

IN-PERSON AND LIVESTREAM BUSINESS MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

The meeting of the Local Government Commission (Commission) was called to order by Senator Scott Hutchinson at 9:01 a.m. in Room 515 Irvis Office Building with the following Commission Members, staff and guests participating in-person and remotely:

MEMBERS

**Senator Scott E. Hutchinson, Chairman
Senator Cris Dush
Senator Dawn Keefer
Senator Timothy Kearney
Representative Robert Freeman
Representative R. Lee James
Representative Brett R. Miller**

STAFF

**David A. Greene, Executive Director
Kristopher J. Gazsi, Assistant Director
Martin A. Toth, Associate Legal Counsel
Julia E. Frey, Senior Research Analyst
Rex Burman, Research Analyst
Karen S. Bear, Executive Assistant
Sonya I. Ebersole, Fiscal Administrator**

GUESTS

**Isaac Evans, Senator Hutchinson's Office
Wesley Medina, Senator Kearney's Office
Shaina Bijlani, Guest of Senator Kearney
Luc Miron, Senator Kim's Office
Ryan Carpenter, Representative Freeman's Office
Teresa Leitner, Representative James' Office
Jon Castelli, House Local Government Committee (D)
Kyle Schaeffer, House Local Government Committee (R)
Kathryn Krueger, House Office of Legislation and Policy (D)
Larry Gerrity, Pennsylvania Fraternal Order of Police
Jan Murphy, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association
Ron Grutza, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
Logan Stover, Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
Dawn Blauch, Pennsylvania State Association of Elected County Officials
A.C. Stickel, Pennsylvania State Association of Elected County Officials
Dr. Stefan Peterson, The Pennsylvania State University**

The Executive Director made a statement that the in-person and virtual meeting was being recorded and conducted with both Member and Commission staff participation. On Monday, March 2, 2026, notice of the meeting was posted on the committee meeting pages of the Senate of Pennsylvania and the House of Representatives through the Legislative Data Processing Center. The meeting agenda was posted on the Commission's website, www.lgc.state.pa.us, on Monday,

IN-PERSON AND LIVESTREAM BUSINESS MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

Page 2 – March 18, 2026

March 16, 2026, and outside of the Commission's office located at 506 Irvis Office Building. Any questions on agenda items for consideration by the Commission were addressed during the meeting. The recording of the Commission's business meeting may be found on YouTube.com.

As the first order of business, the Members reviewed an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement (Agreement) that was received, via e-mail, by the Commission on March 13, 2026, between the Bucks County Sheriff's Office and the United States Marshals Service with the purpose of forming a Regional Fugitive Task Force whose primary mission is to investigate and arrest, as part of joint law enforcement operations, persons who have active warrants for their arrests.

Pursuant to statute, the Commission is required to provide an advisory written response to a proposed intergovernmental cooperation agreement within 90 days of the agreement's submission. Notwithstanding this mandate, the failure of the Commission to provide a written response has no effect on the legal efficacy of the agreement so long as it has been submitted to the Commission prior to execution. Consistent with the Applicant's request, the Commission provided an expedited review.

The Commission does not regard the review of agreements between a Pennsylvania local government and the federal government as involving a power to veto or enjoin; but, in accordance with the requirements of 53 Pa.C.S. § 2314, the Commission is charged with undertaking a review of the agreement and providing an advisory written response of its review of, and any recommended changes to, the agreement with regard to form and compatibility with the laws of this Commonwealth.

After thorough review, the Commission has discovered no legal authority compelling it to conclude that the Agreement is not in compliance with Pennsylvania law. It appears that the Agreement is in proper form and compatible with the laws of this Commonwealth. Provided Bucks County appropriately authorizes this Agreement by ordinance or resolution, no discernible case law, statutory or regulatory provisions apparently threaten the substantive validity of the Agreement. The Director emphasized that there is ongoing litigation involving the parties to an unrelated agreement with the federal government, and this review does not take a legal position with regard to the respective legal arguments in the case.

The Members unanimously agreed on a motion by Senator Kearney and a second by Senator Dush to authorize Commission staff to send correspondence detailing the Commission's comments to all involved entities.

The Members reviewed the minutes of the February 18, 2026, meeting, which were unanimously approved on a motion by Representative James and a second by Representative Freeman. The financial reports for the month of February 2026 were presented, and an explanation was given by the Executive Director. The financial reports were unanimously approved on a motion by Senator Dush and a second by Senator Kearney.

