

Allegheny County Council

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Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 29, 2005

5:30 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Public Safety

*Vince Gastgeb, Chair; John DeFazio, Jay Jabbour, Edward Kress,
and Chuck Martoni*

I. Call to Order

Summary: *The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM*

Invited Guests:

Stephen Zappala, District Attorney or Designee

Pete DeFazio, Sheriff or Designee

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Mike Wojcik, County Solicitor or Designee

Superintendent Charles Moffatt, County Police or Designee

Chief Bob Full, Emergency Services or Designee

Andy Baechle, Director, Parks or Designee

Attorney Josh Bloom

John Chalovich, IBEW, Local #5

Summary: *Invited Guests Present: Joe Rizzo for Mr. DeFazio; Dan Fitzsimmons for Mr. Zappala; Derek Uber for Mr. Flynn; Mr. Wojcik; Mr. Moffat; Mr. Full; Mr. Baechle; Mr. Bloom; Rich Stinizzo for Mr. Chalovich.*

Council Staff Present: Joe Catanese, John Mascio, Jared Barker, and Stephanie Buka.

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Chair Vince Gastgeb, C.L. Jabbour, and Edward Kress
Absent: John DeFazio, and Member Chuck Martoni

III. Approval of Minutes

2224-05 Motion to approve the Minutes of the September 1, 2005 Public Safety Committee Meeting.

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

IV. Agenda Items**Ordinances**

1388-04 An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to facilitate the reporting and recording of transactions for pawnbrokers, dealers in precious metals, secondhand dealers and antique dealers of goods in order to establish a County-wide computer registry of such transactions designed for the purpose of tracking and locating stolen items and prosecuting those trafficking in stolen items.

Sponsors: District Attorney, Rich Fitzgerald and Wayne Fontana

Summary: *Mr. Fitzsimmons said that although it is a good idea some of the merchants have expressed hesitancy about the reporting elements of the bill. He also said that he does not see any provision for establishing a computer registry or any funding for personnel*

to process the information that is gathered. He said that unless the bill provides for staff then it is an imperfect piece of legislation. Mr. Gastgeb agreed that the roadblock has been how to establish a registry.

The Chair explained that any bill that is not approved by Council by the end of the year will expire by rule and would need to be reintroduced at the next Council session. He said that Council President Rich Fitzgerald called him and asked him to hold the bill and reintroduce it at the next Council session in January. He said that he had no problem doing that. Mr. Moffat said that there is a similar system in place at the City of Pittsburgh that might be worth looking at.

Action: Held in Committee

1438-04

Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, establishing a requirement that any hotel, motel, or lodging establishment must complete a mandatory background check when hiring any employee that has a job that entitles them to a room key or access to rooms within that establishment.

Sponsors: Vince Gastgeb

Summary: The Chair said that he would also like to hold this bill and reintroduce it at the next Council session. He said that he is looking at a voluntary system in which hotels could display that they comply.

Action: Held in Committee

1504-04

An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, approving an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement with the City of Pittsburgh to provide emergency medical dispatch services, i.e. Enhanced 9-1-1, between the City and County.

Sponsors: Rich Fitzgerald, Wayne Fontana, Brenda Frazier, Vince Gastgeb, Chuck Martoni, Jan Rea and Eileen Watt

Summary: The Chair indicated that the bill was outdated and that he will allow it to expire.

Action: Held in Committee

2154-05

Repealing the Rules and Regulations of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation as established by Ordinance on January 1, 1977 and amended by Ordinance on June 14, 1982 to aid in the preservation of County property and promoting and preserving the public health, safety and welfare in the parks owned and maintained by the County of Allegheny, and replacing such Rules and Regulations with Parks Department Regulations.

Sponsors: Vince Gastgeb

Summary: This Bill, in Ordinance form, aims to preserve County property and the public health, safety and welfare of people using any of the nine (9) County Parks. Specifically, it repeals the Rules and Regulations that were set forth under the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation, an entity succeeded by the Department of Parks.

Mr. Gastgeb explained that this Ordinance would replace such outdated Rules and Regulations with Parks Department Regulations. This will bring the rules into

conformity with the current needs of the Parks Department.

He also said that this legislation describes Prohibited and Regulated Activities. It provides for Penalties, in which any person violating this Ordinance would be guilty of a summary offense, and upon conviction would pay a fine of a minimum of \$300.00.

Mr. Moffat said that he did not know whether they have the authority to regulate some of these activities described in the bill. He said that the Law Department would need to take a look at that. He said that on its face, he does not see anything really wrong with some of the provisions of the bill. Mr. Jabbour said that he thinks everyone needs more time to review this bill. Mr. Baechle said that he had no real problems with the bill but would like more time to study it. He said that he would like the Law Department to review it. Mr. Gastgeb said that he will allow the bill to expire and reintroduce it at the next Council session.

