



County of Lackawanna

Lackawanna County
Administration Building
200 Adams Avenue
Scranton, Pennsylvania
18503

Meeting Minutes Board of Commissioners

Wednesday, May 7, 2014

10:00 AM

Commissioner's Conference Room

Call to Order

Commissioner Jim Wansacz called the meeting to order at 10:04am.

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, to 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)

Proclamation Presentations

[14-0083](#)

Presentation of a Certificate of Recognition to the West Scranton Intermediate Students in honor of winning third place at the National 2014 C-SPAN StudentCam Contest.

[14-0090](#)

Proclamation declaring May 7, 2014 as "Rotary Club of Scranton Day" in Lackawanna County.

Resolutions

[14-0089](#)

Approving Current Payables

Attachments: [Payables](#)
[EFTs](#)

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

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

[14-0079](#)

Entering into an Amendment to a Lease Agreement

Attachments: [Magistrate Lease Agree 2014](#)

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

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

[14-0080](#)

Ratifying a Verizon Extension

Attachments: [911 Verizon Extension](#)

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

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

[14-0082](#)

Entering into Letters of Agreement with PPL

Attachments: [PPL Letters of Agreement](#)

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

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

[14-0081](#)

Entering into a Cooperation Agreement with Geisinger

Attachments: [Lackawanna County - Geisinger Clinic - Cooperation Agreement \(LSA Grant\)](#)

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

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

[14-0084](#)

Amending the County Engineer Agreement

Attachments: [County Standard Billing Rates signed Greenman-Pedersen Engineer](#)

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

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

[14-0085](#)

Approving a Provider Agreement with Northeast Foster Care, Inc.

Attachments: [OYFS Provider Contract-NE Foster Care FY 13-14- Commish Mtg 5-7-14](#)

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

[14-0086](#)

Entering into a Professional Services Contract for Counseling Services

Attachments: [OYFS Prof. Contract-Counseling FY 13-14- Commish Mtg 5-7-14](#)

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

[14-0087](#)

Entering into an Agreement with Georgia State University Research Foundation

Attachments: [OYFS Prof. Contract-Georgia State FY 13-14- Commish Mtg 5-7-14](#)

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

[14-0088](#)

Approving and Accepting Addendums to Provider and Professional Service Agreements

Attachments: [OYFS Addendum to Richard Gold Contract FY 13-14- Commish Mtg 5-7-14](#)
[OYFS Addendum to Lang Int Contract FY 13-14- Commish Mtg 5-7-14](#)
[OYFS Addendum to CAC Contract FY 13-14- Commish Mtg 5-7-14](#)
[OYFS Addendum to Avanco Contract FY 13-14- Commish Mtg 5-7-14](#)

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

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

[14-0091](#)

Entering into an Agreement with the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority

Attachments: [2014 Trail Mileage](#)
[Trail Maintenance 2014](#)

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

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

[14-0092](#)

Authorizing the Bridge Inspection Services Agreement

Attachments: [Pages from PennDOT CECO Bridge Inspection](#)

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

Opportunity for the Public to Address the Board

Anissa Fetchan, Lackawanna County Veteran Affairs Office: Armed Forces Day Parade-Saturday May 17th at 11am, starting at the Gino Merli Veterans Center.

Commissioners' Other Business

Commissioner Patrick O'Malley: PNC Field Family Fun Day last weekend, huge success; Armed Forces Day Parade on Saturday May 17th, please come out and support our veterans who sustain our freedoms; the kidnapping of the Nigerian girls for trying to receive an education, in our thoughts and prayers.

Commissioner Corey O'Brien: Want to reflect this day, and talk about the May 20th Election, Study Commission recommendations and put some things in to perspective. This county was established and formed 135 years ago. In 1991, I saw a need in my hometown, the Borough of Dunmore, a need for kids to congregate and not get in trouble; formed an organization to build a Community Center and did our best to get it going, but unless you were in office and willing to make the hard decisions and willing to fund important projects and they aren't going very far, had to be willing to serve and get it done. We need people in office willing to make the decisions to improve our community long term. Project languished for 10 years, until the leadership came along and we built it-the center is overwhelmed with people, always adding to the location. It taught me service is important. In 2005 my wife and I moved our law practices from Washington DC and moved back here and become involved in the local community. In 2007 I announced I was running for this office-very few people for me, and all I did was knock on doors, I had hardly any money, but at the end of the day we were successful. My whole goal for running was to serve and do good things; and we have done good things. We launched the Boundless Playground program, which is now 6 playgrounds in the county, which is just breaking down barriers between parents and children and now those misconceptions are broken down. Funding of community projects and doing good things. We were able to get baseball done, when it was on its way out-arrangement now is that they will be here for 30 years, and established a maintenance fund which was never done in its history-family friendly venue. Doing things that need to be done, and that's what we have been focused on. The day after I announced my running, the Toyota Pavilion collapsed February 14, 2007, \$1.6 million roof goes down, became an important part. Fast forward- on a path that could be full of peril, I am doing my best, my days in politics will not be long, but while I am here working for the people and with people that I respect. The electorate has a very important decision to make on May 20th.

