania. Also joining Melissa today is her service dog, goose. Goose and Melissa graduated from the stand with Me program in 2022, a nonprofit service dog organization based in Binghamton, New York. Specializing in training service animals for veterans. Melissa served in the Naval Reserve Center in Avoca from 2003 to 2011, served two tours of active duty with the first Naval Construction Division out of Little Creek, Virginia, and she currently resides in Jessup, Pennsylvania.

Present 2 - Chris Chermak and Bill Gaughan

Reading and Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Chris Chermak, seconded by 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

Penn State Extension

Resolutions

[25-0236](#)

Approving Current Payables

Attachments:

[Res 25-0236.pdf](#)

[3H50M8V8.pdf](#)

[3H50M8V7.pdf](#)

[signed approving current payables](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0229](#)

Approving and Entering into a Consulting Services Agreement

Attachments: [ProfServiceAgrmntMarianni.docx](#)
[Res 25-0229.pdf](#)
[Signed Consulting Agreement Controller's](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0230](#)

Approving a Support Services Agreement

Attachments: [DA Toxicology](#)
[res 25-0230](#)
[signed agreement northern tier research](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0231](#)

Entering into a Memorandum of Understanding

Attachments: [OYFS-Legislative Cover-MOU with OUTREACH-2025-2026 10-1-25 Mtg](#)
[res 25-0231](#)
[signed MOU Outreach Adopt an Angel](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0232](#)

Entering into an Agreement with the University of Pittsburgh

Attachments: [res 25-0232](#)
[OYFS-Legislative Cover-CWEL for Elizabeth Maros 2025-2027 10-1-25 Mtg](#)
[res 25-0232](#)
[signed agreement u of pitt](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0233](#)

Approving an OYFS Addendum

Attachments: [OYFS-Legislative Cover-Addendum for Outreach- 2025-2026](#)
[res 25-0233](#)
[signed contract addendum OYFS outreach](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0234](#)

Entering into a Grant Agreement for Area Agency on Aging

Attachments: [Legislative Cover Sheet-Aging GRANT AGREEMENT](#)
[res 25-0234](#)
[signed older adult services grant agreement](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0235](#)

Approving the Financing by the Redevelopment Authority for Certain Projects for the Benefit of The Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System, Inc.

Attachments: [Res 25-0235.pdf](#)
[Legislative Cover Sheet _CSS_ Lack County_ 2025\(3736261.2\).docx](#)
[2nd resolution lack count approval diocese of scranton css](#)
[note 2025\(3779823.1\).docx](#)
[signed redevelopment authority dioceses](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0241](#)

Entering into an Agreement with Edge Insights

Attachments: [WCMMA 11-1-2025 Lackawanna.pdf](#)
[Legislative Cover Sheet Edge Insights Contract Renewal 2025](#)
[2026.docx](#)
[Res 25-0241.pdf](#)
[signed agreement edge insights](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0242](#)

Approving a Contract Extension

Attachments: [2024 2025 Waste Management - 1 year extension.pdf](#)
 [Copy of Lackawanna County - Price Sheet - 2025 2026 - WM.xlsx](#)
 [Legislative Cover Sheet CSS Lack County 2025\(3736261.2\).docx](#)
 [Res 25-0242.pdf](#)
 [signed contract ext waste management](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0237](#)

Authorizing the submission of an application to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development

Attachments: [Res 25-0237.pdf](#)
 [Legislative Cover Sheet CDBG.docx](#)
 [signed PCED grant submission](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0238](#)

Designating a Fair Housing Officer

Attachments: [Res 25-0238.pdf](#)
 [Legislative Cover Sheet Fair Housing.docx](#)
 [signed fair housing officer](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0239](#)

Designating a Section 3 Compliance Officer

Attachments: [Legislative Cover Sheet Section 3.docx](#)
 [Res 25-0239.pdf](#)
 [signed section 3 compliance officer](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

[25-0240](#)

Appointment to the Workforce Development Board

Attachments: [Appt 25-0240.pdf](#)
 [signed wdb appt](#)

