



County of Lackawanna

Lackawanna County
Administration Building
200 Adams Avenue
Scranton, Pennsylvania
18503

Meeting Minutes Board of Commissioners

Tuesday, February 5, 2013

9:00 AM

Commissioner's Conference Room

Call to Order

Commissioner Corey O'Brien called the meeting to order at 9:05am.

Present 3 - Corey D. O'Brien, Jim Wansacz and Patrick M. O'Malley

Reading and Approval of Minutes

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

Aye: 3 - Corey D. O'Brien, Jim Wansacz and Patrick O'Malley

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

Controller Gary DiBileo- Commissioners, our controller's office has had questions regarding the procurement of goods and services involved in one resolution today on today's agenda specifically 13-0024, which is the furniture package for PNC Field.

Commissioner Corey O'Brien- Gary, do you want to address it during that (Resolution)? We'll turn to you during the discussion portion.

Ordinances - Second Reading

[13-0019](#)

Ordinance #224

Second Reading

Home Rule Charter Referendum

Attachments: [Home Rule Charter Attachment A Ordinance 224](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Jim Wansacz, seconded by Commissioner Corey D. O'Brien, that this Ordinance be Adopted on the Second Reading.

Commissioner Pat O'Malley- I believe the consolidation streamlining the waste of fine money. When the Register of Wills decided that she wasn't going to run, I felt that the Register of Wills office would be absorbed into the other row offices at that point. I thought it would be the easy move. It wouldn't be much of a problem. It would be taken up into the other row offices. The idea of this ordinance which we're looking at right now is approximately four weeks new to me. And I just believe that should be that – should have had an independent

study of the row offices to look at the pros and cons, pluses and the minuses. This is nothing to reflect on my fellow Commissioners. They're doing what they feel is right. But for me I just need a lot more information to be able to make this decision today. The big thing of all of it is the idea of the Sheriff. I felt the Sheriff should be independent of the Commissioners. It should be appointed -- it shouldn't be appointed by us. I understand that we're not actually making this happen. But this is going to be put into a mechanism that will be voted on in the May election. I believe that a little more time, a little more information my decision would be a little bit different. But at this time I will be voting no.

The motion carried by the following vote.

Commissioner Corey O'Brien- Motion carries 2-1. We're going to move onto the next matter. But our initial action with respect to ordinance number 224 took place in the form of a first reading on January 23rd, 2013. Our final action approving ordinance 224 took place on this 5th day of February, 2013, at 913 a.m.

Aye: 2 - Corey D. O'Brien and Jim Wansacz

Nay: 1 - Patrick O'Malley

[13-0020](#)

Ordinance #225

Second Reading

Issuance of General Obligation Note, Series Of 2013

Attachments: [ordinance 225](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Patrick O'Malley, seconded by Commissioner Jim Wansacz, that this Ordinance be Adopted on the Second Reading.

Commissioner Corey O'Brien- This ordinance is our wireless ordinance. And we talk about historic moments. And this meeting makes some history with respect to that program. The money that is being borrowed is offset with savings;

CFO Tom Durkin-Our telecommunications budget is going to fund this completely.

Commissioner Corey O'Brien- This is exciting because this really helps finalize our wireless program and get shovels moving here to get the program accomplished to make government more effect, to reduce our cost and expense and also provide additional assistance for emergency services throughout the county. This is a big deal. When we look back 10 or 15 years from now and we talk about economy development, we talk about government efficiency. We will all point to this project and this day as an important day in moving our county forward. We always need as many tools in that economic tool box as possible. And this ordinance allows us and provides us with the tools to get that done. So we're excited about it. We're excited about what this means with respect to economic development. But we're also excited about what this means with respect to our emergency services areas and making our

county government more efficient in the process.

The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye: 3 - Corey D. O'Brien, Jim Wansacz and Patrick O'Malley

Resolutions

13-0026

Approving Current Payables

Attachments: [PayDay Register 02012013](#)
 [Check Register 02042013](#)
 [EFT Register 02042013](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Jim Wansacz, seconded by Commissioner Corey D. O'Brien, that this Resolution be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye: 2 - Corey D. O'Brien and Jim Wansacz

Abstain: 1 - Patrick O'Malley

13-0021

Entering into an Agreement with Cost Plans Plus, LLC

Attachments: [COST PLANS PLUS](#)

A motion was made that this Resolution be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye: 3 - Corey D. O'Brien, Jim Wansacz and Patrick O'Malley

13-0024

Awarding the PNC Field Furniture Package

Attachments: A101-2007 -One Point Furniture
 Exhibit A- One Point
 Exhibit B- One Point Quote 2-1-13
 SKMBT_C36013020411490

Tabled until the February 27, 2013 meeting.

