

From: [R&W Kochan](#)
To: [Luzerne County Council Meeting Public Comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Public Comment for 1/24/2023 Luzerne County Council Meeting to be read audibly and entered into the record
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Public Comment from Walter & Robyn Kochan of Dallas Twp. for 1/24/2023 Luzerne County Council Meeting to be read audibly and entered into the record

NON-AGENDA ITEM

Merit increases, in the private sector are awarded to employees who not only successfully execute all responsibilities but go above and beyond. We want to know:

Who proposed the \$1137 merit increase for County Council, the \$2561 merit increase for County Manager, and \$840 for the Bureau of Elections, and *what those merits were based on.*

Sadly, Council and County staff proposing merit increases are out of touch with the reality of taxpayers having to budget for necessities such as heat, food, medicine and even taxes to retain home ownership. Even if the employee did a fabulous job, today's exorbitant inflation does not warrant *any increases*. Private sector employees would be told, "Sorry, we just can't afford it this year but will note your merits for future consideration..." County needs to act as responsibly.

Neither County Manager (either former or Acting) warrant *any type of raise* when they have not done their job and allowed Beth Gilbert McBride to remain in her position of Acting Elections Bureau Director; or even more insulting to the taxpayer and voter, to grant her an interview to become the permanent Elections Bureau Director when, as a leader, she was responsible for the November 8, 2022 election disaster. McBride significantly eroded public trust in our elections and should have been fired immediately yet neither County Manager has done so, even when the County's Employee Policy manual indicates justification for her termination whether *with or without cause* as noted in section 3.8 for Employee Termination (included FYI at the end of this comment). (Is this yet another manual like in the Elections Bureau that no one is administering?)

No one can deny that the November 8, 2022 election was grossly mishandled. To allow McBride to remain as a County employee is ignoring the concerns of County taxpayers and voters. The County Manager and Council work *for the public* and have a duty to act responsibly. You have the power to hire/fire the County Manager. They have the power to hire/fire County employees. As such, we fully expect the County to stop wasting taxpayer money on salaries for employees who cannot do the job. As government representatives you are accountable to us. We expect answers. We expect responsible action even if that means making unpopular decisions to *serve the public* rather than the establishment and stop wasting time and *our money*.

3.8 EMPLOYEE TERMINATION

A. Employees of Luzerne County are employed on an at-will basis, and the County retains the right to terminate an employee at any time. Termination of employment is defined by and occurs when an employee officially terminates payroll by leaving the employ of the County for any one of the following reasons:

2. Termination With Cause:

An employee is considered to be terminated from employment “with cause” when the action to terminate an employee is initiated and solely decided by the Management. “With Cause” is defined as any one or combination of the following which may have occurred “on or off the job”.

- An intentional act of fraud, embezzlement, a misappropriation of funds, theft or **any other material violation of the law.**
- Willful misconduct, **negligence or behavior which places or potentially places the economic and/or non-economic welfare of the County, fellow employees, or public confidence at risk.**
- Willful and **continued failure to substantially perform the duties and responsibilities of the employee’s job description.** Failure or inability to meet performance standards or objectives, by itself, does not constitute “cause”.

3. Termination Without Cause

An employee is considered to be terminated from employment “without cause” when the County exercises its right to terminate employment under the “At-Will” employer/employee relationship at the County for any other reason not covered by the intent and definition of “With Cause” Section 3.8-2.

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