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

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan

Opportunity for the Public to Address the Board

Michelle Tierney, Glenburn Township: My first, comment is with the for each with Christian mental health is an incredible crisis. Is your forum that you're having advertised in all the school districts? Because I think families all across could only learn from any education they can to help in the kinship and helping support children. So is it advertised in all the school districts? Okay. Thank you, thank you. My next thing is I just want to comment on the, Commissioner's perseverance in getting a special election for the seat that is vacant. It has been seven months since we the people, have asked to have a fair opportunity to vote in the person to sit next to both of you. I want to commend you for your perseverance in sticking the course and having faith in our judicial system to continue to understand that we the people, select who we want to serve us. That my next thing is the reassessment. Is there a final date that the reassessed, values of homes need to be sent in and on November 5th it needs to be certified by November 15th, November 15th? I during your, speech, after And if there are issues with that, and if there is any reason that you believe that there should be a hold off or a stall and understand what the consequences are, that I learned that you were on a, talk radio station trying to educate the community on the process and where we stand now. Unfortunately, I wasn't in town to hear it. I appreciate you doing that. The more knowledge we all have and understanding this process, I think for it to have in completion, it is important that the person sitting in that seat that's elected in that seat understands that this is a process that you have put in place that we have voted for in place. And it should be completed. So I, I would like you both to speak on where we stand with this to date. And if there's any need to stall this and what that stall would mean. Thank you.

thank you. Would anyone else like to address the board?

00:36:29:27 - 00:36:59:10

Unknown

Bob Bolus, Scranton: And you can start calming down Mr. Gordon. The hospitals, I believe, should become employee owned here in the city of Scranton. You're looking for somebody to buy us. You have all the connections with your state senators, congressman, all state representatives. They have deep pockets. Let them fund the hospitals and make them employee owned. We don't need somebody coming in here to tell us how to do it. Well, we already have the talent here to do it. They'll be dedicated, and doctors and nurses could work from one hospital to the other, whether it's Geisinger or Lehigh Valley. But to sit here and keep saying we need a buyer for, Bridget and all them and Flynn, we don't need a buyer. We have everything we need right here, now. Let them fund the hospitals to be employee owned. They'll pay taxes to the city. And that's a hell of a benefit that we have. We don't need another dictator in the community. If anybody paid attention, I brought up about PTSD clinics. They've been ignored. You just take a look at the shootings

in the last couple of weeks. Two former Marines, one shot in the head. The other one, issues. Remember, when you're in the service, whether it was in the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, you're trained to be a killer of the enemy. And people seem to forget that are people. PTSD affects everyone. Anyone in this room, including yourself, can be infected with PTSD from something that went on in the tragedy or whatever. And, I'm offering the use the church that I have here in Scranton is a PTSD clinic. I just want to see some of you worry about the individuals that need the treatment. And we don't have one here. I have a clinical psychologist that I've had here at, genome early. We had them at the VA. They're just ignorant on what they need to do to treat people because it's dollars and cents. The tax assessments here are a total joke. Young lady just spoke about them. They're absolutely ridiculous. Tyler has been sued in many counties already for their ignorance. I have a lawsuit to reverse the 33% tax and the assessment that's all a joke. Yeah, it's against the people. Yes. Tyler has been sued. People could contact me at (570) 346-7659 to join our class action suit to reverse what you and everybody else has done here, to take away from the people in this community. What a fantasy. Of what? It's assessment. I was here a couple of weeks ago when an individual, kept claiming that he wants to see the queers get protection from the county. They killed Charlie Kirk. Let them understand what's going on in this country. We're the ones. And our government officials need the protection from the president and on down last, I brought up about McGloin's name here, yet it's still on the commissioner thing here. I'd like to see it removed. If we take a look at what's going on in our community, business wise or otherwise, they want to start building all these, like, training centers throughout the area. They're going to allow a one to take over the brainpower of the people in this community. And it's a fallacy. We don't need it. I think we all have a brain and we could use it. We've been using it for centuries. And, to sit back here and see what's going on in this county, including between you and, Mr. Chermak, I think is an insult to the people here to allow it to get to that point. We need another commissioner here. And last, I like to know how much money the county paid on your behalf, whether it's for your representation or not, to that law firm. So we get to the bottom of what you're trying to do to take it from the taxpayers. But this community, we have a right to stand up for what's being spent. If you want to spend your money, you spend it on your on a list, lawsuits being filed when you had the sheriff removed me, destroyed the whole back corner of my shoulder blade area and Mr.. Go ahead and I'll see. Thank you.

