

LAKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES

JOHN R. HAMERCHECK, COMMISSIONER JASON W. BOYD, ADMINISTRATOR
JOHN PLECNIK, COMMISSIONER LEGAL COUNSEL
RICHARD J. REGOVICH, COMMISSIONER NEWS MEDIA
JENNIFER BELL, CLERK

(Tape 2024-1029)

CALL TO ORDER: Commissioner Plecnik called the Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, October 29, 2024.

ROLL CALL: Upon roll being called, Commissioners Hamercheck, Regovich, and Plecnik were present.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Commissioner Plecnik asked if anyone in the audience wished to address the Board. Ms. Lyndsie Wall of Mentor referred to a statement made by Assistant Prosecutor, Mr. David Hackman at last week's Commissioners Meeting.

Bishop Mirbel of Painesville, shared that he is thankful for the "With God All Things Are Possible" sign that hangs in the Commissioners Chambers. He thanked Commissioner Hamercheck for meeting with clergy and inviting them to attend meetings.

Mr. Chris Bihary of Painesville stated that it is good to talk to God and peace begins within yourself. He asked for a moment of silence for renewed hearts.

Mr. Chris Weiss of Leroy stated that for the past few months there have been many people using public portion to question Commissioner Hamercheck and he (Mr. Weiss) questions Commissioner Plecnik's loyalty.

Mr. Brian Kolkowski of Painesville read a prepared statement with regard to an investigation into a possible hacking event related to Lake County computer servers, a motion that was filed in Lake County Common Police Court on September 8th, 2021, and his public records request for the investigatory files of the State Attorney General.

RESOLUTIONS:

1.RESOLUTION INCREASING APPROPRIATIONS IN LAKE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF UTILITIES SOLID WASTE FUND TRANSFERS-OUT AND TRANSFERRING CASH TO THE SOLID WASTE CLOSURE/POST CLOSURE FUND(20241029\U01)(UT-2)

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck, the foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners Hamercheck, Regovich and Plecnik "NAYS": None.

2.RESOLUTION INCREASING APPROPRIATIONS AND TRANSFERRING CASH WITHIN LAKE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF UTILITIES SEWER FUND AND PROJECT FUND 554, RED CREEK SEWER, PROJECT 280-S (20241029\U02)(UT-2)

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck, the foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners Hamercheck, Regovich and Plecnik "NAYS": None.

3. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A FIFTH AMENDMENT TO THE WATER SUPPLY AGREEMENT WITH AQUA OHIO, INC. ("AQUA") RELATED TO A PERMANENT SUPPLY OF WATER TO AQUA FOR THE BERKSHIRE HILLS DRIVE AREA, KIRTLAND, OHIO AND ASHTABULA COUNTY, OHIO, AND FROM AQUA FOR THE PINECREST ROAD AREA, CONCORD TOWNSHIP, OHIO, AND FOR A TEMPORARY SURPLUS AND EMERGENCY BACK UP SUPPLY OF WATER TO EACH OTHER IN LAKE AND ASHTABULA COUNTIES (20241029\U02)(UT-2)

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck, the foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners Hamercheck, Regovich and Plecnik "NAYS": None.

4.RESOLUTION APPROVING LAKE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES VOUCHERS DATE OF WARRANT NOVEMBER 8, 2024 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$59,614.00(20241029\JFS01)(JFS-14)

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck, the foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners Hamercheck, Regovich and Plecnik "NAYS": None.

5.RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE LAKE COUNTY EMPLOYEES' SHARE OF THE MONTHLY PREMIUM FOR MEDICAL AND DENTAL INSURANCE COVERAGE, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2025 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2025 (20241029\C01)(INS)

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck, the foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners Hamercheck, Regovich and Plecnik "NAYS": None.

6.RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE MONTHLY PREMIUMS FOR MEDICAL AND DENTAL INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR SUB-GOVERNMENT ENTITIES PARTICIPATING IN THE COUNTY EMPLOYEE HEALTH PLANS, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2025 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2025(20241029\C02)(INS)

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck. The foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners Hamercheck, Regovich and Plecnik "NAYS": None.

7.RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO EXECUTE A RENEWAL ADDENDUM FOR THE CONTRACT WITH MEDICAL MUTUAL OF OHIO FOR THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES(20241029\C03)(INS)

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck, the foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners Hamercheck, Regovich and Plecnik "NAYS": None.