Commissioner Jim Wansacz-Motion to table the resolution until the next Commissioners meeting, so the Controller can get some answers. Commissioner Corey O'Brien seconded the motion. Vote 3-0.

13-0022

Approving the submission of a CDBG Program Modification

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

Aye: 3 - Corey D. O'Brien, Jim Wansacz and Patrick O'Malley

[13-0023](#)

Approving a Cooperative Agreement Amendment with NeighborWorks

Attachments: [NHS Coop Agree Amend. Dunmore HOME](#)

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

Aye: 3 - Corey D. O'Brien, Jim Wansacz and Patrick O'Malley

[13-0025](#)

Awarding the Radio Equipment for the Prison

Attachments: [Lackawanna County Prison XPR6550 XPR6350 XPR8400 VHF State Contract Discount 2013 XPR6550 XPR6350 P&T](#)

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

Aye: 3 - Corey D. O'Brien, Jim Wansacz and Patrick O'Malley

Opportunity for the Public to Address the Board

None

Commissioners' Other Business

Commissioner Jim Wansacz- First off, I just want to say that the wireless project, it took a long time as we know to get to this point. But it is truly going to be a cost savings measure for the county. But more importantly it's also going to provide much needed emergency services throughout the county. We have parts right now in the northern part of the county and even spots where we can't communicate on Montage Mountain at the bottom and the top that will make it much easier for our emergency services to get in contact and hopefully if it saves one life it's definitely going to be well worth it. And we look forward to this hopefully being up and running around in July of this year. And it's going to give us a great opportunity for economic development too going forward.

As far as the referendum, I think today is a historic day. As many people know 2012 was a tough year financially for the county, we were faced with state cutbacks; we've had a tremendous amount of layoffs. We had to cut 4.8 million dollars in government spending. And what the voters tasked all of us to do is to be more efficient and effective with their taxpayer dollars. They asked us to not to make government bigger but to make it more efficient and effective and to save money. They don't want to see taxes continue to go up. And this was an opportunity with -- I think with the retirement of an elected official and leases coming up to really streamline government. And now this is going to be up to the voters to decide whether or not they want smaller more efficient government or they want a larger bigger government filled with much more bureaucracy. This is going to allow us to create a one stop shop for efficiency and effectiveness. They want a more efficient and effective government. They don't want more politics. They don't want bureaucraticness. They want efficiencies. We made the tough decisions in 2012. This is going to be up to the

voters going forward. This is a way conservatively that we believe we're going to save at least a million dollars. So this will be up to the voters to make that decision. I mean, we'll find out in May. But overall I think this is a good idea going forward. This is what they've asked us to do is look at ways to become more efficient and not raise taxes. And that's what we're trying to do.

Commissioner Pat O'Malley- I just want to congratulate David Hahn for the great job he's going up at 911. We had a little problem with the police radios being able to communicate in certain areas. And the receivers they just put up are going to make it -- they're going to actually be able to have an opportunity to -- anything goes wrong that they're able to contact 911. And this is something that has been going on for a while. And we got that taken care of. And I think everything has been okay for like the last two and a half, three weeks. It's a great thing. I would like to congratulate Dave Hahn. He's doing a great job in his position.

Commissioner Corey O'Brien- We've come here today to propose amendments to our Home Rule Charter. Now, we're under no illusion as to who holds the ultimate power regarding our charter. The people in this county have the power. The people of this county have the choice to amend their charter or leave it unchanged. While the amendments that we propose have no substantive matter of statewide concern, the amendments that we propose will take great strides in moving our county forward by making our government more efficient, more cost effective, and more streamlined. So why are we acting now? First, Lackawanna County government will continue to face difficult economic challenges in the future with increased costs of living, coupled with the state and federal cutbacks, debt service that we inherited, and rising healthcare costs. Elimination of these row offices will save county residents conservatively one million dollars. Through the use of technology, staffing efficiencies, collaboration, and other operational tools, the services provided by these offices will continue to be delivered as we move forward. Second, Lackawanna County has a unique opportunity to take advantage of one or more row office retirements. These provide us with the unique opportunity to propose changes to our charter that have been long overdue. Third, the residents of Lackawanna County have been talking about reducing the number of countywide row offices literally for decades. The people of this county have told us on countless occasions that we must continue to find ways to reduce the expenses associated with government that we don't need all of these politicians, that we don't need all these individual kingdoms that have developed. Residents can no longer afford the size and scope of this county government. We have heard your calls for a more efficient government. And we're taking the first step to place the government back into your hands. In May of this year you will have the opportunity to take a step forward and amend your Home Rule Charter. Lastly, less politicians in Lackawanna County is better. If the public approves this ordinance by referendum in May, the number of politicians in Lackawanna County will be reduced by four.

