

Allegheny County Council

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Meeting Minutes - Approved

Wednesday, September 3, 2014

4:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Budget and Finance

Michael Finnerty, Chair

Members:

Barbara Daly Danko

Amanda Green Hawkins

Heather Heidelbaugh

Bob Macey

Sue Means

Nicholas Futules, John Palmiere

Jan Rea

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 PM.

**Invited Guests: William D. McKain, CPA-County Manager or Designee
Warren Finkel-Director, Budget and Finance Department, or Designee
Stephen G. Shanley P.E.,Deputy Director/ Interim Director- Public Works**

Lori Sicard, Walter Szymanski, Jared Barker and Erin Graney were present from Council staff.

William McKain, Warren Finkel, and Stephen Shanley were present from the Administration.

Council Members Ellenbogen, DeFazio and Martoni were present as non-committee members.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: 6 - Finnerty,Barbara Danko,Heather Heidelbaugh,Sue Means,Jan Rea andNick Futules

Members Absent: 2 - Bob Macey andJohn Palmiere

Members Phone: 1 - Amanda Green Hawkins

III. Approval of Minutes

[8461-14](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the Budget and Finance Committee meeting of Allegheny County Council held on August 27, 2014
Passed

IV. Agenda Items

Ordinances

[8443-14](#)

An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, providing, as a result of the County Manager's recent performance of a mandated sunset review and the submission of a report on the sunset review, for the elimination of the County's Department of Real Estate as a separate County department, the transfer of the duties, functions and obligations of the Department of Real Estate to the Department of Administrative Services and the amendment of Chapter OC of the County Code of Ordinances entitled "Organizational Chart" to reflect the elimination of the Department of Real Estate and the transfer of its duties, functions and obligations to the Department of Administrative Services.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

The clerk read the title into the record and the Chair invited Mr. McKain to the table to answer questions.

Ms. Means asked why the Manager recommended the elimination of the Department of

Real Estate. Mr. McKain gave an overview of his reasoning naming the elimination of a director position which is now vacant. He also stated that there may be other positions that could be eliminated but he did not have the exact number.

Ms. Heidelbaugh inquired as to the number of employees in the Department of Real Estate and who currently headed the Department of Administrative Services. Mr. McKain stated that he could not at the current moment give exact numbers and asked for the assistance of the latest "Budget Book"

Ms. Heidelbaugh inquired as to if there was an actual study done under his control to make recommendations on efficiencies which led to his conclusions on this review.

Mr. McKain stated that there was no formal study but that this was a common sense conclusion to combine departments.

Ms. Heidelbaugh inquired as to the distribution of the Sunset Review and if a hard copy was given to the Council Members. Ms. Heidelbaugh stated that she did not receive the report.

Ms. Rea stated that if the result was to save 250,000 then she was in favor of moving it forward.

Mr. Finnerty suggested that a discussion could be had at the next Regular Meeting about the Sunset recommendation prior to the vote.

Ms. Heidelbaugh stated that there was a limit per rules of Council on how many questions that could be asked in Full Council if the member did not attend a committee meeting which would limit effective discussion.

A motion to table was made by Ms. Heidelbaugh and seconded by Ms. Hawkins. The Chair called for a roll call for the motion to table which failed by the following votes: No: Finnerty, Danko, Rea, Futules; Yes: Green Hawkins, Heidelbaugh, and Means.

Ms. Danko asked why this was not placed under Court Records. Ms. Danko stated that she also did not see the Sunset Review and because this was a long report that there should be a special meeting to discuss the ramifications of passing the review.

Mr. McKain stated that this was the only recommendation in the review and apologized if it was not communicated to Council to their expectations.

Ms. Danko stated that it was worth at least a presentation to Council.

Ms. Green Hawkins also commented that to vote now might be an issue without having all of the information before all council members and asked if there was any urgency in its passage.

The Chair stated that the Budget process was about to commence and that was the urgency. Ms. Hawkins requested an answer from the County Manager to which Mr. McKain agreed that it was related to the budget process impending.

Ms. Rea stated that it was a good thing to eliminate some costs prior to budget considerations however the request to hold the bill for a week for a presentation on the Sunset.

