



County of Lackawanna

Lackawanna County
Government Center
123 Wyoming Ave
Scranton, Pennsylvania
18503

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

10:00 AM

Commissioners' Conference Room

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10am.

Pledge of Alliegence conducted by:

Captain Jeremy M. Komasz is a native of Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey. He graduated from The George Washington University with a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs and commissioned through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps in 1996. He completed Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL Training (BUD/S Class 214) in 1997.

On active duty, he served in multiple leadership and operations billets within Naval Special Warfare, including platoon-level and unit-level operational and command staff assignments with SEAL Teams TWO and FIVE, and Naval Special Warfare Unit FOUR. He deployed to Afghanistan in 2003. He transitioned to the Navy Reserve in 2005, mobilized and deployed to Iraq in 2008, then served in a succession of senior command and operational leadership roles across reserve component Naval Special Warfare units, including multiple Commanding Officer tours.

Captain Komasz mobilized and deployed in 2013–2014 as Deputy Commander, Special Operations Task Force Southeast, and later as a Basing Lead and Garrison Commander for NATO Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan. In 2017, he was selected for promotion to Captain and command of Navy Reserve Special Warfare Task Force 18—one of the Navy Reserve's senior special operations major commands.

He earned a Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies and Joint Professional Military Education Level II (JPME II) through the Naval War College's in-residence Naval Command College program. In 2019, he mobilized again as Commander, NATO Combined Joint Psychological Operations Task Force–Afghanistan, dual-hatted as Senior Naval Officer at NSOCC-A.

He subsequently served as Deputy Commander–Reserve within Naval Special Warfare, overseeing reserve manpower, talent management, and global force generation. From 2024–2025, he supported Headquarters, U.S. Special Operations Command as Senior Navy/Naval Special Warfare Reserve Advisor and Navy Reserve Program Director. He is currently the Commanding Officer of the USSOCOM Navy Reserve Readiness Unit.

In his civilian career, Captain Komasz spent nearly two decades in defense technology business development supporting U.S. and international government customers. In 2025, he joined the National Park Service and currently serves as Superintendent/Park Manager of Steamtown National

Historic Site in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

His personal awards include:

- The Bronze Star Medal,
- Defense Meritorious Service Medal (two awards)
- Joint Commendation Medal (two awards)
- Navy Commendation Medal (four awards)
- Navy Achievement Medal (three awards)

He is also, subspecialty-qualified as a Foreign Area Officer (Latin America).

Present 3 - Chris Chermak, Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

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: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

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

No comments

Resolutions

Approving Current Payables

- Attachments:** [3H50MXZO](#)
 [3H50MXZP](#)
 [Res 26-0036](#)
 [signed Accounts Payables](#)

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: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Declaration of a Disaster Emergency

- Attachments:** [012526 Lackawanna County Declaration of Emergency](#)
 [Res 26-0025](#)
 [signed Declaration of Disaster Emergency](#)

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: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Entering into an Airport Partnership and Operating Agreement

Attachments: [AVP Partnership Agreement \(2185404.11\)1.22.2026](#)
[Res 26-0026](#)
[signed Airport Partnership Agreement](#)

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: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Entering into a Service Agreement

Attachments: [Legislative Cover Sheet-Pension Check Folder 2026-2027](#)
[Pension Check Folder Agreement 2.28.26 - 2.27.27](#)
[Res 26-0027](#)
[signed PHE Pension](#)

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: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Approving a Service Invoice with Election Systems & Software

Attachments: [worksessions&s2026servicecontractinvoice](#)
[Res 26-0028](#)
[signed Election ES&S](#)

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: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Entering into a Service Agreement with Otis Elevator

Attachments: [Elevator Otis](#)
[Res 26-0029](#)
[signed Otis Elevator](#)

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: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Approving an Elevator Maintenance Invoice

Attachments: [Elevator Contract \(Kone\)](#)
[Res 26-0030](#)
[signed KONE Elevator Maintenance](#)

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: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Approving Provider Contracts for the Office of BHIDEI

Attachments: [January 2026 Legislative Cover Sheet Updated 2025](#)
[BHIDEI](#)
[PAInclusive Final 2526](#)
[Quality Progressions Final 2526](#)
[Res 26-0031](#)
[signed BHIDEI FY25-26](#)

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: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Entering into a Grant Agreement with Agency for Community Empowerment

Attachments: [SLHDA Legislative Cover Sheet 2026](#)
[SLHDA Grant Agreement 2026 ACT 137 Heating](#)
[Res 26-0032](#)
[signed ACE Heating Emergency Housing](#)

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: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Entering into a Grant Agreement with NeighborWorks

Attachments: [FTHB NeighborWorks 2026 Legislative Cover Sheet](#)
[Act 137 First Time Homebuyer Cooperation Agreement with NeighborWorks 2026](#)
[Res 26-0033](#)
[signed Neighborworks First Time Homebuyer](#)

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: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Accepting the Proposal from Station Automation, Inc.

