

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 2024-1107)

CALL TO ORDER: Commissioner Plecnik called the Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Thursday, November 7, 2024.

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

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Commissioner Plecnik asked if anyone in the audience wished to address the Board. Commissioner Plecnik introduced Lake County Department of Utilities Director of Operations, Mr. Gary Fedak. Mr. Fedak congratulated Mr. Jim Adams on 25 years of service to the Department of Utilities, explaining that he began his career as a Wastewater System Maintenance Operator, obtained Class I and Class II licensing, has incomparable leadership abilities and in 2019 was promoted to Collection System Maintenance Supervisor. Mr. Adams was presented with a special certificate and a watch by the Department of Utilities.

Ms. Linda O'Brien of Mentor stated that she is the founder of the Liberty Camp and the camp is in its 4<sup>th</sup> year. She requested a letter of support from the Board so that she may apply for a grant from the America 250<sup>th</sup> Committee.

Bishop Mirbel of Painesville was thankful for the many Police Chaplains that came out to pray recently and shared how thankful he is that Americans voted. He shared how he is always willing to help those in need.

Rev. Chris Bihary of Painesville, asked for a moment of silent reflection for Lake County and for unity so that everyone can lean to share and respect each other's opinions.

Ms. Bernadette Blumel of 2300 River Road, shared several of her concerns regarding the expenses of County mailings and Dog Shelter, information that may or may not have been included in an affidavit signed by Commissioner Plecnik as well as wondering if he removed personal campaign material items from his office.

Mr. Brian Massie of Rainbow Drive in Painesville thanked Board of Elections Director, Mr. Dante Lewis and his staff for the excellent job they did during the election. He stated that 77% of registered voters exercised their right to vote. He thanked Commissioner Plecnik for providing him with a draft copy of a resolution pertaining to no property taxes for seniors. He asked both Commissioners Hamercheck and Regovich to weigh in on Commissioner Plecnik's resolution. Mr. Massie then referred to item #6 on the agenda and asked if the resolution was premature and should wait until the required committee is formed. He also referred to item #8 on the agenda asking if the Crime Lab would be replacing the donated item and whether or not the Crime Lab goes to crime scenes.

Ms. Donna McNamee of Willoughby and as a member of the LakeTran Board stated that she was concerned about comments made regarding sales tax that the LakeTran Board voted to pause collection at their January 2024 meeting. She explained that it was not the intention of the Board to permanently suspend the collection but rather to pause the collection and eventually resume.

Mr. Chris Weiss of Leroy, also referred to item #8 on the agenda asking why the Crime Lab is donating this scanner and whether they still go to crime scenes. He also discussed a draft press release presented by Commissioner Plecnik that he did not get majority approval for.

Mr. Brian Kolkowski of Painesville, thanked Auditor Galloway for working with the Director of the County Information Technology Department to obtain some sort of timeline and detailed information regarding the 2021 incident. He also asked the Lake County Prosecutor's Office to contact the State Attorney General's office and request a copy of all records of any investigation performed by the Attorney General's special investigations Branch to determine whether the Attorney General failed to perform their own independent investigation into this matter.,

Mr. Joe Tomsick from Council on Aging provided an update of the Council on Aging Annual Meeting which was recently held. He stated that every year from September to December, Council on Aging provides free Medicare coverage review assistance to senior citizens. Last year, they were able to save seniors approximately \$19,000 in Medicare savings.

Commissioner Plecnik invited Telecommunications Director, Mr. Paul Stefanko, to speak on the recent refurbishing of the "Liberty Bell of Lake County" in preparation for the upcoming 250<sup>th</sup> or Semiquincentennial celebration. Mr. Stefanko thanked Commissioner Hamercheck and the Board for the opportunity to restore the bell. He stated that he wasn't sure what to expect when Commissioner Hamercheck contacted him and he soon realized he would have to restore it to last several lifetimes as this is a symbol of freedom. He explained that his first task was to construct a yolk and stand that would be appropriate but very sturdy. Mr. Stefanko stated that they wanted to use the same type of wood that the Liberty Bell in Washington was made of so the yolk and the base is actually Elm that they were able to find in an Amish sawmill in Middlefield. Because the bell weighs nearly 300 pounds, they had to embed a steel plate inside the yoke to support the bell. Mr. Stefanko stated that he and his staff were honored to work on this project recognizing the Liberty Bell and its symbol to our freedom and he trusts that this Bell will be displayed for the people of this great County and maintained for generations to come.

