The following are the minutes of the Business & Economic Growth Committee meeting, which was held on Tuesday, September 8, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Statement of Adequate Notice:

Adequate notice of the regular meeting of the Lawrence Township Growth & Redevelopment Committee has been provided by filing an annual meeting schedule with the Municipal Clerk and by filing the agenda with the Municipal Clerk, posting prominently in the Municipal Building and mailing to the Trenton Times.

Roll Call:

Present:

Stavros Papafilipakis
Melissa Clark, Chairperson
Joan Brame
Edward Freeland, Vice Chairperson
Jeremy Ryan
Edward Garcia
Peter Ferrone

Absent:

Excused Absence:

Maria Connolly, Planning Board Representative
Kevin Vanhise, School Board Liaison
Jeff Edelstein, Zoning Board Representative

Also Present:

Abi Oravsky, Student Representative
Lily Kania, Student Representative
Melyssa Mabes, Secretary
Kelly Edelstein, Staff Liaison
Amanda Santos, Council Liaison
Chris Bobbitt, Mayor

Minutes:

There were no minutes from the July 14, 2026 meeting. There was a change of secretary's and the minutes could not be obtained.

Awards Nomination Review

This committee held voting for multiple categories of awards. The awards will be handed out at Community Day, which is October 3,2026. Five awards will be given out to local businesses on this date. The categories are Mayor's Impact Award, New Large & Small Business Award, Lawrence Legacy Award, and Ralph Copleman Environmental Award. The Mayor selected AmeriKick for the mayor's award as this business is big on fundraising and showing up to all community events.

The New Large Business Award is awarded to Candlewood Suites. This location took some time to open up, but they turned an aged location into a new town gem that draws in out of towners.

The New Small Business Award is awarded to Caesar's Bagels & Deli II. Caesar's has been this town's go-to for bagels ever since opening their doors and they have been consistently busy.

The Lawrence Legacy Award is awarded to Pulaski Meats located in the Trenton Farmers Market. Pulaski is a multi-generational business that is family owned and has been in business for 57 years.

The Ralph Copleman Environmental Award is awarded to Taylor Rae Designs as she takes scraps of clothing and upcycles them into something wearable. This business was nominated multiple times across each category. This committee felt the Environmental Award was the best way to honor Taylor Rae Designs.

Job Fair

The Job Fair is being held on October 1, 2026 5:30 pm-7 pm at Quakerbridge Mall. Abi and Lily met with a representative from the mall to discuss the flyers that they made as well as an Instagram video. The mall is going to advertise the flyers and video promotion. Quakerbridge Mall will be advertising this event on their own socials as well.

This event is targeted towards individuals seeking seasonal work for the upcoming holiday season.

The purpose of this committee's table is to direct participants and serve a helping hand. The committee will be wearing nametags so that the public is aware of who is a part of the Business & Economic Growth Committee should anyone need assistance. There will be flyers containing a QR code that allows participants to leave feedback on the event.

Student Rep Report

Abi and Lily reported they have been busy working on ways to promote the job fair. Lily put together a promotional video for the Instagram page. Both students worked on the flyers.

Update from Council Liaison, Amanda Santos:

Councilwoman Amanda Santos states there is nothing major to report at this time. She is waiting on proposals for the Community Center. Also notes, the fire study results are close to being finished.

The Arts Commission is looking for committee members.

The topic of the housing off of Texas Ave came into discussion. Councilwoman relayed that waiting for the transformers from PSE&G are delaying occupancy, but it is expected that homes will be available in November 2026. These homes will be for low-moderate income.

Community Day:

Awards will be presented at Community Day on October 3,2026.

The receivers will be present to accept their awards.

Ribbon Cutting:

Melissa Clark and Kelly Edelstein attending the ribbon cutting for a new restaurant in town, Tandoor n' Wok, in Lawrence Shopping Center on September 7, 2026.

Kelly reports there are no upcoming ribbon cuttings.

Other Business:

There is no other business to discuss at this time.

Public Comment:

None.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melyssa Mabes
Recording Secretary