Coming into office in 2008, Comm. Washo and I, filed a lawsuit against the insurance company owned by Chuck Volpe, after they decided not to cover the collapse-their argument is that the policy was cancelled verbally one month before the collapse- no one can cancel a policy for over 1 million dollars verbally. The tax-payers are short 1.6 million- as we had to make over 1 million

in cuts- we have said since day one, let's take this to trial and get the money back so we are able to fund good projects. On January 24, 2013 Chuck Volpe announces he wants to abolish the Commissioners form of Government, which has served us for over 135 years; we have had great success and some failures, however the form of Gov. has always worked, and the people that have done bad things have paid for their actions, but there have been lots of great successes-we think of baseball, Montage Mountain which wouldn't exist, the Parks systems, the 911 system. But I believe that no-one spends their own money to change a government. In the Primary Elections, Chuck Volpe spent \$287,000.00 of his own money to get a study commission through; his TV ad was to change the structure of the form of government-campaign was that we lack opportunity, we got a jobs problem, and there is corruption that is not the structure of governments fault- that's people-whether its corruption or unemployment, those are not structural county government problems. Ran a political campaign, and funded it himself- the taxpayers decided to study the government, not a bad thing, let's get an idea of what it's all about- before any hearings took place, in August Chuck Volpe indicates that a change in government is a fait accompli, Latin for fact accomplished, outcome predetermined. So before even studying the government he decided it has to be changed. As he indicated at a Chamber of Commerce event, he's now spent \$400,000 of his own money, to change the government. If you had \$400,000, would you pay to change the government or pay for your child's education? Pay for your home, or change government? Help cure cancer, or change government? Invest in Autism research, or change government? If you do that, you want something in return- he is trying to reclaim and take over the government- we can say it a million ways, but that is the bottom line. Give us \$400,000 to partner with the Chamber so we can build relationships to bring jobs here, so our child and grandchildren can find good, family sustaining jobs here.

Vote no May 20th, and here is why-it's bad for you. 1-we have 11 elected officials in Lackawanna County, if you vote yes we will have 17. If you think council forms of government work, drive 15 miles south and see how well Luzerne's works- walk two blocks from this building and see how well City Hall is doing. 2-expense: in the 1970's the voters elected to get rid of the prothonotary's office, to combine it with another. Chuck Volpe wants to bring it back, and in doing so will increase the elected officials salaries will go to \$261,000 from \$230,000. So if you vote yes, the elected official you voted to get rid of will be back. 3-accountability: 7 part-time council members running around, less accountability. If you don't like what we are doing, every four years you can vote us out and change the direction the county is going in. if you vote yes, the executive will blame the council, council will blame the executive, you won't know who to blame and who to vote out-in addition, you only get one vote per council, you cannot vote for them all.

Checks and Balances now- Court System, District Attorney, Treasurer, Controller, various Row Officers and more important than that you have a minority commissioner. In 2004-2007 the then minority commissioner unearthed things that he believed were inappropriate, took it to the appropriate personnel and those individuals that conducted those activities have been held accountable. Without someone with equal constitutional power, that's not happening. Change of government will be less checks and balances and more power consolidated in one person-one executive-with no equal, with no-one to check them; as a county commissioner you sit three individuals all with equal

constitutional authority, which matters. A vote no means that you will guarantee that at least one Republican will always sit on this board, if not more than one. Republicans will be eliminated and not have a voice in the council form, since this is a heavy Democrat county. At the end of the day, if you don't know and have a question- one simple thought- is, why is Chuck Volpe spending over \$400,000 of his own money to change this government? This is your choice, this is your government, we collectively decide the direction that this county is moving in, a majority vote will rule and it's your vote that matters. On Election Day I hope you come out. I am proud to live and work here, and I hope to be involved in this community for a very long time, and I think we seriously need to think about this and vote no.

Commissioner Jim Wansacz: Thanks to everyone who attended our great county events over the past few weeks-Bike Safety Fair up at McDade where over 300 helmets were given away and that couldn't be done without the public/private partnerships, and sponsors- Gerrirtys with their hot dogs for the kids, apples and waters, etc. Cedar Bike-donated bikes for the kids. Great Family Day at PNC Filed-stadium tours, horse rides, K9 demo, face painting, running the bases and more-everyone seemed to enjoy the behind the scenes tour of the stadium. Fishing Derby at McDade Park this upcoming Saturday-had such a great time last year, fun opportunity. May 17th- Armed Force Day Parade- please try to come out and support our veterans. We lost a member of our Stadium Authority to cancer last week, if I could have a moment of silence.

