

# **Allegheny County Council**

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## **Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, October 25, 2005**

**4:00 PM**

**Conference Room 1**

## **Committee on Budget and Finance**

*William Russell Robinson, Chair; John DeFazio, Ron Francis, Brenda Frazier,  
Vince Gastgeb, Jay Jabbour, and Doug Price*

**I. Call to Order****Invited Guests:**

**Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee**

**Amy Griser, Director, Budget & Finance**

**Derek Uber, Assistant County Manager**

**Summary:** *Invited Guests In Attendance: Ms. Griser and Mr. Uber*

*Recognized Attendees: Peter Schepis, Budget Office*

*Council Staff in Attendance: John Mascio, Jennifer Liptak, and Jared Barker*

**II. Roll Call**

**Summary:** *Non-Committee Council Members In Attendance: Council Member Cleary*

***Roll Call:*** Present: William Robinson, Ron Francis, and Brenda Frazier

Absent: John DeFazio, Vince Gastgeb, C.L. Jabbour, and Doug Price

**III. Approval of Minutes****2171-05**

Motion to approve the Minutes of the September 13, and September 27, 2005 Budget & Finance Committee Meetings.

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

**IV. Agenda Items****Discussion Topic:****2006 Council Budget Briefing Manual**

**Summary:** *The Chair indicated that the 2006 Budget Briefing Manual was distributed to all Members of Council. He said that the two major documents that Council should use during budget deliberations were the Manual and the administrations 2006 Comprehensive Fiscal Plan (CFP).*

*Ms. Liptak provided a description of the contents and functionality of the Manual. She said that she sent out a second round of budget questions to County Departments and Row Offices and that she should have responses prior to the Budget Hearings. She said that if any one has any additional question to please relay them to her and she will incorporate them into the Manual.*

*The Chair reiterated his four major areas of concern which he discussed at the last Budget & Finance Committee Meeting. The first was addressing diversity and equality. He said that he will ask the administration and all others that come before this committee what policies they have in place to accomplish diversity.*

*The second area of concern was that he wanted to make sure that the county's*

*Homestead program is consistent with state law.*

*His third area of concern was to make sure that the county establish a "Rainy Day Fund". He said that the State has developed a similar fund.*

*His fourth area of concern was what role will the controller play and how much money is the county is willing to invest in that effort.*

*Mr. Francis indicted that the State has a far greater need for a "Rainy Day Fund" than the county because of their fluctuating revenues. He said that the county has a very stable tax base in property taxes and that it was easier for the county to plan budgets based on that tax. The Chair thanked him for that comment.*

*Mr. Francis expressed some concern over issues relating to the county's retirement contribution. He said that the county has an obligation to make sure that they fund that at the appropriate level. He said that under funded retirement programs are always a problem and the longer you wait to make up the difference the more difficult it becomes. Ms. Griser said that the Retirement Board wanted to raise the contribution rate but the administration successfully argued to postpone that for now.*

*A discussion ensued relative to pension plans and retirement funds. The Chair said that it would be worth their while to shape legislation to address this issue and asked Ms. Griser if she would approach the Retirement Board for their input on this. Ms. Griser said that she would do that. Ms. Liptak said that she would send an inquiry to the Retirement Board. Ms. Griser said that she would also follow up on that.*

*Mr. Francis asked Ms. Griser if the Courts were satisfied with the administration's funding proposal. Ms. Griser said that she did not know. Mr. Francis said that he is convinced that the Courts will indicated that they will need more than was funded, and that Council and the administration should be prepared for that. He asked if the Criminal Identification Center was abolished. Ms. Griser said that the City of Pittsburgh disbanded it and that the county would take it on as long as it does not cost them any additional dollars.*

*The Chair noted Mr. Francis' concerns and indicated that Ms. Liptak and Ms. Griser would follow up on them.*

*The Chair said that November 9, 2005, would be the last day to submit recommendations to the Budget Committee for incorporation into the budget legislation. He said that the committee would be responsible for shaping the budget document and that amendments to that document are appropriate and will be accepted. He said that he would not try to prevent any Member of Council from making last minute budget amendments, but hoped that they would not do that. He said that the proposed budget would be voted on in committee for recommendation to the full Council. He said that he will ask Members of Council to co-sponsor the budget bill.*

*Ms. Frazier asked if there was any uniformity in the pay scale of Directors. Ms. Griser said that she would have to review that. Mr. Francis said that the pay differential could be because some departments are larger than others. The Chair indicated that there is some misconception in identifying Directors when in reality they are not Directors but*

*Bureau and Division Managers. Ms. Liptak said that she would incorporate Ms. Frazier's concern into questions to be sent to the administration. She said that she would ask them what method is used to determine the salary for Directors and Bureau and Division Managers.*

*Ms. Griser commented that they changed the format in the CFP to accommodate requests from Council relative to grants. She said that they now provide the period of the grant and have identified with an asterisk those grants that have already been approved. She said they also broke out how much of the grant is county matched and how much is funded from other sources.*

*The Chair indicated that the Chief Executive made himself available to meet with him and his staff if they desired. He said that at an appropriate time he will make a decision as to whether it will be necessary to meet with him.*

## **Resolution**

### **2167-05**

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budgets for 2005 (Submission #17-05).

**Sponsors:** Chief Executive

### **Summary:**

*Ms. Liptak provided the committee with a summary of the legislation. She said that there were no grants listed that Council was not familiar with except the Hurricane Katrina related matters. Ms. Griser commented that 360 Katrina evacuees came to Pittsburgh. She said that the Pittsburgh Project Engagement Center and Urban League were the principal providers and that the cost is 100 percent reimbursable.*

*The Chair asked if the county was paying more for any services than they normally would. Ms. Griser said that every effort is being made to stay within the items that are reimbursable. She said there was a large volunteer effort and that she does not anticipate any costs that the county would have to absorb. She said that all of the service providers are veteran non-profit centers that are accustomed to providing these services. The Chair asked if some of the providers were outside the county. Ms. Griser said that some were, but not many.*

### **Action:**

**A motion was made by Francis, seconded by Frazier, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried unanimously.**

## **V. Adjournment**

### **Summary:**

*The meeting adjourned at 4:45 PM*