Attachments: [Legislative Cover Sheet Updated PSTrax EMA](#)
[Lackawanna County Emergency Management \(PA\) 012226 CM](#)
[PSTrax Overview Brochure](#)
[PSTrax Technical Overview 2026](#)
[Res 26-0034](#)
[signed 911 Station Automation](#)

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: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Accepting the Financing Proposal from M&T Bank

Attachments: [Lackawanna County Prison Traulsen Oven](#)
[Lackawanna County Prison Hobart Dishwasher \(002\)](#)
[Legislative Cover Sheet 01 28 2026 Singer Equipment](#)
[Proposal County of Lackawanna MT 01-29-26 Revised](#)
[Res 26-0039](#)
[signed M&T Financing Prison](#)

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: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Entering into an IT Managed Services Agreement

Attachments: [IT Service Agreement with CHHSRA Legislative Cover Sheet 2026](#)
[IT Managed Services Agreement - CHHSRA \(002\)](#)
[Res 26-0040](#)
[signed IT Services Agreement](#)

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: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Appointments to the Land Bank Board of Directors

Attachments: [Appt 26-0035](#)
[signed Landbank Appointments](#)

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:

Aye: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Motions

Motion to award the Phillips Road Bridge Repair to the lowest, most responsible bidder Pioneer Construction Co., Inc., 3298 Lake Ariel Highway, Honesdale, PA with a total bid of \$387,191.40.

Attachments: [Bid Recommendation Ltr Phillips Rd](#)
[Legislative Cover Sheet Updated_Phillips Rd](#)
[Mot 26-0037](#)
[signed Motion Pioneer Construction](#)

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

Aye: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Motion to award the Main Street and Washington Avenue Resurfacing Project to the lowest, most responsible bidder Pensy Supply, Inc., 300 Armstrong Road, Pittston, PA with a total bid of \$705,371.82.

Attachments: [Bid Recommendation Ltr Main St Paving](#)
[Legislative Cover Sheet Updated_Main St and Washington Ave](#)
[Mot 26-0038](#)
[signed Motion Pensy Supply](#)

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

Aye: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby

Opportunity for the Public to Address the Board

Angela Ramon, Scranton: Angela has concerns about ICE activity in Minnesota and what precautions the county government will take if ICE comes to Lackawanna County. Angela wants to focus on keeping residents safe and secure, suggesting that the county do something to prevent them from coming in and extracting voter roll and other information, and not directing any county resources to ICE.

Will Cohen, Scranton: Will grew up in Minneapolis but has been a resident of Scranton since 2009. Will wants to thank Commissioner Gaughan for taking a stand on the immigration issues facing this county. Will works for the University of Scranton and provided insight to the Catholic Church's stance on the immigration issue, stating that this is not in accord with the fundamental teachings of the Church. Will is also concerned about the data centers coming to this county and hopes the Commissioners and county government can help with both issues.

Bob Bolus, Scranton: Bob discussed issues with the city code enforcement regarding one of his properties and lack of signage and the cleanliness of the roads in the city, particularly East Mountain. He also has issues with his tax amounts. He wants to compliment the airport for being the safest and very equipped to handle emergencies. He disagrees with the comments being made about immigration.

Krysten Xanthis, Scranton: Krysten had a question for Commissioner Chermak regarding an issue with COLTS and how the Commissioners claim they have nothing to do with COLTS, yet appoint members to the Board. The Commissioner explained that that is their only relationship with COLTS and COLTS runs on its own entity. He did say that security has increased at the main station, as that was one of Krysten's concerns.

Rabbi Daniel Swartz of Temple Hesed, Scranton: Rabbi Daniel wants to be sure the county is still welcoming immigrants with open arms, and cites articles from the Scranton Times throughout the years when other immigrant groups came such as the Polish, Irish, Italian, etc and how the rhetoric today remains similar toward other nationalities coming to our country. He requests government transparency throughout this trying time.

