

JANUARY 12, 2023

LAKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES

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

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(Tape 2023-0112)

CALL TO ORDER: Commissioner Hamercheck called the Meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. Thursday, January 12, 2023

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

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Commissioner Hamercheck asked if anyone in the audience wished to address the Board.

Mr. Brian Massie of 8196 Rainbow Drive in Painesville reiterated his support of law enforcement, the need for a new jail, and competitive wages for law enforcement. He expressed his opposition to the rehabilitation model of the new jail and of the proposed sales tax increase asking that something this important be placed on the ballot for all citizens to vote on.

Mr. John Muzik of 45 Coventry Drive in Painesville complimented the department heads watchful eye of the budget and reiterated Mr. Massie's support of law enforcement.

The following people voiced their concerns and opposition to the proposed sales tax increase:

Ms. Betsy Phillips of Kirtland, Mr. Elliott Pilarcyk of Painesville, and Ms. Jan Schanemen of Mentor.

RESOLUTIONS:

1.RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT WITH MANNIK & SMITH GROUP, INC. FOR THE LAKE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF UTILITIES(20230112\U01)(UT-4)

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Plecnik. Sanitary Engineer, Mr. Randy Rothlisberger, stated that Mannik & Smith assists with the regulatory requirements of the landfill and with the monthly reports. The foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners Regovich, Plecnik and Hamercheck "NAYS": None.

2.RESOLUTION CERTIFYING UNPAID WATER AND SEWER SUMS AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES TO THE LAKE COUNTY AUDITOR(20230112\U02)(UT-7)

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

3.RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN PROJECT HOPE AND THE LAKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ON BEHALF OF THE LAKE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES TO PROVIDE HOMELESS PREVENTION SERVICES TO ELIGIBLE TANF RECIPIENTS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$106,630.70 EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2023(20230112\JFS01)(JFS-11)

On a motion by Commissioner Plecnik, seconded by Commissioner Regovich. Commissioner Plecnik pointed out that Project Hope is the only homeless shelter in Lake County and the Board is very grateful for the work that they do. Director of Job and Family Services, Ms. Suzanne Casar, explained that this is a new partnership and will provide emergency shelter for TANF eligible families. The foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners Regovich, Plecnik and Hamercheck "NAYS": None.

4.RESOLUTION APPROVING LAKE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES VOUCHERS DATE OF WARRANT JANUARY 20, 2023, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$571,495.39(20230112\JFS02)(JFS-14)

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

**5.RESOLUTION TO INCREASE THE RATE OF THE SALES AND USE TAX BY ONE-HALF OF ONE PERCENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE GENERAL FUND FOR LAKE COUNTY, OHIO PURSUANT TO OHIO REVISED CODE SECTION 5739.026(A)(3) AND OHIO REVISED CODE SECTION 5741.023(20221229\C03)(C-107)
(12/29/2022 TABLED FOR RECONSIDERATION ON 01/12/2023)**

This resolution is now off the table based on previous motions made on December 29, 2022.

On a motion by Commissioner Regovich, seconded by Commissioner Hamercheck.

Commissioner Plecnik stated that this was a difficult issue. Although he gives support to the Prosecutor and the Sheriff, he cannot support a sales tax increase with a looming recession and asked that the County find another way. He supports law enforcement but also the citizens of this County. Commissioner Hamercheck stated that Lake County Coroner, Dr. Mark Komar, has provided him with the following statistics: Lake County is the 11th largest County in Ohio, Lake County does not have a morgue facility so we must continue to use the hospital for the deceased, he finds it difficult to keep pathologists and investigators on staff, and a potential new morgue could cost an estimated \$15 million. Prosecutor Mr. Charles Coulson discussed the Crime Lab, Narcotics, and the Coroner as well as the law enforcement departments and Courts and their excellence. He explained in detail the meaning of the model for his office which is "vertical case prosecution". He went on to explain that this sales tax increase equates to only \$1.00 on a \$200.00 purchase.

