

# Allegheny County Council

*436 Grant Street  
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## Meeting Minutes

**Wednesday, March 16, 2016**

**4:00 PM**

**Conference Room 1**

## **Committee on Budget and Finance**

*Mike Finnerty, Chair*

*Members; Sam DeMarco, Nick Futules, Paul Klein, Ed Kress, Bob Macey, Chuck Martoni, Sue Means, John Palmiere*

## I. Call to Order

*The meeting was called to order at 4:04.*

### Invited Guests:

**William D. McKain, CPA - County Manager or Designee**

**Mary C. Soroka - Director, Office of Budget and Finance or Designee**

**Jason Davidek - Executive Director, Allegheny League of Municipalities Board**

*Mr. McKain was present from the Office of the County Manager.*

*Ms. Culhane was present as solicitor on behalf of the Office of the Treasurer.*

*Mr. Davidek was present from the Allegheny League of Municipalities.*

*Mr. Barker and Mr. Catanese were present from the Office of County Council.*

## II. Roll Call

**Members Present:** 8 - Nick Futules, Finnerty, Sam DeMarco, Paul Klein, Bob Macey, Sue Means, John Palmiere and Chuck Martoni

**Members Absent:** 1 - Ed Kress

**Members** 1 - Cindy Kirk

**Non-Members:**

## III. Approval of Minutes

[9512-16](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2016 meeting of the Committee on Budget and Finance

**A motion was made by Palmiere, seconded by Means, that this matter be Passed. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

## IV. Agenda Items

### Ordinances

[9477-16](#)

**Sponsors:** Treasurer, Council Member DeFazio, Council Member Ellenbogen, Council Member Finnerty, Council Member Futules, Council Member Macey, Council Member Martoni and Council Member Palmiere

*At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill and the Chair provided a brief overview of the bill's history.*

*The Chair, the Clerk and Ms. Means discussed the significance of amending by substitution.*

*At the request of the Chair, Ms. Culhane and Mr. McKain came to the table.*

*Mr. Kress gave a summary of his reasons for working with the Treasurer's office and solicitor to create the amendment, and summarized the provisions of his amendment with the clerk and Ms. Culhane.*

*Ms. Means and Mr. DeMarco noted that the County's hotel room tax Code is more extensive than the ordinance.*

*The Chair noted that he believes that it is an issue of equity between hotel operators and online booking agents.*

*Mr. Futules and Ms. Culhane discussed the scenario that is currently playing out with regard to the U.S. Open, and Ms. Culhane noted that the owners of property rented in connection with that event are already subject to the tax.*

*Mr. Kress noted that administration of the provisions of the ordinance would fall to the Treasurer, and that fraudulent evasion of the tax would be a matter for him to resolve.*

*In response to a question from Ms. Means, Ms. Culhane noted that collection of the tax by booking agents is discretionary and not mandatory, because Commonwealth law currently does not require that they collect it.*

*Mr. Kress moved to amend by substitution, Mr. Palmiere seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.*

**A motion was made by Palmiere, seconded by DeMarco , that this matter be Amended and Affirmatively Recommended as Amended. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

## **Discussion Topic**

### **Allegheny League of Municipalities Board**

*At the request of the Chair, Mr. Davidek provided an overview of the history of ALOM, the composition of the Board of Directors, the role of ALOM as an intermediary between units of local government, and the Board's activities in the areas of legislative advocacy, educational and informational activities (including this year's spring conference), facilitating understanding retirement solutions and administering a deferred compensation plan on behalf of approximately 30 municipalities, the banner community program, and communication enhancements. Mr. Davidek summarized ALOM's revenue sources and budgeting process, and briefly described the staff members' functions.*

*In response to a question from Mr. DeMarco, Mr. Davidek noted that the County provides \$125,000 towards ALOM's approximately \$450,000 annual budget, and noted that the various municipalities provide funding based upon their size.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Futules, Mr. Davidek indicated that program fees also provide a portion of ALOM's funding.*

*Ms. Means indicated that she had attended the previous two spring conferences, and that her experiences had been very positive.*

*In response to a question from Ms. Means, Mr. Davidek noted that ALOM's only real funding challenge relates to the pension plan, due to market fluctuations, and that there may be wisdom in switching from the current plan to an annuity plan, but that it is not yet completely clear whether this is the case or not.*

*Ms. Means, the Chair and Mr. Davidek discussed the reasons for the Board's structure.*

*In response to a question from Ms. Kirk, Mr. Davidek indicated that he believes that the banner community program is fairly robust, but that the application process can be time*

*consuming and otherwise burdensome to the municipalities, so there may be wisdom in incentivizing participation. Ms. Kirk and Mr. Davidek discussed the relative need for incentives in light of the program's current success.*

*Mr. Palmiere inquired about the possibility of providing a separate program for individuals like himself, who are unable to participate in the full three day spring conference, and Mr. Davidek expressed a willingness to investigate the possibilities.*

*In response to a question from the Chair, Mr. Davidek discussed the Board's desire to implement a strategic plan for ALOM's future activities.*

## **V. Adjournment**

*The meeting was adjourned at 5:09.*