Reverend Christopher DeForest: The Reverend talks about how the Lutheran Church would not be what is today without immigration. The Church is constantly evolving for the better with the introduction of new cultures and viewpoints. He exclaims that we should embrace the immigrants and love thy neighbor as Jesus would.

Patty Lawler, Dunmore: Patty gives a shout out to ECTV for their broadcasting.

She enjoyed the Christmas window display at the Government Center. She gives praise to Commissioner Gaughan for turning the county around financially and wants to make sure that this issue was inherited and that he also did not vote for the reassessment, that it was the previous administration, but also that it was long overdue. She appreciates Commissioner Gaughan's transparency and honesty.

Breeda Cronin Holmes, Dunmore: Breeda wants to thank Commissioner Gaughan for his comments on ICE and reminds us that this country was built upon immigration.

Terry Brechtel, Scranton: Terry is here on behalf of United Neighborhood Centers and wishes to thank Commissioner Gaughan for addressing concerns related to immigration enforcement and its impact locally. She asks for clear guidance and training for county employees regarding privacy protections and legal boundaries related to federal immigration enforcement.

Joan Hodawanitz, Scranton: Joan addresses the reassessment and wants to know how many properties that were never on the tax rolls before have been added. Joan explains that Tenor bought Regional and Moses Taylor Hospital and hopes they are able to turn the hospitals around, but also is concerned that now that it is a non-profit that they will also be coming off the tax rolls. She is interested in what amount of money Tenor might be promising. She also wants to know when the digital budget book for 2026 will be available. Joan would also like to know if the meetings held by our boards and authorities should be allowed to be held over zoom.

Jenny, Scranton: Jenny has concerns about ICE's recent practices. Jenny says it is the county's duty as public servants to protect the rights, dignity, and safety of the constituents. She asks the commissioners and solicitor what we are going to do to protect citizens from ICE brutality and racial profiling.

Francis McHale, Scranton: Francis has lived in south Scranton his entire life and has seen immigration's affects on the area for the better. He is concerned about his neighbor, who was picked up by ICE and his family that has been left behind. His neighbor does not have the money to afford an attorney and court costs and claims that he has not had the right to the hearings the law calls for. He is concerned for him and any other neighbors who may have to face similar hard times.

Kathy Harrington, Scranton: Kathy is a nurse and has had direct interaction with immigrants, documented and undocumented. Kathy says she has taught nurses and nursing students to care for everyone regardless of who they were, what color their skin was, what language they spoke, etc. She is concerned about ICE operations and wants the county to work on a policy so that people do not have to live in hear.

Teddy Michael, Archbald: Teddy is originally from Minnesota, where he grew up and attend law school. He cites a case that comes from Judge Patrick Schiltz, who was one of his law professors in Minnesota, 20 CV 107. The case concerns noncompliance from the federal government regarding immigration practices.

Ushu, President of the Congolese Community of Scranton: Ushu believes leaders' largest jobs are to make sure that people feel safe and if there are

conflicts, that our leaders are doing everything they can to mediate them. He would like the Commissioners to work on legislation ensuring that county leadership is supportive of the community and immigration.

Ethan Emker, Scranton: Ethan is also concerned about ICE operations in the country and asks the county to make residents feel safe and ensure that the community continues to thrive despite the federal government's current immigration operations. Ethan asks that the county commits to not spending and local resources or taxpayer dollars to help ICE, stating we should not be giving any records without a warrant.

Sandy Lamana, Clarks Summit: Sandy is a school psychologist and discusses the impact of fear and stress on a child. She says we are responsible for creating a safe and healthy community environment and that we need to ensure that students and families feel valued, connected, and supported.

David James Baker, Scranton: David exclaims that his wife is an immigrant and is concerned about the country's direction toward immigration.

Elizabeth Kuyper, Scranton: Elizabeth is concerned about the effects of the state of the country on our children and immigration issues. She says many children and families are living in fear and it is affecting their education and mental health. She wants the commissioners to be representative of the community and diversity.

Eric Spivak: Eric is a political organizer in eastern PA. He is concerned about the wellbeing of his friends and neighbors and communities he has worked in. He expresses that many folks, especially in heavy Latino communities are very scared and he wishes the county would express solidarity with all neighbors and make them feel safe. He urges the county to develop legislation to support the vulnerable population and protect everyone from ICE.