He stated how the County is not paying enough competitively for staff attorneys and corrections officers as an example. Commissioner Hamercheck thanked Mr. Coulson for educating the public on "vertical prosecution" and pointed out that 46% of crimes committed in Lake County are committed by non-Lake County residents. He also

stated that Mr. Coulson's 'vertical prosecution' is a model used throughout the State. Sheriff Leonbruno discussed the issues he has experienced in finding new employees. Potential deputies can go to another county and earn \$20,000 more, corrections officers can earn \$12,000 more, and nurses can earn \$20,000 more entering the private sector. He also discussed that, between 2008 and 2011, 60 employees were laid off and have never been replaced. There will be a need very soon for a \$2 million computer aided dispatch. Sheriff Leonbruno discussed the very poor condition of the jail and how whether the County decides on extensive, costly repairs or construction of a new jail, the money will be coming from the General Fund. Commissioner Hamercheck provided the following statistics: Lake County collects 1.0% in sales tax and there are 67 other counties in Ohio that collect greater than our 1.0% (52 of those collect 1.5%) the Local Government Fund collects .11¢ of every dollar making Lake County 87th lowest out of the 88 counties in the State and Lake County is 88th out of 88 counties with the lowest inside millage. Commissioner Regovich stated that he came into office with an open mind and how this was a very hard decision and he emphasized how the safety forces and judicial systems are very important. He stated that he is clear about his decision and thanked the staff for taking the time to educate him. Commissioner Hamercheck discussed the condition of the Emergency Operations and Communications Center which was constructed in 1985 and how very expensive upgrades will be necessary for the Ohio statewide system. He added that Lake County is one of very few dispatch centers in the state that stay on the line with the caller until the appropriate Police Department Dispatch is actively on the line. The estimated costs for a new building may be as high as \$20 million, and the next generation 9-1-1 upgrade will cost no less than \$2 million. Commissioner Hamercheck stated that everyone is going to have to work together and that the costs and necessary construction and upgrades are looming and a solution will need to be found. He reviewed many other legitimate issues that need to be addressed. Commissioner Plecnik stated that the decision today is whether the Board makes the tough choices or if every resident in Lake County must. He acknowledged support for law enforcement and the Courts and discussed the people in need in the County. The Board continued to discuss law enforcement, the Courts, and the safety of Lake County residents. The foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows: "AYES": Commissioners Regovich and Hamercheck "NAYS": Commissioner Plecnik

6.RESOLUTION ACCEPTING AND APPROVING THE RECOMMENDATION OF COMMISSIONER JOHN PLECNIK TO DESIGNATE RANDY VANBUREN TO SERVE AS HIS ALTERNATE ON THE LAKE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION(20230112\C01)(B-34)

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

7.RESOLUTION ACCEPTING AND APPROVING THE RECOMMENDATION OF COMMISSIONER RICHARD J. REGOVICH TO DESIGNATE DAVID PHARES TO SERVE AS HIS ALTERNATE ON THE LAKE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION (20230112\C02)(B-34)

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

8.RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT WITH SCHINDLER ELEVATOR CORPORATION PROCURED THROUGH SOURCEWELL ON BEHALF OF THE LAKE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF ELEVATOR #3 IN THE LAKE COUNTY JAIL IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$66,740.00(20230112\C03)(C-7)

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

9.RESOLUTION TO JOIN WITH THE LAKE COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY TO APPLY TO THE LAKE COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS, PURSUANT TO R.C. 305.14(A), TO EMPLOY AND COMPENSATE LEGAL COUNSEL TO ADVISE, REPRESENT AND PROSECUTE ANY LEGAL CLAIM BY THE BOARD REGARDING THE ACQUISITION OF REAL ESTATE(20230112\C04)(C-107)

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

10.RESOLUTION APPROVING PAYMENT OF BILLS AS LISTED ON THE COMMISSIONERS' APPROVAL JOURNAL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,467,010.56(20230112\BC01)(C-4)

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

11.RESOLUTION APPROVING PURCHASE ORDERS AS LISTED ON THE COMMISSIONERS' PURCHASE ORDER APPROVAL JOURNAL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,017,498.02(20230112\BC02)(C-17)

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

12.RESOLUTION INCREASING APPROPRIATIONS FOR VARIOUS GENERAL AND NON-GENERAL FUND ACCOUNTS (20230112\BC03)(C-111)

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

13.RESOLUTION TRANSFERRING CASH AND AN APPROPRIATION WITHIN NON-GENERAL FUND ACCOUNTS (20230112\BC04)(C-111)

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

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

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UTILITIES – none.

JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES – Job and Family Services Director, Mr. Suzanne Casar, gave an update on the “Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023” which was signed by the President at the end of December 2022. She read the following: “The Act contains several provisions of significance that are designed to end pandemic-related policies in SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and Medicaid. For close to three years, since a public health emergency was federally declared around the COVID-19 pandemic, SNAP and Medicaid programs have been operating under different federal regulations. Medicaid and SNAP benefits are now no longer tied to the public health emergency. This change is governed by federal law and State and county agencies have no control over this policy change. Federal law had allowed states to request emergency allotments for households participating in SNAP until the end of either the federal public health emergency declaration or that state’s declaration and Ohio has been providing enhanced emergency allotments to SNAP households since March 2020. Congress has now set forth that the last month of emergency SNAP allotments, including maximum benefits, will be February 2023. SNAP participants have been receiving their normal allotment on their normal issuance dates from the 1st to the 20th of the month and their emergency allotments at the end of the month. Beginning in March 2023, clients will only receive their normal monthly allotment. As this is a federal law change, there are no fair hearing rights or fair hearing benefits on the ending of the SNAP emergency allotments. SNAP recipients will not see their SNAP benefits terminate due to this change, but all households will experience a decrease of at least \$95 per month beginning March 2023. This is likely going to cause an unexpected and significant hardship on many individuals in our community who rely on SNAP benefits. It is important that everyone understands that this is due to a federal law change and State and county agencies have no control over this change. We have approximately 24,000 individuals who receive SNAP assistance and nearly 46,000 individuals who receive Medicaid assistance. The termination of SNAP emergency allotments will affect many aspects of our community. In the month of December alone, \$1,568,018.00 in emergency allotments were allocated to Lake County SNAP households. Clients are encouraged to access other local resources, including food pantries, to assist them during this time. There will be a full eligibility redetermination for individuals receiving Medicaid benefits. Beginning in April 2023, individuals who no longer meet eligibility criteria or respond to annual renewal packets may be disenrolled from the Medicaid program. Commissioner Regovich thanked Ms. Casar and her staff for their assistance with a resident in need.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – Mr. Jason Boyd stated that he has been meeting with all the Department Directors to review 2022 and their visions for 2023.

FINANCE – none.

CLERK – Commissioners Clerk, Ms. Jennifer Bell, stated that the Regular Meeting is scheduled for next Thursday, January 19, 2023 at 10:00 am. The County offices will be closed Monday, January 16, 2023 in observance of Martin Luther King Day.

LEGAL – none.

OLD BUSINESS: none.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner Plecnik requested that today’s agenda be amended to include the following:

14. RECOGNIZING THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2023 AS NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH IN LAKE COUNTY, OHIO

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: Commissioner Hamercheck asked if anyone in the audience wished to address the Board. Mr. Adam Litke from the Lake County General Health District, wanted to personally thank Lake County Prosecutor Charles Coulson and Assistant Prosecutors, Mr. David Hackman and Mr. Michael DeLeone, explaining that his department requests their services often and that they always assist them day, night, or weekends.

Mr. Chuck Hillier of Painesville Township and a Painesville Township Trustee wanted to acknowledge the professionalism and knowledge the Township has experienced when working with any of the County Departments including the Utilities Department and Engineer’s Office.

Mr. Boyd thanked Mr. Hillier for his comments regarding the County Departments and stated that the same sentiments should be acknowledged back to Painesville Township, the Administrator, Trustees and their staff.

Ms. Lindsey Wall of Mentor thanked the Board for making the right decision on the sales tax resolution.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: On a motion by Commissioner Plecnik, seconded by Commissioner Regovich, the Board convened an Executive Session at 11:41 a.m. to discuss Personnel-discipline with the vote as follows: "AYES": Commissioners: Regovich, Plecnik, and Hamercheck "NAYS": None.

The Lake County Board of Commissioners adjourned to Executive Session at 12:34 p.m.

ADJOURN: On a motion by Commissioner Plecnik seconded by Commissioner Regovich, the Board adjourned the meeting at 12:34 p.m. with the vote as follows: "AYES": Commissioners: Regovich, Plecnik, and Hamercheck "NAYS": None.

Minutes approved this thirtieth day of March, 2023.

BOARD OF LAKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

JOHN R. HAMERCHECK, PRESIDENT

JOHN PLECNIK, COMMISSIONER

RICHARD J. REGOVICH, COMMISSIONER

JENNIFER BELL, CLERK