8.RESOLUTION APPROVING PAYMENT OF BILLS AS LISTED ON THE COMMISSIONERS' APPROVAL JOURNAL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,446,193.06(20241029\BC01)(C-4)

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck, the foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners Hamercheck and Plecnik "ABSTAIN": Commissioner Regovich "NAYS": None.

9.RESOLUTION APPROVING PURCHASE ORDERS AS LISTED ON THE COMMISSIONERS' PURCHASE ORDER APPROVAL JOURNAL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$616,869.74(20241029\BC02)(C-17)

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck, the foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners Hamercheck and Plecnik "ABSTAIN": Commissioner Regovich "NAYS": None.

10. RESOLUTION INCREASING APPROPRIATIONS FOR VARIOUS GENERAL AND NON-GENERAL FUND ACCOUNTS (20241029\BC03)(C-111)

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck, the foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners Hamercheck and Plecnik. "ABSTAIN": Commissioner Regovich "NAYS": None.

11. RESOLUTION TRANSFERRING CASH AND APPROPRIATIONS WITHIN VARIOUS GENERAL AND NON-GENERAL FUND ACCOUNTS(20241029\BC04)(C-111)

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck, the foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners Hamercheck, Regovich and Plecnik "NAYS": None.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

UTILITIES –none.

JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES – Ms. Suzanne Casar, Director of Job and Family Services was happy to announce that the Caley Receiving Home received a 3-year accreditation from CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities); the highest rating that they could have received. It has also been certified as a QRTP (Qualified Residential Treatment Program) facility for their compliance with the requirements related to standards per OAC 5122-30-32. She thanked everyone that was involved with this year-long renewal process. Commissioner Regovich congratulated Ms. Casar and her staff on this important accreditation. He also congratulated her on the successful Annual Chili Cook-off that was held last week.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – Lake County Administrator Jason Boyd, presented the inaugural Annual "State of the County" Report which detailed significant progress in various departments including public safety, economic development, and infrastructure improvements. He spoke of several critical topics which included an overview of the County's budget and financial position, a review of major capital projects and infrastructure improvements, an assessment of County services and programs, as well as updates on key initiatives and projects, and the challenges facing the County along with proposed solutions. Mr. Boyd also provided a summary of major accomplishments and achievements. Mr. Boyd thanked Public Relations Specialist, Ms. Summer Torok, all of the Directors and Elected Officials as well as staff that worked together on this informative presentation. Commissioner Plecnik remarked on the importance of the report stating that this first-ever "State of the County" Report serves as a vital tool for communicating with citizens, stakeholders, and other governmental entities. He stated that this will promote open governance and enhance transparency by providing a thorough overview of the County's activities and initiatives. Commissioner Hamercheck stated that this report reflects the County's commitment to transparency and accountability. Commissioner Regovich thanked Mr. Boyd and Public Relations Specialist, Ms. Summer Torok for their hard work in preparing the Annual "State of the County Report". He stated that this not only showcases what the County has accomplished but also sets the stage for continued collaboration towards solving the issues that matter most to our citizens. Mr. Boyd added that this report is available on the County's website and distributed at County offices to ensure widespread accessibility. The full report can be found at: <https://www.lakecountyohio.gov/commissioners-office/state-of-the-county-presentations/> Commissioner Plecnik announced that the groundbreaking for the new Public Safety Center will occur on November 22, 2024 and that completion of the project is targeted for 2027.

CLERK – Commissioners Clerk, Ms. Jennifer Bell, stated that the next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 7, 2024 at 10:00 am. and reminded everyone that daylight savings time ends this coming weekend.

LEGAL – none.

OLD BUSINESS: none.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner Plecnik stated that he had four quick items of new business. He addressed Mr. Kolkowski and others who have asked for an update from the County's IT Director and while Auditor Galloway was unable to attend today's meeting, he sent an email to the Board of Commissioners that he read without edit: "President Plecnik and Commissioners, in light of the myriad of requests for the IT Director to present information to the Board of Commissioners regarding the attempted breach of the Board of Elections and County networks in May 2021 I will work with Mr. Falcone to develop a timeline and fact sheet for your information on the matter I will look to present to you in the near future after the Prosecutor's Office has an opportunity to review please also understand that I will present it to you and not Mr. Falcone I do not believe it is fair to place one of our employees directly into a very public and controversial matter I will handle I appreciate your understanding additionally has come to my attention that there are individuals making public statements about having hacked into our elections Network and equipment I will let the BOE and SOS discuss their security however please know that there is no

evidence that our County or elections Network were breached in a way that allowed for any manipulation of our local election people's votes are safe, our network security measures worked, lastly, I've been made aware that because of the public statements made by individuals claiming to have breached our Network and election machines our County Prosecutor has referred these statements and videos on the matter to the Ohio Attorney General's Office. I believe this is a prudent step the public must know we are doing all that we can to protect not only our network, but their vote. Yours in freedom, Christopher Galloway."

