

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
436 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone (412) 350-6495
Fax (412) 350-6499*



Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 20, 2007

4:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Public Safety

*Jim Burn, Chair; John DeFazio, Matt Drozd, Vince Gastgeb, William E. Lestitian,
Chuck Martoni, and William Robinson - Members*

*****REVISED*******I. Call to Order**

Summary: *The meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM*

Invited Guests:

Stephen Zappala, District Attorney or Designee

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Charles Moffatt, Superintendent, County Police or Designee

Ramon Rustin, Warden

Michael Machen, Public Defender

Summary: *Invited guests in attendance: Mr. Flynn, Mr. Machen, and Mr. Rustin*

Recognized attendees: Derek Uber, County Manager's Office

Council staff in attendance: John Mascio, Jared Barker, and Jennifer Liptak

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Matt Drozd, Vince Gastgeb, William Robinson, Jim Burn, Council Member Joan Cleary, and Council Member Bob Macey
Absent: John DeFazio, William Lestitian, and Chuck Martoni

III. Approval of Minutes

3309-07 Motion to approve the Minutes of the May 3, 2007 Public Safety Committee Meeting.

Action: **A motion was made by Robinson, seconded by Burn, that this matter be Passed. The motion carried unanimously.**

IV. Agenda Items**Ordinances**

2483-06 An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to facilitate the recording of transactions for pawnbrokers, dealers in precious metals, secondhand dealers and antique dealers of goods in order to establish a registry of such transactions designed for the purpose of tracking and locating stolen items and prosecuting those trafficking in stolen items.

Sponsors: Jim Burn, William Russell Robinson, Chuck Martoni and Rich Fitzgerald

Summary: *The Chair indicated that since no one was present from the District Attorney's Office or the County Police, he would hold the bill in committee.*

Action: **Held in Committee**

3034-07

An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Division 2, entitled "County Government Operations," Chapter 205, entitled "Allegheny County Jail," by the creation of a new Article II, entitled "Employment of Prisoners", and providing guidelines for the employment of inmates at the Allegheny County Jail for the improvement of highways within the County.

Sponsors: Vince Gastgeb and Matt Drozd

Summary:

The Chair asked the sponsors of the bill if any progress has been made regarding the bill. Mr. Drozd said that he would like prisoners to be rehabilitated so that they do not go back to their old ways but would also like to receive some type of service to Allegheny County through their work.

Mr. Gastgeb said that he envisions the bill as a work program that would be made available to the Warden should he want to use it. He said that this is not a mandate to implement this.

Mr. Rustin agreed that there may need to be an avenue that an administrator could use in order to provide employment for inmates. He said that he would rather that the prisoners develop skills that they could use once they are released. He said they may even be able to use the jail as a work reference.

Mr. Robinson said that he is concerned about whether the courts that have jurisdiction over the prisoners have any rules prohibiting or restricting them from being placed in a work program. He asked if the county has jurisdiction over these prisoners or are they only holding them. He also expressed concern over union issues. He said there may be contracts in place that would prohibit non union personnel from performing some types of work. He said that he is concerned that it could violate some union agreements.

Mr. Rustin said that if they did implement this it would apply to only those prisoners that were sentenced by the Court of Common Pleas. He said that the courts indicate if the prisoners are eligible for work release programs or if they are eligible to be placed in a community correction setting. He said if that is not approved by the courts ahead of time then the prisoners would need to stay incarcerated. He also said that maybe they could work out some agreement with unions to place the prisoners in some type of apprentice program.

Ms. Cleary expressed concern over security issues. Mr. Rustin agreed that security would have to be tight and that the main issue would be contraband. He said that while it may be beneficial to the community there are some security risks.

The Chair asked Mr. Rustin if he could provide the committee with a cost analyses of what the increased security would cost the county. Mr. Rustin said he would do that.

Mr. Gastgeb asked that Council's staff work with Mr. Rustin to rewrite the bill so that it reflects the discussion that took place at this meeting.

Mr. Flynn said that cost concerns aside, the jail already has many work and educational

programs available to the inmates. He said he is concerned about the perception of taking inmates out to the communities for manual work. He said it does not teach the inmates a trade or other useful skill. He said that he is in favor of providing inmates with useful skills, but does not support the punitive aspect of the bill.

The Chair asked if Mr. Rustin could research similar programs and report his findings to the committee. Mr. Rustin said he would do that.

Mr. Gastgeb reiterated his desire to make this bill discretionary for the warden and a mandate. He said that he will work on making the bill broader in scope.

The Chair agreed to this.

Action: Held in Committee

3238-07

An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing acceptance of an Automated External Defibrillator from St. Margaret Foundation/UPMC St. Margaret, P.U.L.S.E. AED Program.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *Mr. Machen provided the committee with a summary of the bill. He said that the bill would authorize the County to accept the donation of an Automated External Defibrillator from St. Margaret Foundation/UPMC St. Margaret, and that the defibrillator would be placed on the fourth floor of the County Office Building, in the Office of the Public Defender. He said that there is no cost to the county except for \$200 for a cabinet to house it.*

Mr. Robinson asked Mr. Machen why the Public Defender's Office would need on. Mr. Machen said for the health and safety of the constituents.

Ms. Cleary spoke in favor of the bill.

Action: A motion was made by Robinson, seconded by Burn, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution

3240-07

A Resolution of the Council of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, naming and designating the Family Activity Center at the Allegheny County Jail in honor of the late City of Pittsburgh Police Commander Gwendolyn Elliott

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *Mr. Rustin provided a summary of the bill to the committee. He said that the Chief Executive made this recommendation to honor the work and legacy of the late Pittsburgh Police Commander Gwendolyn Elliott by naming the family activity center at the Allegheny County Jail as the "The Gwendolyn June Campbell Elliott Family Activity Center." He said she was a driving force in the completion of the activity center and it would be appropriate to name it in her honor.*

Action: A motion was made by Robinson, seconded by Drozd, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried unanimously.

V. Adjournment