I have yet to meet a person in Lackawanna County who thinks that we need more politicians. So why is the sheriff included in this ordinance? There is no -- three people here -- there is no person in Lackawanna County who respects the work of our deputy sheriffs more than we do. Over the last five years I witnessed firsthand their level of professionalism. I have seen the great security that they provide. They earned my respect over the course of the last

five years. And I think that they know that when I come in contact with them. Since we announced this ordinance, we've come across a lot of people. Everyone that I spoken to seem to agree that we should eliminate the Register of Wills, Recorder of Deeds, and Clerk of Judicial records. However, some of you have asked questions on why we're including the sheriff's office in this ordinance. Before we determine whether the sheriff should be elected or appointed, I think it's important to understand the Sheriff's role in Lackawanna County government. The county's Home Rule Charter provides a sheriff with the power to provide security for all county property and personnel. That's about it. They do a great job. But that is about it. The primary function of the Sheriff is to schedule deputy sheriffs to serve summons, secure county property and personnel, and schedule prisoner transport. What they do they're excellent at. The deputy sheriffs do it and they do an excellent job. The Sheriff's position in Lackawanna County is a scheduling job. They have to schedule the moving pieces. For budget purposes, the Sheriff's budget is 3.9 million dollars. The Register of Wills, Recorder of Deeds, the Clerk of Judicial Records combined budget -- combined, all three of their offices together is 1.9 million bucks. The Sheriff's office has 102 positions. The Recorder of Deeds, Register of Wills, and Clerk of Judicial records, they have a total combined of 34 positions. In addition to the Home Rule Charter, the state provides the Sheriff with a few additional powers. But none trump the security of county property and personnel. It is also important to note that the Sheriff's powers have significant limitations under state law. It should be noted that your local police officer has more jurisdictional law enforcement authority than does our Sheriff. Some have argued as the chief peace officer of Lackawanna County the Sheriff should be elected. You'll decide that question, not us. You'll decide that question, not us. In municipalities throughout this county, throughout this state, and throughout the country, the chief peace officer is the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police in your home town is not elected. The Chief of Police in your home town is appointed. And that process seems to work fairly well. So what's the public purpose being served by electing a sheriff? Absolutely none unless you think scheduling deputy sheriffs to protect county property and personnel rises to that level. The county sheriff serves as the chief scheduler of Lackawanna County's deputy sheriffs, nothing more, and nothing less. We do not need to elect someone to schedule deputy sheriffs to provide security for county property and personnel.

Having said all of that, this is your Home Rule Charter. And you'll decide whether to amend it or not. We're just proposing it so that you have that opportunity. The question before voters is simple. Do we want a smaller government? Do we want a government that costs less? Do we want fewer politicians? If you believe the answer to all of these questions is yes, then you should consider voting in the May 21st primary election to eliminate these row offices. If you want a government of its current size, if you want a government to continue to cost you more money, if you want all these politicians tripping over themselves here in Lackawanna County, then you should consider voting no. We don't make that determination. All we've done here today is we've given you the opportunity to take hold of your government and to decide what you want to do with your Home Rule Charter. You will have that decision. We want to make sure that you have a decision to take action. People could be out there talking about smaller government all they want. Leadership requires action. It requires us to move forward and to get things done. We've adopted an ordinance here to move us in the direction of getting things done. Now that ordinance is in the hands of the people. And you will decide whether we get it done and make this government smaller.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Jim Wansacz, seconded by Commissioner Corey D. O'Brien, that this meeting be Adjourned at 9:45am. The motion carried by the following vote.

Aye: 3 - Corey D. O'Brien, Jim Wansacz and Patrick O'Malley