Joan Hodowanitz, Scranton: When will the draft budget be released to the public?

Commissioner Bill Gaughan: Yeah. October 15th.

Okay. Is your commissioners meeting here or elsewhere on that day?

Commissioner Bill Gaughan: It is here.

Joan Hodowanitz: Okay. Thank you. I want to confirm something I've been told. When will the new commissioner be sworn in?

Solicitor Don Frederickson: There's no date, exactly. It's upon certification of the election. So it depends on how long it takes to you.

Joan Hodowanitz: So it can be this year can be before January?

Solicitor Don Frederickson: It'll be some point in November, but it depends on how long it takes for the certification. Because this year is a it's a municipal election. So there's a lot of there's a lot of write ins that are going to have to be canvased as part of that, because a lot of these township like controllers and that nobody files.

Joan Hodowanitz: Well, I have been told would be January and that that raised some concerns about not being available for voting on the reassessment

or the budget. So that puts that to rest. But I understand if, the budget's not passed, what would happen in that scenario. But what I want to know is if the commissioners do not vote to certify reassessment, what happens?

Commissioner Bill Gaughan: So we don't actually vote to certify reassessment. It's not a vote by the commissioner, is it? The assessment office has to certify them correct?

Solicitor Don Frederickson: Correct. Under the Assessment Act, the assessment Office has to certify the numbers by November 15th.

Joan Hodowanitz: Okay. So we don't have to worry about the reassessment not being certified, just that they make the deadline on November 15th. And the PFM public presentation?

Commissioner Bill Gaughan: That will be Monday at noon. Board of Elections is at 9:15.

Joan Hodowanitz: Is that confirming the slate?

Solicitor Don Frederickson: The slates already been confirmed. The Board of Elections is to authorize out of district workers, and they have to move one polling place.

Joan Hodowanitz: Okay. That's fine. Let's see. And only one other thing. And this this is minor, but when you introduce the young lady who led the Pledge of Allegiance, it's no longer the Department of Defense. It is now the War Department. So duly, I don't know who we're fighting, but it's the War Department.

Commissioners' Other Business

Commissioner Chris Chermak: Thank you for all for coming today. You know, the reassessment is a, it's a huge issue. Certainly is with me. And nothing can make me happier is to have a perfect reassessment and be done, and everybody be happy. But we're not there. First of all, the reassessment has to be revenue neutral. So what's that? The county cannot use reassessment to increase taxes immediately. That means they can you know, we can add we can raise taxes, you know, going down the road. But for the reassessment year, we can't total amount collected from property taxes after reassessment was equal. The amount collected in the previous year. So this means that what will happen is, you know, once they do the reassessment, once they come up with all the values in which obviously they're going to be much higher than what they were, then the millage rates will have to be drastically reduced so that we get to the same number. So that takes care of that part of revenue neutral. I've talked about extending it for the process for for a year. And there's reasons, because I feel that this process is being rushed at the finish line here. There's a tremendous amount of values that are incorrect. There's a tremendous amount that have been corrected. And we're talking some of our board people that are doing the hearings, you know, they're looking at almost 90% of some of them that were 90% of them that were incorrect. So that shows me that there's there's there's a problem. There's a problem because it's not just 90% of the ones that the appealed. It's it's a good chance it's going to be a big percentage of all the reassessment. So we need to we need to really look at making these corrections. We talked about lawsuits and different things that's going on. Or that could happen if we we fail to do this. Well, you know, my sister can speak on parts of of the reassessment law if, you know, if I get if I need them to. But the first problem initially is how we were notified in Lackawanna County. We were notified improperly. It didn't follow the statute. There was a very simple solution or sample from Schuylkill County and Schuylkill County when they notified, because they're in the same position. We