Action: Held in Committee

2213-05

An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to facilitate the reporting and recording of information by contractors operating within Allegheny County, as well as for the licensing of the same.

Sponsors: Edward Kress

Summary:

Mr. Kress explained that the Ordinance would require contractors doing business within the county to obtain a license each year and provides certain requirements for obtaining one. He said that it would protect consumers against dishonest contractors. He said it would create accountability. Mr. Bloom commented on some of the specifics of the bill. He said that he is an attorney that represents many contractors and labor unions and that they strongly support the bill. Mr. Stinizzo said that he receives many phone calls from consumers telling him that they have been cheated. He said many of those calls are from the elderly. He said that the bill would at least force the contractors to show that they have some proficiency to the work. He said he was in support of the bill.

The Chair said that he will allow the bill to expire and obtain more information to improve the bill and possibly reintroduce it at the next Council session. He said that there were procedural and logistical issues that needed to be cleared up in the bill.

Action: Held in Committee

Resolutions

2143-05

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, calling on the administration to institute and implement a Reverse 9-1-1 early warning emergency system for advanced warning of emergencies and alerts within Allegheny County by Calendar Year 2006.

Sponsors: Doug Price

Summary:

Mr. Full said that he thinks the bill has value and that it fits in with their goal of provided the highest level of emergency warning and notification to residents. He said that he believes it could be tied into the current 9-1-1 system at some time. He cautioned

that 9-1-1 money could not be used for the implementation of this and that it would have to be funded through the operating or capital budget. The Chair asked him if he thought it would be expensive. Mr. Full said that initial costs would be high but after that it would not require a lot of money to perpetuate the system. He said that he thinks it would be a valuable tool and was in favor of the bill. The Chair said that he will ask the administration to explore the possibility of using capital funds for this.

Action: Held in Committee

2155-05

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending Resolution No. 14-05, establishing the contribution rate for the Allegheny County 9-1-1 System.

Sponsors: Vince Gastgeb

Summary: *The Chair indicated that this bill was outdated and he would allow it to expire.*

Action: Held in Committee

Motions

1922-05

Motion expressing the Sense of Council of Allegheny County, supporting the creation or re-institution of the position of Allegheny County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Coordinator, requesting that the Administration provide County Council with information regarding the creation or re-institution of such position and/or a status report of any progress in filling such position, and requesting that the Administration continue to provide such reports until there is consensus with County ambulance services as to how to resolve this issue.

Sponsors: Joan Cleary and William Russell Robinson

Summary: *Mr. Full said that the Chief Executive is fully committed to filling this position and has interviewed several candidates. He said that on December 7, 2005, they plan on interviewing another 5 candidates. He said it was moving along well and they expect the position to be filled by the end of the year.*

2101-05

Motion expressing the Sense of Council of Allegheny County urging the Allegheny County Police, Sheriff, and District Attorney to investigate establishing a street level drug and firearm interdiction unit based upon the City of Pittsburgh Police Department's Impact Squad to cooperate with existing and planned law enforcement initiatives within the County, and to endeavor to increase their level of assistance to local municipal police departments throughout the County.

Sponsors: Edward Kress, C.L. Jabbour, Vince Gastgeb, Eileen Watt and Doug Price

Summary: *The Chair said that he would like to have the Sheriff's Office involved with this. Mr. Rizzo said that if this should move forward that he would very much like to be involved. Mr. Moffat said that he would be. Mr. Gastgeb asked how this would be an enhancement over the current system. Mr. Moffat said that they would have a certain number of officers be responsible for various communities requesting assistance. Moffat said that would have to be extended to the City of Pittsburgh police. Mr. Rizzo said that this would also need to include the Chiefs of Police. Mr. Fitzsimmons a report containing recommendations by the District Attorney's Office to the Governors*

Commission to Address Gun Violence. Mr. Fitzsimmons said that the DA's Office is working toward establishing a task force on gun violence. Mr. Fitzsimmons provided a detailed description of the report to the Governor.

Mr. Moffat said that he did not see a necessity for this bill. He said they already work together well now and he does not see how this could enhance that. The Chair asked Mr. Moffat that since this is only a Motion, would he change it to give it more teeth or would he just let it go. Mr. Moffat recommended that the committee just let his go. Mr. Fitzsimmons agreed with Mr. Moffat. He said that he believes that the DA's approach makes the most sense. He said the biggest part of this is the funding, not the working together. He said they have all worked well together for years. Mr. Moffat said that they are already doing this and that he would recommend that the committee allow the motion to expire. The Chair said asked Mr. Kress if he was willing to withdraw the motion and maybe rewrite it to be more in harmony with some of the recommendations of the District Attorney. Mr. Kress said that he would have no problem with that.

V. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM*