

LAWRENCE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
PUBLIC MEETING
MINUTES OF Tuesday, December 30, 2025

The Lawrence County Commissioners' Meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag followed by a Moment of Silence.

The Lawrence County Commissioners' Meeting of Tuesday, December 30, 2025, was called to order by **Commissioner Daniel Vogler**, at 10:00 AM at the Lawrence County Commissioners Meeting Room. **Deputy Chief Clerk, Vanessa Bayless**, called the roll. Those in attendance were, **Commissioner Dan Kennedy, Commissioner Chris Sainato (via phone), County Administrator, Joseph Venasco, Amy DiMuccio, Judge J. Cox and no one from the New Castle News**. It was stated for the record that the meeting is being taped. Those wishing to speak shall be given five minutes. If they need more time, they are to see the Chief Clerk at another time, and she will arrange for them to meet with the Commissioners. Those speaking are to state for the record their names, addresses and the nature of their business.

ROW OFFICERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

None

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

FISCAL/CONTRACTUAL

- A. Repository Properties: None
- B. Advertise for bids/proposals: None
- C. Receipt for bids/proposals: None
- D. Warrant Registers:
 - 1. December 23, 2025

Moved by Mr. Sainato seconded by Mr. Kennedy to approve and file said warrant register(s). Motion carried 3-0.

MINUTES AND CORRESPONDENCE

- A. Approval of Minutes:
 - 1. December 23, 2025

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Sainato to approve said minutes. Motion carried 3-0.

- B. Presentation of Written Communications:
 - a. PennDOT Notification Section L05 Old Pulaski Road Culvert Replacement (Pulaski Twp.)
 - b. North American Forgemasters Co.-Act 14 Notification State Only Natural Minor Operating Permit-710 Moravia Street (City of New

Castle)

- c. US Rolloffs, Inc.-Municipal Notifications-Plan Approval Application-Gardner Road (City of New Castle)
- d. Julia Soliday-SRSTP to replace the malfunctioning onlot septic system serving the existing home on the property located at 2584 Hillsville Road, Edinburg (Mahoning Twp.)

Moved by Mr. Sainato, seconded by Mr. Kennedy to file written correspondence. Motion carried 3-0.

VI. REPORTS

REPORTS

- A. Staff Reports:
- B. Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Vogler stated the Courthouse will be closed on Thursday, January 1st in observance of New Year's Day. The Courthouse will be open on Friday, January 2nd. The swearing in ceremony for Elected Officials and Judges will be on Monday, January 5th. At 2PM on Monday, the Salary Board will also convene for it's Annual Salary Board meeting.

Commissioner Kennedy had no comment.

Commissioner Sainato wished everyone a Happy New Year.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution R-2025-412

WHEREAS, the County desires to enter into an agreement for professional legal services for a court appointed Truancy Officer and;

WHEREAS, Susan M. Papa, Esquire desires to provide such services to the County .

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, that:

1. Authorization is hereby given to execute an agreement with Susan M. Papa, Esquire an attorney at law with offices at 439 Court Street, New Castle, PA 16101 for the provision of Truancy Court as assigned by the Lawrence County Court of Common Pleas.

2. The agreement shall be effective for the period **January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026** unless terminated sooner by either party.
3. The compensation for such services shall be \$85.00 per hour to be paid on a monthly basis. All payments will be made by electronic transfer.

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Sainato to approve said Resolution. Motion carried 3-0.

RESOLUTION R-2025-413

WHEREAS, LAWRENCE COUNTY desires to enter into an agreement for professional legal services for a court appointed Custody Conciliation Officer and;

WHEREAS, DEBORAH SHAW, ESQUIRE desires to provide such services to the County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, that:

1. Authorization is hereby given to execute an agreement with Deborah Shaw, Esquire, an attorney at law with offices at 1906 Wilmington Road, New Castle, PA 16105 for the provision of custody conferences as assigned by the Lawrence County Court of Common Pleas pursuant to Local Rule L. 1915.3.
2. This agreement shall be effective for the period **January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026** unless terminated sooner by either party.
3. The compensation for such services shall be \$85.00 per hour to be paid on a monthly basis. All payments will be made by electronic transfer.

Moved by Mr. Sainato, seconded by Mr. Kennedy to approve said Resolution. Motion carried 3-0.

RESOLUTION

R-2025-414

WHEREAS, the County desires to enter into an agreement for professional legal services and representation to indigent defendants who are in need of court-appointed counsel for Juvenile cases; and

WHEREAS, these cases shall be assigned by and at the sole discretion of the Court of Common Pleas of Lawrence County and shall include all juvenile matters assigned by the Court; and

WHEREAS, three agreements to provide such services to the County shall be authorized and executed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, that:

1. Authorization is hereby given to execute four separate agreements each with an unlimited number of juvenile cases, as assigned by the Court, to the following attorneys for professional legal services in juvenile cases:

- A. **Paula J. Cialella**
- B. **Larry J. Puntureri**
- C. **Eugene P. Tempesta**
- D. **Elizabeth A. Gribik**

2. Each Agreement shall contain the following provisions:

- a. The compensation for such services shall be Forty Thousand Dollars (**\$40,000.00**) per contract year to be paid in twelve (12) equal monthly payments on or about the 10th day of each month. All payments will be by electronic transfer.
- b. Each agreement shall be in effect for the period **January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025** unless terminated sooner by either party.

