

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
436 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone (412) 350-6495
Fax (412) 350-6499*



Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 14, 2009

4:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Government Reform

***Rich Fitzgerald, Chair; Jim Burn, Jim Ellenbogen, Nick Futules, Vince Gastgeb,
Amanda Green, Bob Macey, and Chuck McCullough - Members***

I. Call to Order

Summary: *The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.*

Invited Guests:

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Steve Bland, Executive Director, Port Authority

M. Elise Hyland, President, Equitable Gas Company

Summary: *Invited Guests Present: Jim Flynn, County Manager; Steve Bland, Executive Director, Port Authority; M. Elise Hyland, President, Equitable Gas Company*

Recognized Attendees: Dan DeBone, Senior Government Affairs Representative, Port Authority; Bill Miller, Operations, Port Authority; David Ross, Technical Marketing and Business Development Director, EQT Corporation; Kevin West, Managing Director, External Affairs, EQT Corporation

Council Staff Present: Jennifer Liptak; Jared Barker; Stephanie Buka

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Nick Futules, Amanda Green, Rich Fitzgerald, Michael Finnerty, and Joan Cleary
Absent: Jim Burn, Jim Ellenbogen, Vince Gastgeb, Bob Macey, and Chuck McCullough

III. Approval of Minutes

4843-09 Motion to approve the Minutes of the April 23, 2009 Government Reform Committee meeting.

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

IV. Agenda Items

Ordinance

4809-09 An Ordinance amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances through the creation of a new Chapter 720, entitled "Energy Resources," in order to establish County policy for the use of energy resources derived from property owned by Allegheny County.

Sponsors: Rich Fitzgerald, Bob Macey, John DeFazio, Nick Futules, Vince Gastgeb, Michael Finnerty, Jim Ellenbogen and William Russell Robinson

Summary: *Chairman Fitzgerald commented that according to the FY2008 Budget the Port Authority spent \$27 million dollars on energy costs.*

Mr. Miller explained that the Port Authority operates 863 buses, both diesel and hybrid diesel buses, which typically last 13 or 14 years.

Mr. Bland and Mr. Ross discussed stimulus monies available nationwide for energy independence and alternative fuels.

Ms. Hyland described the various benefits of using natural gas to operate buses, including fuel savings, but she acknowledged that the Port Authority would be making a significant investment.

In response to a question from Chairman Fitzgerald, Mr. Miller said a standard bus costs \$380,000, while a hybrid bus costs \$200,000 more. He added that in Washington, D.C. they spent \$28 million to renovate just one facility.

Ms. Hyland told the Committee that natural gas is \$1.50 a gallon less than diesel, and because of the abundance of Marcellus Shale in Pennsylvania, it's likely that natural gas prices would drop. She added that a number of cities, including Shreveport, Louisiana and Dallas, Texas transit systems are using natural gas buses.

In response to a question from Councilman Finnerty, Mr. Miller said the compressed natural gas (CNG) buses that the Port Authority used in the past did not perform well and had a lot of fueling issues. He said their buses have 3 minutes to fuel, but with CNG buses it can take up to 10 minutes which is unacceptable.

Mr. Bland asked Ms. Hyland if the Equitable Gas Company would be willing to conduct an engineering study of the Port Authority's facilities and buses, and Ms. Hyland responded, yes, they would be willing to pay for and conduct such a study.

Action: **Held in Committee**

V. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.*