are same about the same place. When they sent out the notification by statute, you were supposed to be notified of your current assessed value and your new assessment, what it would be, what it's going to be. They also added in here an estimation of what your taxes are going to be, which to me would have been hugely, just a such a benefit for the residents here, because any confusion, if your values were going to drop or stay the same would have been solved right there. I'm a simple letter that went out in the mail. But the problem is that folks in Lackawanna County were improperly notified that could trigger a lawsuit, because technically we didn't follow the statute. That's an issue to me. To me, that's my opinion. What I've stated before, what I'd like to do is send out a corrected notification with, with your old assessment, your new assessment and an estimated tax, what your taxes are going to be. I think that would be a huge benefit to everyone to see where they are. That would again settle any disputes that may or may not happen after they provide those, completed notices. I would like to allow people, you know, another three months to get their appeals. If somebody feels they need an appeal, let's give them an opportunity. At least the ones that know their taxes are going to go up or think that their values are incorrect and they're looking at their new assessments, they'll have a better understanding, it's going to allow for a more accurate final value, and it's certainly going to allow for a more accurate millage rate moving up to the next year. You know, it's going to benefit from clogging the courts with lawsuits and, you know, appeals for their properties. Another thing that I've, I've voiced concerns. And one of them I know that we're going to do, which is it's a, it's a great thing is, you know, I was concerned about safeguards. And one of the things that we're putting in place is a payment plan, which is nice. You know, I think it's going to be quarterly. You'll be able to make your payments quarterly now. It will be the you won't get the discount, but it but at least you'll be able to make quarterly payments. Other counties that do that have different safeguards. Philadelphia and Allegheny County have there's property tax freeze for low income seniors and fixed income residents. And it a tax freeze prevents property bills from increasing even if assessment rates rise locking in their current amount. And like I said, Philadelphia and Allegheny County do that. There's other and there's other things that other counties, other counties do. Expanded property tax and rent relief programs, tax deferral, programs for vulnerable homeowners. So there's things in here that other counties do. It would be a benefit to have them in place to protect our residents here. If there's ever if there was an issue where they can't afford it, there's something in place. And again, I want to also just remind people of different things that are, that are available to clean and clean and green program. Go on our website and look at it. It's for ten acres or more. You can get, breaks on your on your property taxes. It explains the whole process. Homestead exclusion. That's another program that's available. It's on again, it's on our website, veterans. There's programs for veterans and especially 100% disabled veterans. And it's during during wars where they have to be. So World War Two, from December 7th, 1941 to December 31st, 1946, Korean Vietnam and the Persian Gulf. So there's different dates. And if you're 100% disabled, you don't pay property taxes. So there are programs there. So again, nothing will make me happier to see a perfect reassessment, which I know is impossible. But I would like to strive for a more accurate reassessment with values, and I'd like to see it postpone a little bit. I'm not. I want I want to have it. I want to do this. Make sure that we get this reassessment done. I know it has to be done. I'm not looking to stop it. I'm looking to make accurate corrections and I'm just speaking on behalf of residents in this county. I try to support every single one of them. Everybody's

entitled to their own opinion. I'm certainly entitled to mine. I sit in this seat and I vow to do, and I take an oath to do what I can and do the best I can for this county. That's what I have to say today. Okay. Thank you.