At the February 18, 2026, business meeting, the Members offered various changes and modifications to proposed municipal consolidation or merger language to be considered for possible inclusion to the Commission's 2025-2026 legislative package. At today's meeting, the revised language was offered to the Members for their approval. The bill addresses several issues that were

IN-PERSON AND LIVESTREAM BUSINESS MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

Page 3 – March 18, 2026

raised during the merger of Sandy Township and the City of DuBois. A summary of the recommended changes follows (references are to the pages/provisions of the draft):

Page 3, Paragraph 734(b)(10)-Removal of redundancy in the context of ordinances, instead specifically referencing land use applications and approvals.

Page 4, Paragraph 734(d)(4)-Reconcile a stalemate in the appointment of the neutral committee member. Two options discussed at the meeting were provided. After debate, the Members with a vote of 4 (Chairman Hutchinson, Senator Dush, Senator Keefer, and Representative Miller) to 3 (Senator Kearney, Representative Freeman, and Representative James) selected to include option 1 in the legislation. Option 1 provides that the members of each governing body appointed under paragraph (1) shall draw lots to determine which resident shall be appointed.

Page 4, Paragraph 734(d)(5)-Clarification of appointive power.

Page 4, Clause (k)(3)(D)-Parallel "house keeping" of provision identical to that modified in 734(b)(10).

Page 5, Subsection 736(d)-Integration of requested additional entities receiving notice of the joint agreement/consolidation or merger agreement/merger/consolidation with home rule report.

Page 5, Clause 737(a)(1)(iv)-Parallel "house keeping" of provision identical to the choices for the Commission under 734(d)(4).

Page 6, Clause, 737(a)(1)(v)-Parallel "house keeping" identical to 734(d)(5).

Page 6, Paragraph 737(a.1)(5)-Parallel "house keeping" identical to change in 734(b)(10).

Page 6, Subsection 737(b.1)-Clarification of language.

Page 7, Paragraph 737(c)(2) and flush language of 737(d)-Clarification of language.

Page 7, Paragraph 737(d)(1)-Clear articulation of limits of court review per discussion.

Page 8, Section 743-A question was raised regarding the duration of the grant "grandfathering" - seven years. Based on further feedback from the Pennsylvania Economy League and the Department of Community and Economic Development, the consultants on this project, Commission staff recommended no change to the language.

After the discussion, the Members unanimously agreed to introduce the legislation into the Senate of Pennsylvania and the House of Representatives as part of the Commission's 2025-2026 legislative package. Senator Dush and Representative Freeman volunteered to be the prime sponsors.

The next item for discussion was a fellowship placement with the Commission through The Pennsylvania State University's Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Science and Technology Policy Program (COPA-STEP). COPA-STEP provides dedicated scientific and technical expertise by placing Ph.D.-level scientists and technologists in offices across the General Assembly to evaluate

IN-PERSON AND LIVESTREAM BUSINESS MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

Page 4 – March 18, 2026

complex scientific and technical issues, interpret data, and contribute as full-time members of their host offices. The aim is to strengthen ties between the scientific community and the General Assembly, while encouraging and equipping more scientists and engineers with the skills for effective careers in public service. Currently, fellows are being placed with the Joint State Government Commission, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, and the Health Committee of the House of Representatives. Fellows serve a one-year term and will be compensated by The Pennsylvania State University. Host offices have no financial obligation toward a fellow's stipend. Dr. Stefan Peterson, Director of the COPA-STEP program, gave a brief overview of the program and offered to answer any questions. After a brief discussion, the Members unanimously agreed to the Commission's participation in the program.

The Executive Director announced that the Pennsylvania State Association of Elected County Officials (PSAECO) will be hosting its Annual Legislative Day on Wednesday, April 15, 2026. Dawn Blauch, President of PSAECO, invited Commission Members to attend PSAECO's meeting at 10:30 a.m. in Room 461 Main Capitol Building where representatives of each of the participating Associations will give an overview of their Association and highlight legislation of interest. PSAECO is an association consisting of representatives from all Pennsylvania statewide county row office associations. PSAECO works collaboratively with the General Assembly, the Governor's office and the judiciary to pursue policy objectives beneficial to the citizens of Pennsylvania's 67 counties.

As the last order of business, the Executive Director announced that the next business meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 22, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 515 Irvis Office Building. At that meeting, the Members will primarily address administrative items.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:49 a.m.

ATTESTED: _____
April 13, 2026