The Chair agreed to hold the bill until the next meeting on Wednesday.

Ms. Green Hawkins made clarification that she commended Mr. McKain's work.

Ms. Means also requested a presentation of the sunset review. Legal mandate for the department? How many employees are in each department? How does Mr. T feel about the additional responsibilities.

Ms. Heidelbaugh turned the committee's attention to pages 312-319 where an explanation of the reason for consolidation was highlighted. Ms. Heidelbaugh stated that she would like to have a more in-depth explanation for the reasoning behind the consolidation. Ms. Heidelbaugh suggested that there be further inquiry on how there may be more money saved.

Mr. Martoni joined the meeting.

Held in Committee

Resolutions

[8444-14](#)

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2014 (Submission #11-14).

Sponsors: Chief Executive

The clerk read the title into the record and Mr. Szymanski reviewed the grants and proposed recipients.

The Chair asked the committee to take note of the questions prepared by Mr. Szymanski about the budget blocks and opened the floor to questions.

Ms. Means inquired about the 34,600 grant to fund the participation in monitoring abuse in the elderly and disabled. Ms. Celestino and Mr. Schepis were invited to the table and answered Ms. Means stating that there were protocols for follow up on abuse and an investigation of abuse of which they could provide further details.

Ms. Means inquired as to the PDAI Grant for electronic case information with concerns on privacy. Ms. Celestino stated that there was not issue with privacy because the information was merely transmitted between departments and it only facilitated greater communication within the county.

Melissa Javorsky from the DA's office was asked to the table to explain the need for the grant. Ms. Javorsky explained that this was a training grant for first responders and DA's in the area.

Ms. Means further inquired about Live Well Allegheny and what specific health issues will be targeted. Ms. Celestino stated that obesity and physical activity would be primary but others will be addressed in the program.

Ms. Means inquired about what kind of information is being collected pursuant to the IT grant for the Health Department. Ms. Celestino clarified that this was actually an update of software and not necessarily additional information gathering.

Affirmatively Recommended

Discussion Topic: The state and function of the Allegheny County Department of Public Works

Steve Shanley was invited to the table to give an overview of the Department of Public Works. Mr. Shanley reviewed the functions and structure of the Department.

The Chair inquired as to how many districts in Public Works. Mr. Shanley stated they have seven districts.

Ms. Heidelbaugh inquired who Mr. Shanley reported to and how the projects were decided on and if they were based on need. Ms. Heidelbaugh further inquired on how hypothetically it would be reported if a project was affected based on politics. Ms. Heidelbaugh asked if basing projects on politics was prohibited. Mr. McKain replied that they did not conduct business in that fashion.

Ms. Means inquired if she could get a list of completed projects and those projects that were going to be completed in the future. Mr. McKain stated that there was a list for 2014 which he would provide. Mr. McKain stated that there was a fluid list based on constituent complaints, emergencies and other factors. Ms. Means requested the "plan" for next years repair to enhance transparency to the public.

Mr. McKain stated that 2014 is still ongoing for projects but that he would provide a list to Council. Mr. McKain stated that there was a five-year plan projected within the budget as a forecast.

Ms. Danko inquired as to the Homestead Waterfront projects and if there was a project study done for the costs of the proposed "fly-over" and if there was cooperation between Economic Development and Public Works on studies. Ms. Danko expressed concern over the ramifications of a train explosion and a lack of exits in the area for residents and occupants. Mr. McKain stated that he would look into it.

Mr. Futules inquired as to the parks capital projects and asked if the pavilion in Hemlock Grove at Hartwood Acres had progressed or started. Mr. Shanley stated that the architect was working on the design but they didn't have an estimate at this time. Mr. Futules stated that they significantly increased the rates and wanted to know if that was reflected through the upgrades or planned upgrades. Mr. McKain stated that a report was due to Council and that he would provide one.

Ms. Heidelbaugh expressed concern over the Squirrel Hill Tunnel and asked if there was any plans to rectify that problem area. Mr. Shanley stated that it was a PennDot facility and that they needed to report on the comprehensive plan. Mr. Shanely and Mr. McKain stated that they would ask PennDot and get back to Council.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 PM