Cameron County Commissioners
Commissioner's Conference Room
20 E 5th Street, Emporium, PA 15834
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 7, 2026 @ 11:00am

Commissioner Herzing called this meeting to order at 11:00 am, with a moment of silence and pledge to the flag.

Visitors: Sophia Fragale, Cameron County Echo; David J Reed, Tom Tompkins, Solicitor

Public Comment: None

Meeting minutes: The meeting minutes of April 16, 2026, were amended to correct the date of the Judicial Sale from June 29 to May 29, the minutes unanimously approved as amended.

Correspondence:

*Received notice from Buchart Horn Engineers of Mid-Cameron Authority Wastewater System, upgrades to the treatment plant.
*Received notice from DCED the Financial Monitoring Report for the pass-through contracts with DCED.

Chief Clerk Report: Business as usual.

Commissioners' Reports:
Commissioner Zucal: Commissioner Zucal reported on several tourism, recreation, environmental, and economic development initiatives occurring throughout the county and region.
He discussed ongoing participation in a multi-state tourism study being conducted by West Virginia University, Penn State Agricultural Sciences, and the University of New Hampshire. The study, now in its third year, includes areas surrounding the Allegheny National Forest and examines visitor interests and tourism trends. Findings show that outdoor activities such as hiking, sightseeing, and wildlife viewing are the primary attractions for visitors, while shopping ranks much lower. Commissioner Zucal noted that researchers visited the county in person and described their experience meeting with local stakeholders as one of the most impactful parts of the project.
He also attended the Lumber Heritage Region's 25th anniversary dinner in Philipsburg, where he participated in a "forest bathing" session focused on experiencing nature through mindfulness and sensory engagement. He spoke positively about the event, the networking opportunities, and the regional collaboration taking place among organizations promoting outdoor recreation and heritage tourism.
Commissioner Zucal provided updates on economic development efforts related to brownfield redevelopment. Following the county's successful EPA brownfield grant award, the county is now eligible to pursue additional cleanup funding opportunities. Discussions have begun with Montrose regarding the potential to secure more brownfield grant dollars for future remediation projects.
He also announced that Pennsylvania Great Outdoors has completed a new gravel riding brochure highlighting regional trail routes, and promotional videos and social media content have also been finalized. He noted that the project is already gaining recognition, with visitors traveling specifically to experience the routes and trails promoted through the initiative.
Additional updates included planned improvements to the South Park Playground, continued participation in Core Connect meetings, and attendance at a Biomass Conference in Harrisburg focused on improving soil quality and reducing reliance on chemical fertilizers through biomass applications. Commissioner Zucal emphasized that the region's biomass resources could provide long-term agricultural and environmental benefits.

Lastly, he reported receiving a detailed follow-up from landscape architects regarding county property planning efforts and stated that future public outreach meetings will be held to gather community input on potential uses and improvements for the property.

Commissioner Herzing: Commissioner Herzing reported on several county, educational, infrastructure, and healthcare initiatives over the past three weeks. She participated in a meeting with Windstream and county emergency management officials regarding communications infrastructure improvements and the company's transition from copper lines to fiber service. Windstream confirmed that no residents would lose service during the transition and that upgrades would be completed upon customer request. The meeting also established a direct communication line between Windstream leadership and the county's emergency management office to address future service concerns.

She also met with Siemens representatives to discuss recommendations from the STAMP strategic management plan and potential participation in Pennsylvania's Guaranteed Energy Savings Act. Discussions focused on possible county capital improvement projects including roof and generator upgrades, solar options, waterproofing, lighting improvements, and replacement of older single-pane windows.

Commissioner Herzing participated in the high school's junior mock interview program, praising the collaboration between community organizations and the school in helping students prepare for future careers. She also attended a library board meeting where updates were shared on upcoming summer reading programs, STEAM activities, and countywide community partnerships.

Financially, she reported that the county is working with the Treasurer's Office to pay off the tax anticipation note early in order to reduce interest costs.

Additionally, Commissioner Herzing spent several days in Harrisburg conducting legislative visits on behalf of the Northern Pennsylvania Regional College while also discussing Cameron County initiatives with state legislators. Conversations included economic development, data centers, college closures, and regional cooperation efforts.

A significant portion of her report focused on attending the Center for Rural Pennsylvania's public hearing on rural healthcare transformation. She highlighted new Department of Human Services initiatives aimed at supporting rural hospitals, expanding behavioral health services through 988, improving maternal healthcare access, and creating collaborative regional healthcare councils with local representation. She emphasized that state officials acknowledged the unique challenges facing rural communities and recognized the direct connection between economic development and the long-term sustainability of rural healthcare systems. Commissioner Herzing noted that future funding efforts are intended to be more accessible for rural communities by reducing reliance on outside consultants and ensuring local participation in planning and implementation efforts.

Commissioner Moate Commissioner Moate reported on several regional development, education, broadband, and veterans' initiatives.

He attended the Lumber Heritage Region's 25th anniversary celebration in Philipsburg alongside Commissioner Zucal and praised the organization's small staff for successfully managing programming across 13 counties. He highlighted the strong networking opportunities at the event and noted growing regional interest in economic and tourism opportunities throughout the area. He also mentioned a potential future collaboration involving the county's Dark Sky Park once additional certifications are completed.

Commissioner Moate also attended the Community Education Center's 35th anniversary event, where he emphasized the value of the organization's educational and youth programs. He encouraged greater community participation, noting that many programs are free or low-cost and provide hands-on learning opportunities for students. He specifically highlighted projects involving 3D printing, woodworking, and game design, while also acknowledging transportation challenges that currently limit participation for some Cameron County residents.

He provided an update on the county's Purple Heart Initiative, explaining that Cameron County was officially recognized as part of the Purple Heart Trail following last year's proclamation designating the county as a Purple Heart County. He has been working with PennDOT and Senator Dush's office to install Purple Heart signage throughout the county and expressed optimism that signs will be in place later this year, potentially by Independence Day or Veterans Day.

Commissioner Moate also announced that he recently became an official advocate for Penn State Extension after participating in advocacy training and virtual legislative meetings. He joined efforts to request increased state funding for Penn State Extension and the College of Agricultural Sciences, which have experienced several years of flat funding despite rising costs. He reported that meetings with legislators were productive and received positive feedback regarding the funding request.
Additionally, he participated in meetings with Core Connect regarding the development of a 10-county open-access broadband network. Discussions focused on logistics for infrastructure construction, coordination with local projects, and future deployment planning. Commissioner Moate stressed that the broadband initiative will serve as a major economic development tool for rural Pennsylvania by supporting healthcare, business growth, and improved connectivity across the region.
He also shared that the America250PA committee is working on plans to incorporate commemorative activities into the upcoming Memorial Day Parade.
Finally, Commissioner Moate recognized May as Mental Health Awareness Month and noted that he wore green intentionally to promote awareness and support for mental health initiatives.

Treasurer's Report: Expenses for the month of April will be reported at the May 21 meeting.

Old Business: nothing

New Business:

- Motion to approve Proclamation declaring the month of May as Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month. Commissioner Zucal made a motion to approve this proclamation, Commissioner Moate seconded the motion, all in favor and so carried.
- Motion to approve Proclamation declaring the month of May as Mental Health Awareness Month. Commissioner Moate made a motion to approve this proclamation, Commissioner Zucal seconded the motion, all in favor and so carried.
- Motion to **acknowledge** ACT 13 request from Lumber Township, funding request in the amount of $50,000.00 for resurfacing of three roadways in Lumber Township. The Board acknowledged receipt of an Act 13 funding request from Lumber Township in the amount of $50,000 for the resurfacing of three township roadways. Following acknowledgement of the request, the Board approved a motion to table the matter for further discussion and analysis at the first meeting in July.
- Motion to approve service agreement between Cameron County CYS and Avanco International LLC for Child Accounting and Profile System. Commissioner Moate made the motion to approve this service agreement, Commissioner Zucal second the motion, all in favor and so moved.

Good of the Order: Cameron County plans to put out the RFQ to participate in the Guaranteed Energy Savings Act (GESA) program as outlined in our strategic management's plan capital improvement recommendations.

During good of the order comments, citizen David Reed inquired about the status of GIS mapping work related to ordinances concerning wind turbines and other development matters. He noted that a meeting had taken place approximately six weeks earlier and that he had not yet received any updates on the project. Commissioners indicated that the matter had been deferred for follow-up through county staff. Mr. Reed also stated that he anticipated questions at an upcoming meeting regarding the status of the proposed data center ordinance.

Solicitor Tompkins offered to answer Mr. Reed's question on the data center ordinance. He noted that examples provided from Monroe County and Allegheny County have been helpful during the drafting process. He also explained that he had hoped to receive additional guidance from the Department of Community and Economic Development regarding the possibility of a uniform county ordinance, as well as clearer direction from DEP and the Public Utility Commission concerning regulatory oversight involving water and electrical infrastructure.

Solicitor Tompkins emphasized that data center ordinances differ significantly from wind energy ordinances and stated that the county may amend the ordinance in the future as additional guidance becomes available. He concluded by noting that no revised schedule has been established at this time.

Adjournment: with no further business Commissioner Zucal moved to adjourn this meeting at 11:50 am, with a 2nd from Commissioner Moate, all in favor and so moved.

The next regular Commissioner Meeting will be Thursday, May 21, 2026, at 11:00am at the Driftwood Senior Center, 7806 Bridge Street, Driftwood, PA.

Submitted by,

Annette Campbell
Chief Clerk, Secretary to the Commissioners