

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
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Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 29, 2008

4:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Budget and Finance

William Russell Robinson, Chair; Jim Burn, Joan Cleary, John DeFazio, Matt Drozd, Mike Finnerty, Brenda Frazier, Vince Gastgeb, Bob Macey, and Chuck McCullough - Members

I. Call to Order

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

Invited Guests:

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Amy Griser, Director, Budget & Finance

Derek Uber, Deputy County Manager

Summary: *Invited guests in attendance: Mr. Flynn, Ms. Griser, and Mr. Uber*

Recognized attendees: Jack Exler, Economic Development; and Pete Schepis, Budget & Finance Office

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

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Joan Cleary, Matt Drozd, Michael Finnerty, Bob Macey, Charles McCullough, and Chair William Robinson

Absent: Jim Burn, John DeFazio, Brenda Frazier, and Vince Gastgeb

III. Agenda Items**Resolution****3676-08**

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2008 (Submission #01-08).

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *Prior to discussion on this bill, the Chair discussed the budget process for the upcoming 2009 Budget. He said that he will schedule Budget & Finance Committee Meetings on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month unless there is no legislation in the committee. He also said that if there happens to be a 5th Tuesday in the month he will not schedule a meeting for that day.*

Ms. Liptak provided the committee with a summary of the bill highlighting various projects contained in the bill. She also discussed Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects. She distributed to the committee a list of CDBG projects broken down by Council District. She also discussed Special Accounts Funds.

The Chair said that he has had discussions with the administration regarding what role Council should have in determining how CDBG funds are spent. He said that they agreed that Council would be better informed and that process has been relatively successful. He also discussed the possibility of Council having a more formalized role in this process. He said that he drafted legislation which would establish a committee for this purpose but the legislation has yet to be acted upon.

He discussed CDBG eligibility by Council District. He said that some districts are eligible for more funds than others. He said that it would be hard to equally divide the

funds by district and that the Chief Executive strongly opposes doing that. The Chair said that he would prefer establishing a structure within Council to be formally involved in the process. He went on to discuss the current CDBG process.

At the request of Council Member McCullough, Jack Exler provided the committee with an overview of how the CDBG Program operates and explained the criterion for eligibility of projects.

At the request of Council Member Drozd, Mr. Exler explained to the committee how projects are prioritized.

The Chair asked if the County audits the organizations that receive CDBG funds. Mr. Exler said that they do audit them and monitor their activities.

The Chair indicated that the legislation would have to be amended to reflect the actual amount of CDBG funds that the county received. Ms. Griser said that she would work with Ms. Liptak on the preparation of that amendment.

The Chair reminded the committee that they can not separate items contained within the bill. He said that they have to pass the entire bill or nothing at all. He said that he has had discussions regarding the option of submitting separate bills for each project and found that it would be extremely burdensome. He said that if any Council Member has strong objections or concerns over an item, they can request that the bill be held. He pointed out that that rarely happens.

Mr. Finnerty asked if the county receives progress reports on the projects. The Chair recommended that he ask the administration for these reports. Mr. Finnerty said he would.

Mr. Drozd asked if there was any additional money available to address concerns relative to the negative impact of gambling. The Chair advised that each individual Council Member would be wise to speak with their state legislator regarding that issue.

Mr. McCullough expressed concern over funding for a project regarding illegal slot machines. He asked if those funds could be used for an alternative law enforcement purpose. Mr. Schepis said that the county is not permitted to use the funds for anything other than what is specifically contained in the description of the project.

Action: **A motion was made that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried unanimously.**

IV. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting adjourned at 4:45 PM*