

LAKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES

MORRIS W. BEVERAGE III, COMMISSIONER	JASON W. BOYD, ADMINISTRATOR
JOHN PLECNIK, COMMISSIONER	LEGAL COUNSEL
MORGAN R. McINTOSH, COMMISSIONER	NEWS MEDIA
JENNIFER BELL, CLERK	

(Tape 2026-0609)

CALL TO ORDER: Commissioner Beverage called the Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, June 9, 2026

ROLL CALL: Upon roll being called, Commissioners: McIntosh, Plecnik and Beverage were present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Upon a motion by Commissioner Plecnik, seconded by Commissioner McIntosh, the minutes of Regular Meeting of May 28, 2026 were approved with the vote as follows: "AYES": Commissioners: McIntosh, Plecnik and Beverage "NAYS": None.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Commissioner Beverage asked if anyone in the audience wished to address the Board. Commissioner Beverage stated that Commissioner Plecnik would recite the Declaration of Independence. Commissioner Plecnik stated that as Chair of the Lake County America 250th Committee he will recite the Declaration of Independence as part of America's 250th Birthday. Commissioner Plecnik encouraged other Lake County public bodies to do the same as we remember the birth of freedom and he began the recital.

Commissioner Plecnik recited the Declaration of Independence, which is attached as a permanent part of this record.

Sheriff Leonbruno stated that there are 1,400 words in the Declaration of Independence that stipulate all of our issues with Great Britain. John Locke was a philosopher that said government must serve the people and not the other way around. It is important for them to know we are overthrowing the government because it no longer serves the people. They asked for 13 independent states that would make up the United States to operate independently and only get together in times of war. In 1787, they got rid of the Article of Confederacy and established the United States Constitution detailing why and how we exist. This Declaration is our agreement to work together.

Commissioner Plecnik stated that Thomas Jefferson and John Locke were influential in crafting the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson read *The Six Books of the Republic* by Jean Bodin as inspiration. As he read more about different systems of government, he found a remarkable retelling of the Dukes of Corinthia whereby the Dukes were crowned by a peasant indicating that all power comes from the people.

Sheryl Lawrinson, of 29103 Weber Avenue of Wickliffe, stated that she listened to a previous meeting regarding property taxes and the schools. She emailed Commissioner McIntosh to ask him to consider extending the homestead and owner-occupancy credit and she did not get a reply. She has been married 44 years and recently paid off her home. The Homestead Exemption helped them tremendously when paying their full year taxes of 1,375.42. She also shared that this exemption helps many other senior citizens, veterans and disabled people. The schools receive plenty of money from property taxes and businesses such as Lubrizol. The Wickliffe City School enrollment is down as many other Lake County school districts. She stated that this year, Wickliffe graduated 91 students and last year it was 113. She knows that next year's property taxes will increase again. She asked the Commissioners to continue the homestead and owner-occupied resolutions

Christina Andow, Kirtland Board of Education, stated that she attended the meeting for the Kirtland School Board and for herself as a mom of students. She is from Wickliffe and she asked the Commissioners to take into consideration all the people who voted for them. She stated that it is true that schools are losing students and it can be for many reasons. She wondered if the people benefitting from the tax break were aware of the other services that are being lost and creating suffering for community centers, senior centers, and police and fire services. Kirtland Schools run a financially tight ship with the funds they have available. They are understaffed and everyone pitches in as much as they can. This is hurting the schools, and they are feeling it and this is just year one. She hopes the Commissioners will consider not continuing the homestead and owner-occupied resolutions.

RESOLUTIONS:

1.RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE JACKSON STREET SANITARY SEWER EXTENSION IN THE CITY OF MENTOR (JOB NO. 17-07)(20260609\U01)(UT-22)

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

2.RESOLUTION INCREASING APPROPRIATIONS AND TRANSFERRING CASH WITHIN LAKE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF UTILITIES WATER FUND AND FUND 595 FOR PROJECT 469-W-2023 WEST END SERVICE CENTER FUEL STORAGE TANK REPLACEMENT(20260609\U02)(UT-2)

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

3.RESOLUTION APPROVING PLANS, SPECIFICATIONS AND ESTIMATES OF COST IN THE AMOUNT OF \$866,575.00 FOR MADISON TRUNK SEWER REPLACEMENT PHASE 1 - PROJECT NO 492-S-2025, AND ADVERTISING FOR BIDS FOR SAME (BID OPENING: July 8, 2026)(20260609\U03)(UT-8)

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

4.RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING MICHAEL HATTON TO THE LAKE COUNTY ALCOHOL, DRUG ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD FOR A FOUR-YEAR TERM COMMENCING JULY 1, 2026(20260609\C01)(B- 50)

On a motion by Commissioner Plecnik, seconded by Commissioner McIntosh. Commissioner Plecnik thanked Michael Hatton, Martin Phillips, Francis Kovacic and Matthew Bangerter for their willingness to serve on these Boards. These are volunteer positions requiring a lot of time, effort and energy. It is no small sacrifice to serve, and we appreciate their willingness to support the community. The foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows : "AYES": Commissioners: McIntosh, Plecnik and Beverage "NAYS": None.

