

# This is an Open Letter to the Taxpayers of Elk County, Pennsylvania

Letter to the Editors  
Of the *Ridgway Record*, *Daily Press*, and *Courier Express*

In response to Ms. Secco's story about the Elk County Commissioners' (ECC) meeting of April 17, 2025, we would like to note that Ms. Secco failed to report on taxpayer statements made during that meeting.

- At the December 5, 2024 meeting Commissioner Lecker, in reference to pending litigation with the Estate of William H. Brawand, stated that they (the ECC) are out of this deal—"It's pretty much a done deal.... Actually, we're out of it now." As we stated during the April 17th meeting, this is factually incorrect. Elk County is still a party to the litigation and taxpayers should be aware of this fact. The ECC in its pending complaint, also attempted to build a permanent communication facility on the Brawand Oil & Gas lease without any consultation. While the litigation continues, the Court did not approve their attempt at "public taking." [see *US Constitution*, Fifth Amendment]
- We corrected Ms. Secco's prior comments made about 911 calls. The county's own employees and contractors have confirmed that emergency 911 calls are not transmitted through any of the communication towers, but go through telephone and cellular services.
- The ECC previously stated they had purchased land and signed contracts for the construction of a permanent communications tower, and would be moving soon off the Brawand Oil & Gas lease roadway. This parcel of land has been cleared for approximately two months. At the same time, the temporary communications tower which is at issue in the pending litigation appears to be non-operational, and "has been covered in snow for months and months." Yet the ECC refused to answer the question on when they planned to move the temporary tower.

*ECCs temporary communications tower on the Brawand Oil & Gas lease roadway has been covered in snow for much of the last 2 winters, and in weeds for much of the past 2 summers. Photograph December 16, 2024, courtesy of Tammy D. Brawand.*



- The ECC failed to disclose, when asked, if the Federal government demanded the return of any of the Covid (ARPA) funds received by the county. As reported in the *Spotlight PA's* article on November 14, 2024, Elk County still had approximately \$3.4 million in funds. The ECC has so far allocated approximately \$557,437 of these funds to construct a new communications tower. They have also spent \$130,510 to purchase the temporary communications tower and move county-owned equipment from the Brawand Estate's main property onto the Brawand Oil & Gas lease roadway.
- The ECC's failure to address taxpayer questions and concerns continues a troubling pattern of behavior by the commissioners. For nearly eight months during late 2021 and early 2022, the ECC failed to respond when asked to address their unauthorized use of a communications tower/building on property owned by the late William H. Brawand. Because of their failure to respond, it became necessary to *evict the County from the property*. We still find it amazing that we were forced to file a "Notice to Quit" for our own county government because they couldn't be bothered responding to communications from us and our attorney!

Since the taxpayers are covering the cost of legal fees, we thought you would like to hear our point of view. We have reached out to Ms. Secco numerous times to highlight these issues. Unfortunately, it became clear from the transcript of the December 5th meeting that the local press, instead of functioning as an independent entity, is taking direction from the ECC with regard to whom they should and should not respond.

Sincerely,  
Terry J. Brawand and Tammy D. Brawand, Co-Executrices of the Estate of William H. Brawand