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Sainato to approve said Resolution.
Motion carried 3-0.

RESOLUTION

R-2025-415

WHEREAS, the County desires to enter into an agreement for professional legal services and representation to indigent defendants who are in need of court-appointed counsel for criminal cases; and

WHEREAS, these cases shall be assigned by and at the sole discretion of the Court of Common Pleas of Lawrence County and shall include matters excluding murder cases assigned by the Court; and

WHEREAS, five agreements to provide such services to the County shall be authorized and executed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, that:

1. Authorization is hereby given to execute five separate agreements each with an unlimited number of criminal cases, excluding murder cases, as assigned by the Court to the following attorneys for professional legal services in criminal cases:

- A. **Robert Barletta**
- B. **John Bongivengo**

- C. **Michael Bonner**
- D. **Joseph Kearney**
- E. Kevin Lorello**

2. a. The compensation for such services shall be \$28,000 per contract year to be paid in twelve (12) equal monthly payments on or about the 10th day of each month. All payments will be by electronic transfer.

b. Each agreement shall be in effect for the period: **January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025**, unless terminated sooner by either party.

c. Murder cases shall not be covered by this agreement.

Moved by Mr. Sainato, seconded by Mr. Kennedy to approve said Resolution. Motion carried 3-0.

RESOLUTION **R-2025-416**
ADOPTION OF THE 2025 LAWRENCE COUNTY BUDGET

WHEREAS, the fiscal year of the County begins on the first day of January; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Lawrence County are required by County Code to adopt a budget by the end of the calendar year; and

WHEREAS, the County Code requires the proposed budget be available for public inspection at least twenty (20) days prior to its adoption; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners introduced the proposed 2026 budget on December 9, 2025 through Resolution R-2025-388; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, THAT: in accordance with §1782 of the *County Code*, the 2026 budget is hereby adopted.

Moved by Mr. Sainato, seconded by Mr. Kennedy to approve said Resolution. Motion carried 3-0.

RESOLUTION R-2025-417

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF LAWRENCE COUNTY, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, FIXING THE TAX RATE FOR THE YEAR 2026 AND APPROPRIATING SPECIFIC SUMS, ESTIMATED TO BE REQUIRED,

FOR THE SPECIFIC PURPOSES OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT, HEREINAFTER SET FORTH.

BE IT RESOLVED AND ENACTED, AND IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED AN ENACTED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF LAWRENCE, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, that:

SECTION 1: a tax be, and is hereby levied, on all real property within the County subject to taxation for County purposes for the Fiscal Year 2026. The tax rate for County purposes shall be as follows:

- a. For **General Purposes**, the sum of seven and five hundred, twenty eight-thousandths **(7.528) mills** and on each dollar of assessed valuation (or the sum of seventy-five and twenty eight-hundredths cents [75.28¢] per each one hundred dollars [\$100.00] of assessed value.)
- b. For **Debt Purposes**, the sum of six hundred and forty-six thousandths **(.646) mills** on each dollar of assessed valuation (or the sum of six and forty-six hundredths cents (6.46¢) per each one hundred dollars [\$100.00] of assessed value.)
- c. For **Special Purposes** (libraries), the sum of one hundred and thirty-five thousandths **(.135) mills** on each dollar of assessed valuation [or the sum of one and thirty-five hundredths cents [1.35¢] per each one hundred dollars [\$100.00] of assessed value.)

The ***total millage*** for all County purposes shall be eight and three hundred and nine thousandths **(8.309) mills** (or the sum of eighty three and nine hundredths cents [83.09¢] per each one hundred dollars [\$100.00] of assessed value.)

SECTION 2: for the expenses of the County for the **Fiscal Year 2026**, the amounts are hereby appropriated from the revenues available for the specific purposes set forth above, which amounts are more fully itemized in the **County Budget** on file in the office of the Commissioners.

SECTION 3: any resolution, or parts thereof, conflicting with this Resolution shall be repealed, insofar as the same affects this Resolution.

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Sainato to approve said Resolution. Motion carried 3-0.

RESOLUTION R-2025-418

WHEREAS, the Lawrence County Board of Commissioners implemented a policy that requires employee contribution to healthcare costs; and

WHEREAS, healthcare contribution costs, including health insurance, shall be a maximum of 5% of the premium cost of the policy, effective January 1, 2026 for non-union, management and County compensated elected officials.

WHEREAS, this resolution shall remain in effect until further notice is given with an updated resolution; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, that healthcare contribution costs shall be set as stated above.

Moved by Mr. Sainato, seconded by Mr. Kennedy to approve said Resolution. Motion carried 3-0.