5.RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING MARTIN A. PHILLIPS III TO THE LAKE COUNTY ALCOHOL, DRUG ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD FOR A FOUR-YEAR TERM COMMENCING JULY 1, 2026(20260609\C02)(B- 50)

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

6.RESOLUTION APPOINTING FRANCIS KOVACIC TO THE LAKE COUNTY ALCOHOL, DRUG ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD FOR A FOUR-YEAR TERM COMMENCING JULY 1, 2026(20260609\C03)(B-50)

On a motion by Commissioner Plecnik, seconded by Commissioner McIntosh. Commissioner Beverage thanked everyone for serving on these boards and explained that Eastlake Fire Chief Kovacic will be replacing Chief Sabo from Concord Township on the ADAMHS Board. The foregoing resolution was adopted with the vote follows : "AYES": Commissioners: McIntosh, Plecnik and Beverage "NAYS": None.

7.RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING MATTHEW C. BANGERTER TO THE LAKE COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER COMMISSION FOR A FOUR-YEAR TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2030(20260609\C04)(B-13)

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

8.RESOLUTION APPROVING PAYMENT OF BILLS AS LISTED ON THE COMMISSIONERS' APPROVAL JOURNAL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,343,060.48(20260609\BC01)(C-4)

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

9.RESOLUTION APPROVING PURCHASE ORDERS AS LISTED ON THE COMMISSIONERS' PURCHASE ORDER APPROVAL JOURNAL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$458,311.00(20260609\BC02)(C-17)

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

10. RESOLUTION INCREASING APPROPRIATIONS FOR VARIOUS NON-GENERAL FUND ACCOUNTS (20260609\BC03)(C-111)

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

11. RESOLUTION TRANSFERRING CASH AND AN APPROPRIATION WITHIN VARIOUS GENERAL AND NON-GENERAL FUND ACCOUNTS(20260609\BC04)(C-111)

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

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

UTILITIES – none.

JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES – Job & Family Services Director, Ms. Suzanne Carsar, reminded everyone that the 5th annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) will take place on June 11 at 11:45 am. The walk will step off at JFS, walk around the square and end at the Administration Building. She encouraged everyone to wear purple and stated that Sheriff Leonbruno will be the keynote speaker.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – none.

CLERK – Commissioners Clerk, Ms. Kathleen Russo, stated that the next Commissioners Meeting will be next Tuesday, June 16, at 10:00 a.m., followed by a workshop at 10:30 in Chambers. There is also an America 250th Meeting scheduled on June 18, 2026 at 10:00 am in Chambers.

LEGAL: none.

OLD BUSINESS: SR2 MAINTENANCE CONTRACT DISCUSSION

Commissioner Plecnik shared that the marquee event for American 250th is quickly approaching and the Lake County Captains are setting up a celebrity softball game and fireworks. The Captains will also honor people celebrating their 100th birthdays in Lake County, host a period costume contest and color guards. The Visitor's Bureau is passing out 1,000 commemorative coins. He stated that he hopes that many other public boards will recite the Declaration of Independence.

Commissioner McIntosh reported on the SR2 contract meetings. He continues to have conversations with municipal leaders and is hoping to have a new contract in place that will benefit all the residents of Lake County for the safety of our citizens.

NEW BUSINESS: PIGGYBACK PROPERTY TAX DISCUSSION

Commissioner Beverage stated that he appreciates Willowick Mayor Vanni and their recent conversation because it is not the intent of the Commissioners to dissolve the relationship with municipalities. He thinks the contract needs to be re-worked and updated. Commissioner Beverage stated they have been meeting on this topic since last August. Notice of termination of this contract must be made by June 30, 2026. There is no reason why we can't have a new contract by the end of the year.