Commissioner Bill Gaughan: Just to answer your question on, the reassessment. So and I think I covered this at the last commissioners meeting, which is let me, reiterate it. In my opinion, first of all, we can't delay it. The values are going to be certified by November 15th, and they're going to be certified by Pat Tobin in the assessment office. So that's number one. So there's actually no mechanism at this point to delay it or to stop it. In my opinion, extending it, delaying it. It's not realistic. It's not based in fact. And it's not it would be completely irresponsible, in my opinion. Commissioner Chermak mentioned, Schuylkill County and, people getting an estimate of their, their tax bill. And we've been down this road before, and we asked this question and a lot of people ask the question, why didn't I get something in the mail that told me what my estimated tax is going to be next year? There's a reason that you didn't get that. And let me explain why. This comes from an article that was in, via back in May of this year. And they interviewed, the gentleman who was responsible for reassessment in Schuylkill County. And he said, and I quote, I've been doing this for 40 years, and I've been doing tax impact estimates on all my reassessments for decades. But it's a little risky because it's an estimate. This is why the law doesn't require tax impact estimates, and why many counties don't choose to do it. Furthermore, to that point, One of the other experts in reassessment, Mary, nobody who's quoted in this article states, and I quote, I never recommend doing a, an estimate of what your taxes are going to be when the base year exceeds 30 years and or the county anticipates a large increase in seeing properties. Lackawanna County checks off both of those boxes. So in other words, we haven't done a reassessment since 1968. You're really in dangerous territory, and they do not with the professionals that do this told us, don't send out an a tax impact statement. Don't send out an estimate. That will be a big mistake because you haven't done it since, 1968. I would respectfully also respond to the idea that, 90%, as Commissioner Chermak stated today and at the last meeting, 90% of the figures is not accurate. I asked Pat Tobin, excuse me. Pat Tobin, who is a director of assessment, where that figure's coming from. He said that that is inaccurate. And even if it was accurate, that's 90% of 4500 appeals out of 100 and some thousand properties. And the bottom line here and again, I don't want to dwell on it because I think we went around the horn on this, at the last meeting, the idea that this is being rushed and that everything's wrong and that it's all happening at the last minute, this has been going on since 2022. There was, I think, 16 public hearings. There's been an enormous effort to inform the public over the last couple of years. So this, in my opinion, is not being rushed. We're just at the end of the process. And again, as I said at the last meeting, like this hasn't been done since 1968. People in general, no matter what it is, reassessment, no matter what the topic is, are generally weary of change, including myself. So when you go through a process like this, there's going to naturally be people who say, whoa, wait a minute, pump the brakes. The bottom line is, we can't pump the brakes. There's a court order that says, this must be done by January 1st, 2026. A court order might correct in that. Done. So we can't stop it, we can't delay it. And even if we could, that is not going to solve anything. In fact, I asked Pat Tobin, the director of assessments, in an email, just for just to play devil's advocate, what would happen if we could delay it and if we could stop it? Number one, he states, and I quote the courts could reopen the case against us by the taxpayers that

