

# **Allegheny County Council**

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## **Meeting Minutes - Approved**

**Wednesday, March 5, 2014**

**4:00 PM**

**Conference Room 1**

## **Committee on Budget and Finance**

*Michael Finnerty, Chair*

*Members:*

*Barbara Daly Danko*

*Amanda Green Hawkins*

*Heather Heidelbaugh*

*Bob Macey*

*Chuck Martoni*

*Sue Means*

*John Palmiere*

*Jan Rea*

## I. Call to Order

*The meeting was called to order at 4:*

### Invited Guests:

**William D. McKain, CPA - County Manager**  
**Warren Finkel - County Budget and Finance Director**  
**Andrew Szefi - County Solicitor**

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

*Mr. Finkel and Mr. Casciato were present from the Department of Budget & Finance.*

*Ms. Barkman and Mr. Feder were present from the Department of Court Records.*

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

## II. Roll Call

**Council Members Present:** 6 - Finnerty, Daly Danko, Macey, Means, Palmiere and Rea

**Council Members Absent:** 3 - Green Hawkins, Heidelbaugh and Martoni

## III. Approval of Minutes

[8103-14](#) Motion to approve the minutes of the Budget and Finance Committee Meeting of Allegheny County Council held on February 26, 2014  
**Passed**

## IV. Agenda Items

### Resolutions

[7982-14](#) A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the 2014 Operating Budget for Allegheny County.

**Sponsors:** Council Member Russell Robinson

*The Chair held the bill in the absence of the primary sponsor.*

**Held in Committee**

[8091-14](#) A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the 2014 Capital Budget for Allegheny County.

**Sponsors:** Council Member Russell Robinson

*The Chair held the bill in the absence of the primary sponsor.*

### Discussion Topic

**Presentation on the state and functions of the Department of Court Records.**

*At the request of the Chair, Ms. Barkman provided a brief history of the Department of Court Records and an overview of its organization and functions.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Macey, Ms. Barkman described the Department's ability to function as a passport issuer and the timeline involved.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Macey, Ms. Barkman discussed the interrelation between the County's Department of Court Records and the AOPC and Court of Common Pleas and the various magisterial district courts.*

*Mr. Macey asked about case filings, specifically related to mortgage foreclosures, and Ms. Barkman indicated that the rate of filings for residential dwellings has decreased slightly since 2009.*

*In response to a question from Ms. Means, Ms. Barkman noted that the Department of Court Records generated roughly \$10.2 million in fee revenues in 2013.*

*Ms. Means asked about measures that could help the Department, Ms. Barkman noted that the existing records retention guidelines require retention of paper records unless they are also copied to microfilm, rather than electronically stored. Ms. Barkman and Mr. McKain suggested that updating this requirement to allow for electronic retention would result in significantly lower costs for the Department with regard to record storage.*

*In response to a question from Ms. Rea, Ms. Barkman clarified the statutory mechanism that enables the President Judge to set filing fees within Allegheny County.*

*Ms. Rea asked about data that may be available relating to the workloads borne by the various court entities, and Ms. Barkman noted that she can provide information on number of cases filed, but that she cannot shed light on the relative complexity or length of the various cases.*

*In response to a question from Ms. Danko, Ms. Barkman and Mr. McKain discussed the possibility of integrating other County functions within the Department of Court Records.*

*In response to a question from Ms. Danko, Ms. Barkman and Mr. Barker described the various record retention schedules that apply to the Department.*

*Ms. Danko asked about staffing in the Department today in comparison to staffing in the former row offices that performed the same functions as the Department. Ms. Barkman noted that she did not have the statistics in front of her, but that some duplication of staff functions had been eliminated as a result of row office reform, and that this is responsible for some staffing reductions.*

*In response to questions from the Chair, Ms. Barkman and Mr. McKain described how the positions in the Department are funded and agreed to provide additional data on the subject, as well as discussing the costs of running the Department under the operating budget.*

*Mr. Macey and Ms. Barkman discussed the Department's disaster recovery strategy in the event of catastrophic data loss.*

*Ms. Means and Ms. Barkman discussed the utility of maintaining documents electronically.*

*Ms. Rea requested a copy of the Department's fee structure, and Ms. Barkman offered*

*to provide one, noting that all of the fees are also posted on the Department's website.*

*In response to a question from Ms. Danko, Mr. McKain noted that the record modernization initiative and 911 fees are the administration's two top priorities at the moment.*

**V. Adjournment**

*The meeting adjourned at 4:52.*