



County of Lackawanna

Lackawanna County
Administration Building
200 Adams Avenue
Scranton, Pennsylvania
18503

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Wednesday, October 4, 2017

10:00 AM

Commissioner's Conference Room

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:09am.

Commissioner O'Malley asked for a moment of silence for the victims of the Las Vegas shooting.

Present 3 - Patrick M. O'Malley, Jerry Notarianni and Laureen A. Cummings

Reading and Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Patrick O'Malley, seconded by Commissioner Laureen Cummings, that this be Dispense with the Reading and Approve as Prepared. The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye: 3 - Patrick O'Malley, Jerry Notarianni and Laureen Cummings

Proclamation Presentation

[17-0252](#)

"Good Works in Lackawanna County" certificate for the Forever Sammi Foundation

Presented

[17-0253](#)

Small Business Spotlight: Michele's Sugar Shack, Olyphant

Presented

[17-0254](#)

Presentation of check to the American Red Cross for the Hurricane Fund

Presented

Reassessment Video Presentation

Chief of Staff Andy Wallace: this reassessment informational video- Joan R. Price will be at each meeting. this video available on our website, the libraries, the news, and ECTV.

Information panels on reassessment:

Wednesday October 4th:

3pm: Old Forge Borough Building, 310 S. Main Street, Old Forge

6pm: North Pocono High School, 97 Bochicchio Blvd, Moscow

Thursday October 5th:

12pm: Scranton City Hall, 340 N Washington Ave, Scranton

3pm: Dickson City Borough Building, 901 Enterprise St, Dickson City
6pm: Abington Heights High School, 222 Noble Rd Clarks Summit

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

Joan Hodawanitz, Scranton: the video's sound cut out; are you going to have pro and against people at these hearings? Agenda- can't pull up the backup documentation for the resolutions.

Commissioner Laureen Cummings: both sides should be presented- not just one. That's why I didn't vote for this.

Traci Harte: please click on the resolution number and the item will come up. All the information is available online to read.

Resolutions

[17-0255](#)

Authorizing an Active Shooter Seminar

A motion was made by Commissioner Patrick O'Malley, seconded by Commissioner Laureen Cummings, that this Resolution be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye: 3 - Patrick O'Malley, Jerry Notarianni and Laureen Cummings

[17-0248](#)

Approving Current Payables

Attachments: [3H507JMQ](#)
[3H507JMP](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Patrick O'Malley, seconded by Commissioner Jerry Notarianni, that this Resolution be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye: 3 - Patrick O'Malley, Jerry Notarianni and Laureen Cummings

[17-0249](#)

Approving a Plan of Financing by the Lackawanna County Industrial Development Authority for the University of Scranton

A motion was made by Commissioner Patrick O'Malley, seconded by Commissioner Laureen Cummings, that this Resolution be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye: 3 - Patrick O'Malley, Jerry Notarianni and Laureen Cummings

[17-0250](#)

Authorizing the submission of an application for the Community Development Block Grant Program

A motion was made by Commissioner Patrick O'Malley, seconded by Commissioner Laureen Cummings, that this Resolution be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye: 3 - Patrick O'Malley, Jerry Notarianni and Laureen Cummings

[17-0251](#)

Authorizing the filing of a Local Share Grant (LSA) Program Applications

Attachments: [LSA GRANT SUBMISSIONS TOTAL - Final 2017-18](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Patrick O'Malley, seconded by Commissioner Jerry Notarianni, that this Resolution be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote.

Commissioner Laureen Cummings: the only reason why I would vote for this would be for the Children's Advocacy Center-but there are so many on here that I cannot support. LSA money is from casinos, and it is supposed to be for property tax relief, we provided them to have casinos here in PA, and we should be getting tax reliefs. Slap in the face to taxpayers and I just disagree immensely. We just had 1900 people on the upset sale tax sale last week. This LSA money we are voting on today is over \$2.3 million- I am going to bring this to our State Representatives, and ask them to change it back to the initial law. Some of these are a ridiculous request. I am appalled. It is a disgrace it's not going back to the homeowners- LSA is casino money.

Commissioner Jerry Notarianni: we have no control over it, so therefore, the money is there, we can't change state law, this is what we have at this point, and we should take advantage of it, of the money being offered, these are projects on our community. I do agree with Laureen, but until we can get the state to change it, we should accept this money for the community.

Aye: 2 - Patrick O'Malley and Jerry Notarianni

Nay: 1 - Laureen Cummings

Opportunity for the Public to Address the Board

Joan Hodawanitz, Scranton: 2018 Budget questions-when is it due, when will it be released.

Andy Wallace: continuing to work on the draft budget. It will be available online. October 13th is the budget message announcement, will have budget hearings, and tentative budget is online.