created this issue in the first place. So if you remember, a couple of years ago, a group of taxpayers sued Lackawanna County and said we are unfairly being taxed. There are a lot of people in the county who are not paying their fair share. We're paying way more than our fair share. Okay, so they sued the county. The county under the last administration said, we're going to lose this case. There's case law in this room across Pennsylvania. They're going to the courts are going to force us to do a reassessment. So instead of waiting for them to do that, let's just do it because we're going to have to do it. So they did it. So that's number one. Number two, Pat Tobin been doing this the last couple of years. The director of assessments in Lackawanna County, a six month delay and I quote would cause chaos. And that I am not even sure we could start on, July 1st, effectively implementing the reassessment numbers for the fiscal school year, as any delay, I believe, would have to be a full year delay. So, again, the idea that we can delay this for six months, he blows that argument out of the water. Number two, we would also and I quote from Pat Tobin, we will be starting 2027 with numbers effectively two years, two plus years old, not allowing this office to function with the closure of one for the first time in county history. So if you delay it, you're not just delaying it for six months, you're delaying it for a year because then you can't implement it until 2000 and, 27. Then you're getting further away from accurate market valuations. Okay. Which leads to Pat Tobin's third point. Additionally, every year we roll over to the next taxing year in early to mid January. If the reassessment is an implement, it we won't have anything to roll over to as 2026 is already populated with the new information. If that were to happen, our only real option would be to hire Tyler Technologies again, more money to push all of the 2025 information into 2026. By that time, their contract would have expired. So, and I quote Pat Tobin, more money down the drain. So again, I understand the hesitation. I understand that people are concerned. But I'm just giving you the facts. These are the facts. It has to be done. There's no way to stop it. Where at the end of the day, we're at the one yard line here, about to go into the end zone and, stopping it at this point, delaying it wouldn't make any sense. And we actually cannot do it. So, I just want to make sure people understand that. And again, as I said at the last commissioners meeting, I had people stopping me all the time saying, is there any way we can stop this? Commissioner Cermak said, we can delay it. And that's the most frustrating part of this, is that we all know that we can't do it. So why are we even talking about doing it if it's not going to happen? And so I just don't want people out there to think that that's a feasible option. If it was, we would consider it. It is not. So therefore we cannot do it. And that is the truth. Okay. Moving on from reassessment. As Joan had asked the public presentation by PFM, the, financial experts that we hired last year will be held Monday, October 6th at 12 noon in the commissioners boardroom, here at the fifth floor of the Government Center. We have good news on the, audit update. So in the previous few years, the audit was late. And when I say late, it wasn't completed until the next year. Our folks in revenue and finance have done a really, really good job. And I'd like to thank them. Specifically, Dave was only involved in the audit prep. Work is complete, and they're going to begin the preliminary work in the first week of October. The target date for completion of both the audit and single audit remains the end of the year. Now, that's not ideal. We'd like to have that moved up to when it's supposed to be, but we are in a much better position than we were last year. So things are moving and I'm hopeful that next year and the year after that, you know, we'll be able to get it done, on time. Just wanted to mention that the Fringe Festival, Sept will be held from September 20th 5th to October 5th. One of the great events that we

have here in Scranton and in Lackawanna County, if you want any more information on that, you can go to Scranton fringe.org, the Taylor Police Department. National Night Out will be held this Saturday, October 4th at the Taylor Community Center, 700 South Main Avenue, from 4 to 6 p.m.. And the last thing I just want to, touch on really quickly, we talked about in the last few weeks the fact that we do not have a state budget. And I was down in Berks County yesterday talking about a few different issues. Every commissioner that I talked to across the state of Pennsylvania, we are all holding our breath waiting for a state budget. The federal government shut down as of, I think, 12 p.m. last night. So that adds to this crisis. The federal government shut down. It's not just a crisis in Washington. It is a threat that we are going to feel here in Lackawanna County, many of the programs that our residents rely on, like nutrition assistance, housing support, workforce training, public health funding, those are sustained by federal dollars. So a prolonged shutdown could delay reimbursements, freeze grants, place a new strain on our county budget at a time when every dollar counts. Most of our county budget is funded through the state government, but we do have a lot of programs and grants that are funded by the federal government. Equally concerning to me, and it should be concerning to all of you, are reports, of this from this morning, that the president may move forward with mass firings of federal employees that would not only devastate working families in our community who serve the public every day, but it's also going to weaken the delivery of crucial, critical services that we depend on from, veterans benefits to public safety coordination and infrastructure support. When you hear the word federal bureaucracy, there's always a negative connotation to it. I used to teach American government. We spent almost a whole month on the federal bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is really, really important. And if there's going to be a mass, mass firings, you may not feel it right away, but you eventually will feel it. And our most vulnerable residents in Lackawanna County will almost definitely, feel it. So I just want to make sure that I mention that because in times like this, our duty at the county level is to prepare for the worst, protect essential services, and stand up for the hardworking people who actually make government function. So I'm urging, Congress and the Trump administration to end the shutdown as quickly as possible and focus on stability and not chaos. So we're going to continue not only with the federal shutdown, but with the state budget crisis, monitor all potential impacts, and do everything possible to shield our residents from the natural fallout that will occur.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Chris Chermak, seconded by Bill Gaughan, that this be Adjourned at 11:03am. The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Chris Chermak and Commissioner Bill Gaughan