RESOLUTIONS:

**1.RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING NOVEMBER 2024 NATIONAL ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH IN LAKE COUNTY, OHIO (20241107\F01)(C-126)**

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck. Director of Job and Family Services, Ms. Suzanne Casar, briefly discussed the adoption process and expressed her gratitude to the Board for recognizing National Adoption Awareness Month. She introduced Gene Tetrick; Supervisor of Job and Family Services Foster Care and Adoption Team. He thanked the Board for recognizing November as National Adoption Awareness Month and provided several statistics. He emphasized the importance of fostering children and adoption. The foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners: Regovich, Hamercheck and Plecnik "NAYS": None.

**2.RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION GREEN LIGHT FOR VETERANS IN LAKE COUNTY, OHIO (20241107\F02)(C-126)**

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck. Commissioner Plecnik read the resolution in its entirety. County Recorder, Ms. Becky Lynch, was present and thanked the Board for this recognition. She thanked Commissioners Clerk, Ms. Jennifer Bell, for taking the extra steps necessary to have the Terminal Tower in Cleveland lit up in addition to the Lake County Courthouse. The foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners: Regovich, Hamercheck and Plecnik "NAYS": None.

**3.RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE LAKE COUNTY ENGINEER TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO THE OHIO PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION STATE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND/OR LOCAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM(S), AND TO EXECUTE AN OPWC AGREEMENT FOR THE LAKE COUNTY INTERSECTION RE-ALIGNMENT PROJECT IN PAINESVILLE TOWNSHIP AND CONCORD TOWNSHIP(20241107\E01)(E-3)**

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

**4.RESOLUTION CERTIFYING UNPAID WATER AND SEWER SUMS AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES TO THE LAKE COUNTY AUDITOR(20241107\U01)(UT-7)**

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

**5.RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT OF THE LAKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO EXECUTE A SERVICES AGREEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE LAKE COUNTY COMMON PLEAS COURT, JUVENILE DIVISION, WITH THE ASHTABULA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS(20241107\C01)(CT-3C)**

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck. Juvenile Court Judge, Michael DeLeone, was present and explained that this partnership with Ashtabula County is a historic and unique project. This agreement will allow Ashtabula County juveniles to be placed in the Lake County Detention Center on a per diem basis. Lake County can provide better services and programming which will benefit the youth of Ashtabula County. The foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners: Regovich, Hamercheck and Plecnik "NAYS": None.

**6.RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT WITH PROFESSIONAL SERVICE INDUSTRIES, INC FOR CONSULTING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR TESTING AND INSPECTION SERVICES FOR THE PROPOSED LAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY CENTER PROJECT, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$163,340.00(20241107\C02)(207-N)**

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

**7.RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING KENNETH R. GAUNTNER TO THE LAKE COUNTY LAW LIBRARY RESOURCES BOARD FOR A NEW TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 31, 2029(20241107\C03)(B-19)**

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck. Commissioner Plecnik thanked Mr. Gauntner for this willingness to continue to serve on this Board. The foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners: Regovich, Hamercheck and Plecnik "NAYS": None.

**8.RESOLUTION DECLARING CERTAIN COUNTY PERSONAL PROPERTY OBSOLETE AND NO LONGER NEEDED, TO WIT 360 DEGREE FARO SCANNER, AND AUTHORIZING THE DONATION OF SAID PROPERTY TO CHESTER TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR USE BY THE DETECTIVE BUREAU IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 307.12(D) OF THE OHIO REVISED CODE(20241107\C04)(CT-8)**

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

**9. RESOLUTION APPROVING PAYMENT OF BILLS AS LISTED ON THE COMMISSIONERS' APPROVAL JOURNAL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,620,864.09 (20241107\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.