Commissioners' Other Business

Commissioner Laureen Cummings: last meeting we discussed the opioid crisis and things I was working on. I just wanted to share some info- the largest medical society, AMA, dropped pain as a vital sign as of June 2016-hard to have pain diagnosed and treated, AMA sets policy, and said that physicians played a key role in the current epidemic by prescribing the pain medications to their patients. Now, we have to work on the VA- I met with the office of regulatory affairs, and working on a letter with my solicitor to send to them, will need the communities support.

Meeting with the Conservation Board this week, talked about their PR issues- they do so much work and don't get the recognition they deserve- upcoming event, putting together a lot of press for them, the Commissioners will go out to one of the farmlands. The State is looking to cut the conservation board- I am

trying to help ease the burden on the farmers. Reassessment meetings and video-I didn't vote for the expenditure on that video done professionally, however I requested many cuts to the originally version- our meetings should be more of them and in the evening- the meetings are listed into two days, doesn't allow for people to give their concerns. I believe this woman (Atty Price) makes a living out of reassessment, I believe she would be in favor, I think biased. If I had to vote on it today I would vote no. need a better opportunity to ask more questions, on both sides. Financing is a big part of why some people will be in favor- attorneys and real estate people.

Commissioner Jerry Notarianni: I think that the video is as fair as it can be-I am not in favor of a ballot question-I am in favor of reassessment- I have three examples here in the County. The ballot is wrong- some states mandate it be done every year- the goal is fairness. In Eynon- on home is over 3000 sq. ft. and assessed at \$421,000- the one next door the home is 23,000 sq. ft., and is assessed at \$19,000. Two houses in a Scott Twp. development. The first, a 2,656- sq. ft., home, is assessed at \$22,000, while the second, a smaller, 1,800 sq. ft., home, is assessed at \$34,000. Another one- homes in same development, Glenmaura- home is 3,400 sq. ft., \$66,000 assessed, another is 6,000 sq. ft., and assessed at \$57,000. These are very similar homes in very similar locations, and it does not appear to be fair, the idea of assessed valuation is for fairness, so everyone pays their fair share. We're not trying to increase any income or tax revenue to the county or to the boroughs or the municipalities. All we're trying to do is set a fair playing field across Lackawanna County. The fact that it hasn't been done in 50 years is wrong. You-Laureen- are against it, I respect that, but I am in favor of it. It is necessary for us to grow. The cost of government goes up- due to union contracts, costs of services- we cannot continue to cut services, there is a bottom at some point. We have to create economic development. It is all part of a big picture- to help us grow as a community, we have to do it.

Commissioner Laureen Cummings: I understand your thinking, but I am looking at the millage dropage- so municipalities will be able to tax more- some are at their cap, can't raise taxes without going to court, so now they can go to their council meeting to raise taxes. Once reassessment is done, that millage will come down, and then they can raise taxes.

Commissioner Jerry Notarianni: Nothing forced us to put this on the ballot at 100%-most of them are not at 100% most are at 50 or 35 percent. The question is skewed so people will not vote for it.

Commissioner Laureen Cummings: the lawyers decided that language. Costs going up due to union contract- we are currently working on our budget, and there are a few negotiations going on right now- 7 bargaining units we have. I am concerned- I wanted to work on some of those contracts because I thought I could make a difference, all union contracts up this year. Your hands get tied. I want our contracts to be there for the public to read, and I request that, that every union contract currently being followed should be on our website for everyone to read. Binding Arbitration is frustrating. I am looking for some answers because I believe that if we have to have a budget, and are trying to maintain, we should have the ability to do that without having our hands tied. I

am frustrated by the contracts and the legality of what is going on, and I cannot tell you, inform you the citizens about what is happening in regards to your money, and it is infuriating.

Atty John Cerra: I sent a memo to Andy, to get an opinion from Labor Council, I think they can be published. There is a law being working on now, to get these public before they are passed. Three times in the video it asked if "this is necessary" and it is necessary- the video keeps referring to it, there is no money to pay for it, that's why it is getting put on the ballot.

Atty. Don Frederickson: under the act it allows us to put the debt question on the ballot- we went with the 13 million due to the Chiefs survey, and compared to what we paid in the past. This is just the cost of the reassessment- not including the appeals in the future. Can either raise taxes, or borrow money- with the ballot you can have electoral debt so it doesn't go against the county cap.

Commissioner Patrick O'Malley: we will fight to make sure that it is the lowest possible. I am in the middle of this- go out and vote in November. Tons of opportunity's to see this video for better understanding. Make your decision on behalf of your family. I truly believe the video was in the middle," said O'Malley, who publicly has not taken a position on-It doesn't go to the right, doesn't go to the left. It kind of just tells people exactly what reassessment is. Please go and vote- our veterans fought for your right to vote. Make your decision and make it be heard on behalf of your family. Halloween festival at the Trolley Museum, October 15th. This Sunday is the 22nd annual Steamtown Marathon.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Patrick O'Malley, seconded by Commissioner Laureen Cummings, that this be Adjourned at 12:05pm. The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye: 2 - Patrick O'Malley and Laureen Cummings

Absent: 1 - Jerry Notarianni