His second item for new business was that there have been many discussions about property taxes as was referenced in the State of the County report and that they are actually a very small share of Lake County's revenue because the County is principally supported by sales tax. He wanted to recognize that property taxes are a very big burden collectively and that he, along with the Commissioners Clerk, drafted a resolution. This has not passed and is merely a draft that he proposed. Commissioner Plecnik read the following proposed draft Resolution in its entirety:

“RESOLUTION OPPOSING PROPERTY TAX INCREASES AND IN SUPPORT OF PROPERTY TAX REFORM AND A 100% PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR SENIORS IN LAKE COUNTY AND ALL OF OHIO

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners hereby finds and determines that all formal actions relative to the adoption of this resolution were taken in an open meeting of this Board of County Commissioners, and that all the deliberations of this Board of County Commissioners and of its committees, if any, which resulted in formal actions, were taken in meetings open to the public, in full compliance with applicable legal requirements, including Section 121.22 of the Revised Code; and

WHEREAS, this resolution aims to convey our strong opposition to any proposed tax increases targeted at Lake County, Ohio residents. Recognizing the invaluable contributions and circumstances of Lake County residents, we believe it is crucial to protect their financial stability and ensure they can maintain a decent standard of living; and

WHEREAS, created in the State of Ohio's operating budget, the Joint Committee on Property Taxation Review and Reform is tasked with reviewing Ohio's property tax system and making recommendations regarding property tax to the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Lake County Board of Commissioners encourages the Joint Committee on Property Taxation Review and Reform and the Ohio General Assembly to reform the property tax laws so that inflation does not impose a phantom tax on our residents or tax seniors out of their homes; and

WHEREAS, the Lake County Board of Commissioners concurs with Village of Timberlake, Ohio, Mayor John Marra's proposal that Ohio stop taxing unrealized gains by increasing the assessed value of owner-occupied homes prior to a sale. In the alternative, Ohio should consider a cap on increasing the assessed value of owner-occupied homes, such as Florida's "Save Our Homes" 3% cap; and

WHEREAS, senior citizens often live on fixed incomes, relying heavily on retirement savings and Social Security benefits as their primary sources of income; and

WHEREAS, as a result, many seniors in Ohio are being taxed out of their homes; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Lake County, Ohio concurs with Commissioner John Plecnik, who called for a "100% property tax exemption for seniors" in his guest column in the Columbus Dispatch on April 21, 2023; and

WHEREAS, our residents will be forced to pay these unjust taxes on unrealized gains next year, and it is urgent that legislation is adopted before that time; and

WHEREAS, Lake County residents have spent a significant portion of their lives working and contributing to the growth and development of Ohio, and should not be subject to heavier tax burdens; and

WHEREAS, Lake County residents and all residents in Ohio face the insidious tax known as inflation in the form of increasing healthcare costs and rising living expenses, which already strain their limited resources; and

WHEREAS, many Lake County residents face an inflationary property tax increase of 30% or more as a result of the state-mandated Sexennial Reevaluation in which all real property is reappraised; and

WHEREAS, as a result, many Lake County homeowners in Ohio are being taxed out of their homes; and

WHEREAS, the Lake County population deserves respect, appreciation, and support for their contributions and continued well-being.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Lake County, Ohio does hereby express our strong opposition to any proposed tax increases on Lake County residents and all residents in Ohio, and respectfully requests the great State of Ohio to stop taxing unrealized gains and adopt a 100% property tax exemption for seniors."

Commissioner Plecnik stated his third item was to remind every resident to take the time to vote. Lastly, he wanted to wish everyone a Happy Halloween.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck, the Board convened an Executive Session at 11:22 a.m. to discuss Legal-Imminent Litigation with the vote as follows: "AYES": Commissioners: Regovich, Hamercheck, and Plecnik "NAYS": None.

The Lake County Board of Commissioners adjourned to Executive Session at 11:24 a.m.

ADJOURN: On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck, the Board adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m. with the vote as follows: "AYES": Commissioners: Hamercheck, Regovich and Plecnik "NAYS": None.

Minutes approved this twelfth day of December, 2024.

BOARD OF LAKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

JOHN PLECNIK, PRESIDENT

JOHN R. HAMERCHECK, COMMISSIONER

RICHARD J. REGOVICH, COMMISSIONER

JENNIFER BELL, CLERK