Sister Donna, IHM, Scranton: The congregation recently put out a statement that Sister Donna would like to share. "The IHM statement of commitment to our immigrant and refugee neighbors. The sister servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Scranton, Pennsylvania rooted in our gospel, love, and our IHM mission and our charism. We commit ourselves to stand with our immigrant and refugee neighbors. Wherever we serve we affirm the God-given dignity of every person and we pledge to welcome all with compassion respect and solidarity. We promise to extend hospitality and accompaniment to those seeking safety and belonging. We advocate for just and humane immigration policies that protect families and honor human rights. We educate and engage our communities to build understanding, empathy, and a culture of welcome. We serve generously through our ministries offering support, resources, and hope and we pray faithfully for all who journey in search of peace and a future for their families."

Commissioners' Other Business

Commissioner Gaughan will be introducing the Protect Our Neighbors Act in the February 11 work session, which aims to tackle issues with immigration enforcement in the United States. The legislation highlights negative impacts on immigrant communities, including fears stemming from violent behavior by ICE agents and the detainment of individuals based on appearances or

accents. The act seeks to ensure local government does not engage in federal immigration enforcement. Commissioner Gaughan cites stories of his friends and neighbors in South Scranton. Key points of the proposed legislation include prohibiting local agencies from asking about immigration status during routine interactions, ensuring access to county services is not dependent on immigration status, and preventing local employees from detaining individuals based on ICE requests without valid judicial warrants. The act also blocks the county from participating in federal enforcement operations and mandates training for county departments to follow these rules. The aim is to separate local governance from federal immigration enforcement, promoting safety and preserving rights for immigrant communities. The speaker notes that the climate of fear surrounding immigration enforcement leads to decreased crime reporting and community trust. Commissioner Gaughan raises concerns about data center development in Lackawanna County, where community members fear rapid changes may harm local land and increase utility costs. He opposes large data centers, calling for a two-year moratorium to study their impact, enforce standards, and enhance transparency about energy and water usage before further development proceeds.

Commissioner Chermak expresses gratitude to Captain Jeremy for his service and acknowledges all service members and Gold Star families for their sacrifices. He emphasizes the importance of ensuring the safety of all residents in Lackawanna County, especially in the face of significant challenges. Commissioner Chermak mentions ongoing concerns about local hospitals, particularly Tenor Health, and the need for reliable healthcare services as many healthcare workers have left for better opportunities. Despite concerns about state approval for hospital operations, he has been in contact with local representatives and is pleased that the sale of Tenor Health is proceeding, which he believes is crucial for the community's healthcare needs. He notes the importance of the hospitals for not just Lackawanna County, but the surrounding regions as well, highlighting his experience as a first responder. Commissioner Chermak is hopeful that the hospitals can contribute to community funding and support as they become operational, ensuring the continued well-being and safety of residents. He expresses gratitude to those involved in this process and looks forward to moving ahead.

Commissioner Welby is pleased that a deal for the hospitals was successfully completed, preventing it from falling through at the last minute. Despite concerns about lost tax revenue due to non-taxpaying properties, there is hope that new services will enhance the facilities. There is frustration about underutilized spaces in Regional Hospital, and there are calls for improvement in services. Commissioner Welby then addresses immigration issues, emphasizing the importance of adhering to both law and the Constitution. It reflects on family histories of immigration and the need to respect those experiences, expressing concern over actions that violate constitutional rights. Commissioner Welby expresses strong support for law enforcement but insists it must operate within constitutional limits. He welcomes the suggestion to develop a set of guidelines respectful of constitutional values. Additionally, he appreciates public participation in these discussions and highlights the urgent issue of rising heating bills due to extreme weather. They note that many people may struggle with increased heating costs and may need assistance. Commissioner Welby provides information about available resources for help with heating bills, including the LIHEAP program, which can be found online or through local offices. Other programs mentioned include UGI's Customer

Assistance Program (CAP) and assistance from PPL, which may offer grants for eligible recipients. The Agency for Community Empowerment (ACE) is also mentioned as a resource for weatherization assistance. He encourages those in need to reach out for help with their heating expenses.

Commissioner Bill Gaughan made a motion that the proposed Protect Our Neighbors legislation be placed on the work session agenda for February 11th for discussion and for review. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Thom Welby.

The vote went as follows:

Aye - Commissioner Bill Gaughan, Commissioner Thom Welby

No response - Commissioner Chris Chermak

Adjournment

A motion was made by Comm. Chris Chermak, seconded by Comm. Bill Gaughan, that this be Adjourned at 12:45pm. The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye: 3 - Commissioner Chris Chermak, Commissioner Bill Gaughan and Thom Welby