**10. RESOLUTION APPROVING PURCHASE ORDERS AS LISTED ON THE COMMISSIONERS' PURCHASE ORDER APPROVAL JOURNAL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,298,734.69(20241107\BC02)(C-17)**

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

**11. RESOLUTION INCREASING APPROPRIATIONS FOR VARIOUS NON-GENERAL FUND ACCOUNTS (20241107\BC03)(C-111)**

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

**12. RESOLUTION TRANSFERRING CASH AND APPROPRIATIONS WITHIN VARIOUS GENERAL AND NON-GENERAL FUND ACCOUNTS(20241107\BC04)(C-111)**

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

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

UTILITIES – Sanitary Engineer, Mr. Randy Rothlisberger, stated that the sanitary sewer interconnect between Madison Village and the County Wastewater Treatment Plant is nearing completion. The last step in that process is actually physically diverting the flow from the Village Wastewater Treatment Plant to the County Treatment Plant and the contractor is mobilizing this week so it will happen as early as tomorrow or sometime early next week. The last step to finalize the deal is to transfer the operational services of Madison Village to Lake County Department of Utilities for both Water and Wastewater. Billing should begin on December 2, 2024.

JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES – none.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – County Administrator, Mr. Jason Boyd, wished the Mentor, Kirtland, Lake Catholic and Perry High School football teams’ good luck as they head to their championship games.

CLERK – Commissioners Clerk, Ms. Jennifer Bell, stated that the next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 14, 2024 at 10:00 am and that County Offices will be closed on Monday, November 11, 2024 in observance of Veterans Day. She thanked Mr. Mark Iafelice for his assistance in getting the County Courthouse Clock turned green in honor of Veterans Day.

LEGAL – none.

OLD BUSINESS: Commissioner Hamercheck addressed Ms. McNamee’s comments regarding the additional quarter percent sales tax for Laketrans. Commissioner Hamercheck stated that he has either personally attended meetings or monitored them online and it was the clear understanding and expressed purpose that the suspension of the collection of the additional quarter percent would not be at the cost of any services, facilities or operations associated with LakeTran. He explained that it was specifically done with the purpose of spending down surplus monies and was all part of a spend down strategy. The intent was on an annual basis, to review the financial needs of the organization and then act to reinstate if needed. He continued by explaining that at no time was the financial stability of LakeTran ever put at risk and at no time was this ever to be an automatic reinstatement. Commissioner Hamercheck pointed out that to LakeTran’s (and some of his) credit they have aggressively, proactively and effectively sought out grant funding to offset the need for that quarter percent. He shared how he appreciated Ms. McNamee’s passion, dedication, and willingness to serve on LakeTran’s Board. He stated that the partnership with Geauga County is proving to be a wise decision and is opening up doors for additional funding. He thanked Mr. Ben Capelle for being as assertive as he was to obtain the money to offset the cost of the facility upgrades.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner Regovich thanked Board of Elections Director Lewis and Deputy Director Kistner and staff for the very efficient job they did handling the record numbers of early voters. He stated that he received many compliments for the excellent job. Commissioner Regovich also congratulated the ADAMHS Board on the successful levy renewal.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: On a motion by Commissioner Plecnik, seconded by Regovich, the Board convened an Executive Session at 10:56 a.m. to discuss Legal – Imminent Litigation (x2) with the vote as follows: "AYES": Commissioners Regovich, Plecnik and Hamercheck "NAYS": None.

The Lake County Board of Commissioners adjourned to Executive Session at 11:26 a.m.

ADJOURN: On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck, the Board adjourned the meeting at 11:26 a.m. with the vote as follows: AYES": Commissioners Regovich, Hamercheck and Plecnik "NAYS": None.

Minutes approved this twelfth day of December, 2024.

**BOARD OF LAKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

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JOHN PLECNIK, PRESIDENT

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JOHN R. HAMERCHECK, COMMISSIONER

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RICHARD J. REGOVICH, COMMISSIONER

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JENNIFER BELL, CLERK