RESOLUTION

R-2025-419

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners desires to retain an independent contractor to provide supervisory tax claim services for the County; and

WHEREAS, it is the wish of the Board of Commissioners of Lawrence County to enter into an agreement with Mrs. Artishia Foster to provide independent contractor services to the Tax Claim Department; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, that:

1. Authorization is given to contract with Mrs. Artishia Foster of 919 Williams Street, New Castle, PA 16101 as an independent contractor to provide services in the Tax Claim Department of the County at \$40 per hour and/or for an annual amount not to exceed \$12,000.00; and
2. The Agreement is effective January 1, 2026.

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Sainato to approve said Resolution. Motion carried 3-0.

RESOLUTION

R-2025-420

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners desires to retain an independent contractor to provide supervisory Assessment services for the County; and

WHEREAS, it is the wish of the Board of Commissioners of Lawrence County to enter into an agreement with Mr. Charles "JR" Hardester to provide independent contractor services to the Assessment Department; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, that:

1. Authorization is given to contract with Mr. Charles "JR" Hardester of 190 Eric Drive, Edinburg, PA 16116 as an independent contractor to provide services in the Assessment Department of the County at \$40 per hour and/or for an annual amount not to exceed \$12,000.00; and
2. The Agreement is effective January 1, 2026.

Moved by Mr. Sainato, seconded by Mr. Kennedy to approve said Resolution. Motion carried 3-0.

RESOLUTION

R-2025-421

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners desires to retain an independent contractor to provide supervisory maintenance services for the County; and

WHEREAS, it is the wish of the Board of Commissioners of Lawrence County to re-enter into an agreement with Mr. Frank Piccari to provide independent contractor services to the Maintenance Department; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, that:

1. Authorization is given to retain Mr. Frank Piccari of 218 N. Cascade Street, New Castle, PA 16101 as an independent contractor to provide services in the Maintenance Department of the County for an annual amount of \$38,110.00 that includes a 3% COLA; and
2. The Agreement is effective January 1, 2026, and shall continue on an annual basis unless terminated by either party.

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Sainato to approve said Resolution. Motion carried 3-0.

RESOLUTION

R-2025-422

WHEREAS, Lawrence County is part of the Northwest Commission; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Commission's by-laws, the Lawrence County Commissioners are asked to make appointments to the Governing Board of the Northwest Commission; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended by the Lawrence County Board of Commissioners that the following be re-appointed to the Northwest Regional Planning Commission; and

1. Chris Sainato, 430 Court Street New Castle, PA (City of New Castle)

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, that Chris Sainato shall be re-appointed to the Northwest Regional Planning Commission for a term January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2027.

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Vogler to approve said Resolution. Motion carried 2-0-1. Commissioner Sainato abstained.

RESOLUTION **R-2025-423**

WHEREAS, budgets cannot always anticipate every extraordinary, ordinary, or contingency situation which arises throughout the fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, Section 1784 of the County code permits the Commissioners by resolution to authorize budget transfers from any encumbered balance; and

WHEREAS, the need to provide additional appropriations to certain accounts now exists; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, that:

1. Authorization is hereby given to the appropriate administrative officials to transfer a total of \$265,000.00 described in detail on the attachment(s) designated as T-2025-18.

Moved by Mr. Sainato, seconded by Mr. Kennedy to approve said Resolution. Motion carried 3-0.

RESOLUTION **R-2025-424**

WHEREAS, budgets cannot always anticipate every extraordinary, ordinary, or contingency situation which arises throughout the fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, Section 1784 of the County code permits the Commissioners by resolution to authorize budget transfers from any encumbered balance; and

WHEREAS, the need to provide additional appropriations to certain accounts now exists; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LAWRENCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, that:

1. Authorization is hereby given to the appropriate administrative officials to transfer a total of \$190,179.00 described in detail on the attachment(s) designated as T-2025-19.

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Sainato to approve said Resolution. Motion carried 3-0.

Transfers (Administrative)

- a. Maintenance from materials/supplies to contracted custodial services for \$1,110.00.
- b. Commissioners from contingency to association dues for \$1,547.00.
- c. Adult Probation from contingency to postage for \$10.00.
- d. Adult Probation from contingency to staples for \$1,000.00.
- e. Commissioners from hra benefits to PcoRP liability insurance for \$211,513.00.

Moved by Mr. Sainato, seconded by Mr. Kennedy to approve said Administrative Transfers. Motion carried 3-0.

ORDINANCES

- A. Discussion: None
- B. On the Table: None
- C. For Introduction: None
- D. For Final Action: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. The next Commissioners' Meeting will be on Tuesday, January 6, 2026 @ 10AM in the Commissioners' Meeting Room.
- B. The Lawrence County Courthouse will be closed on January 1, 2026, in observance of New Years' Day.
- C. The Annual Salary Board meeting will be held on January 5, 2026 @ 2PM in the Commissioner's Meeting Room.

PUBLIC COMMENTS.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Sainato to adjourn the Lawrence County Commissioners' meeting dated Tuesday, December 30, 2025 @ 10:50 AM.