Commissioner McIntosh apologized for not responding to Ms. Lawrinson regarding the Homestead and Owner-Occupied tax and stated he would respond and provide more detailed information. This is a challenging discussion because senior citizens are struggling, and with inflation, and school budget issues, the Commissioners are put into a tight spot. He understands that enrollment is declining but costs are also increasing. This is a difficult situation, and his goal is to find common ground on this issue.

Commissioner Plecnik wanted to respond to the people who shared their thoughts today. He stated that he spoke with the Kirtland Superintendent and he is disappointed that people are taking the narrow view of "I have to get mine." We have to exercise authority from and for all the people. The Superintendent said he could make it publicly uncomfortable for the Commissioners. It's not wrong to put your budget as a priority but as a County Commissioner, he has to consider what is best for everybody. Commissioner Plecnik believes in education and fully supports it. He is going to do what is right no matter how much pressure Superintendent VanArnhem puts on the Commissioners. The problem is bigger than this. It would be pennies for the State Legislature to backfill the Homestead exemption and we all need to be united and pressure Columbus to do the right thing. It should be the State sales tax and income tax that fund education that we already pay. You cannot go back to the taxpayer repeatedly and there is another property tax increase coming. The people cannot keep paying more and more. It is not sustainable. We need to start caring about each other. The answer cannot be always going back to the taxpayer.

Commissioner Beverage stated that he was reminded of what happens when government doesn't listen to the community. The property tax discussion isn't just about schools, but school funding is the biggest concern. The State cut the local government fund in 2012/2013 by 40%. He sits next to a former City Councilperson (Commissioner Plecnik) and a former Township Trustee (Commissioner McIntosh) who needed levies for their roads and police and fire services. From FY 2009-2023, the State amount rose approximately 25%-30% and didn't keep pace with inflation. A study was done for FY2000-2022 that showed with adjustments for inflation it was actually negative 2% that the State put into the schools. The State didn't keep up with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation. They have put a little more in lately but per the Ohio Department of Education website, the declining enrollment in revenue per student in 2018 was \$14,222 and in 2025 it was \$18,352; an increase of 29%. Per the CPI calculator from 2018-2025, it went up 28% so finally the revenues are keeping up with CPI. But expenses from 2018 went from \$11,953 to \$17,609 in 2025 which is an increase of 47%. He stated that 57% of a school's budget is salaries, 23% are fringe benefits. Fringe benefits consist of health care and retirement benefits. When 70-80% of budget is tied to salaries, the conversation must be what is happening to this country. \$15 an hour used to be the median hourly rate and now it is around \$25 an hour. That's a 67% increase, so wage inflation, which consists of 70 to 80% of a school's budget, is up by 66 to 67% and 29% increase in revenues will not cut it. This tells him that the core problem is that the local government fund was decimated in 2012, inflation and wage inflation has not been kept up with. The numbers indicate that the State is not doing its job and it is not funding education.

Commissioner McIntosh stated that he spoke with some State Legislators regarding this point a year ago and he wrote a piece about this topic. The money flowing from the State adversely affected his township requiring levies to publicly fund public services. He can speak about the pressure this has put on local governments to fund Fire and Police Forces and roads.

Commissioner Beverage stated that in 2018, the State funded the general revenue fund by \$34 billion but spent \$24 billion so there was a \$10 billion surplus. By 2025, they brought in \$46.5 billion and spent \$32 billion so the State has the money with a surplus of \$14 billion in 2025. There is an extra \$4.5 billion available, and they can pick up the tab on the schools. We need to band together to go to the State and ask what is going on and why they are not doing their jobs. We also need to go to school districts and encourage them to reach out to the taxpayers and let them know they are doing it right, but the state representatives are not doing their jobs. He believes that the Kirtland School District is doing what's right and he would advocate for school districts to put up a levy and ask the voters for funds.

Commissioner McIntosh realizes that the school districts are all in different circumstances and the decisions of the Commissioners are not a uniform impact. He thanked Commissioner Beverage for his diligence and for looking into this topic.

ADJOURN: On a motion by Commissioner Plecnik seconded by Commissioner McIntosh, the Board adjourned the meeting at 11:01 a.m. with the vote as follows: "AYES": Commissioners: McIntosh, Plecnik and Beverage "NAYS": None.

Minutes approved this twenty-fifth day of June, 2026.

BOARD OF LAKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

MORRIS W. BEVERAGE III, PRESIDENT

JOHN T. PLECNİK, COMMISSIONER

MORGAN R. McINTOSH, COMMISSIONER

JENNIFER BELL, CLERK

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

In Congress, July 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America, When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.-

-That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.