The May 20th Election-my opinion-this was not a "study" of government- I read the report- and the report wasn't factual- I don't understand how you can say things and they just aren't factual. And that's the part that worries me- I think that's the part that gives anyone who runs for public service a bad name-because they say one thing and do something completely different. We are public servants- we give up our days and our time, and so do so many other people in the public sector, to make a difference in our community. And for people to go out and say something and do something else, drives me up a wall. You heard about the "corruption" TV ad, and that it would be a "less expensive" Government, it's going to save money, millions- but now it comes out that-and it's going to create jobs. Yes that's right- but it's going to create 6 more political jobs, plus whoever they decide to bring in with them. But we now know that it's going to cost 1 million dollars more to operate. We sit here, and figure out ways to save money, we work every day with our credit agency's to get the County's credit ratings back. I met with them, and their one criteria's are management-future forecast of what's going on. Could you imagine now, crawling back from the Cordaro/Munchak years, that we would go to them and say-we want to eliminate the surveillance fee of \$800,000.00 a year- oh but by the way, we are going to pass a new government that conservatively will cost 1 million more expensive; guess what? They will have to raise taxes to come up with it. Local officials say that oh you pass taxes after the fact you've been elected-but that's exactly what will happen with this and after the May Primary, whenever the Democrat is elected to win, you don't find out what the budget will be until about September, after the audit comes out. More politicians does not mean better! 1 million conservatively. So we are going to expect 7 different people, working part-time, whose responsibility is going to be to their district, to agree on everything. I was a State Representative-203 of us, our main responsibility was our district; I believe in shrinking the size of the legislature.

Local councils, the federal government, the state governments- more people, more troubles, out of order- but yet that's exactly what we want to do? Only 16% of the registered voters came out at the last primary. Look at Luzerne County, and Allegheny County- both have councils, and tax increases. The guy from Northampton even said that his will be more expensive. You won't get any more services-just more money and politicians. The Judges did a nice job of putting out a simple question, so read that for understanding if you don't get it. People need to pay attention as this will affect your future; not like you can change it next year, we would be stuck with this. I believe we can't change it for another 5 more years, and you can't change it during the midterm- so you are stuck for at least 9 years before you can change government. And it won't end corruption; if you're corrupt, you're corrupt, and it doesn't matter where you are at, Mayors, Council Members, School Boards, Governors, State Representatives, even Presidents-all get in trouble. You look at it, where does he make his money? I believe its insurance. Somewhere between 200-300 Governments/Municipalities all over the state that he represents with insurance; over 350. So that's a Government outsider? We are taking a step backwards with the referendum-whether you like us or you don't like us, you can change it every 4 years. Already they had to yank an ad because it was un-factual. We are making the tough decisions-I say no because it's in the best interest of the county- do you think I like saying no and making people upset? But its's in the best interest of the county- I am also a taxpayer, my family and friends are taxpayers. I do not want to raise taxes or cut services by over 1 million dollars because this passes, which won't benefit anything or move our area forward. He talks about 'no bid contracts', well, that's what he had under the Cordaro/Munchak years, 3.5 million for 4 year contract, and all of a sudden it's not right now. I am not attacking anybody personally, but in my opinion it's not a good form, and as a leader I feel I must talk about. Election is in 2 weeks; I've seen it, and this won't work. Its about going forward, and the future of the County- don't like us, you can vote us out. My opinion- vote no.

Commissioner Patrick O'Malley: I had an opportunity to be on a Board for 12 years, on the minority and majority side- and it wasn't easy. When I ran for this office, I knew that this would allow less people to work with. This government is effective and efficient, and works well for the people of Lackawanna County, who have made a difference and worked hard every day, making sure everything was run properly. My hope when I got here, I wanted an opportunity to make things happen. A lot of great things going on in our community, and I really care about our community. Remember, you can vote us out in a few years if you don't think we are doing a good job. I recently reached out to the media and asked if they wanted to know my opinion, and never received a phone call, which is why I am talking about it today. I wouldn't be here, and have worked so hard to be here, if it wasn't for our current form, and our community, trying to make the lives of our community better.

CFO Tom Durkin: as part of my job as Chief Financial Officer, I thought it was important for me to investigate the expected cost of the new form of Government should it pass, how would it impact the County Budget should this happen. Looked at numerous counties that went to an elected council form of government, cost to administer the government. Current Lackawanna County government costs \$1,015,501.00 out of the 2014 budget, for administering the county. (Discussion regarding staffing) Allegheny

Council-\$2,590,119.00; the proposed form of Lackawanna County Government is \$2,119,252.00. That is over 1 million more than the cost of the current government. There is not now, nor do we anticipate will there be in 2016, which is the year that this proposed government would take effect, over 1 million dollars to pay for it; the only way I could see that this would be paid for in the very first year, is that there would have to be a tax increase-just to pay for the additional cost of running the 'new' government. These are conservative numbers, chance it could be greater.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Jim Wansacz, seconded by Commissioner Corey D. O'Brien, that this meeting be Adjourned at 11:45am. The motion carried by the following vote.

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