

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
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Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 16, 2006

4:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Budget and Finance

William Russell Robinson, Chair; Jim Burn, Susan Caldwell, Joan Cleary, Matt Drozd, Mike Finnerty, Brenda Frazier, Vince Gastgeb, and Rich Nerone

I. Call to Order

Summary: *The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM*

Invited Guests:

Stephen Zappala, District Attorney or Designee

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Amy Griser, Director, Budget & Finance

Dennis Davin, Economic Development

Summary: *Invited Guests in Attendance: Dawn Botsford for Mr. Zappala; Derek Uber for Mr. Flynn; Amy Griser; and Jack Exler for Mr. Davin.*

Recognized Attendees: Eric Milliron, Economic Development; and Peter Schepis, Budget & Finance.

Council Staff in Attendance: John Mascio, Jared Barker, and Stephanie Buka.

Marc Cherna, Director, Human Services

Derek Uber, Assistant County Manager

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Susan Caldwell, Joan Cleary, Matt Drozd, Michael Finnerty, Brenda Frazier, Vince Gastgeb, and Chair William Robinson
Absent: Jim Burn, and Rich Nerone

III. Approval of Minutes

2467-06 Motion to approve the Minutes of the February 14, 2006 Budget & Finance Committee Meeting.

Action: **A motion was made by Finnerty, seconded by Frazier, that this matter be Passed. The motion carried by the following vote:**

Votes: Yes: 6 - Cleary, Drozd, Finnerty, Frazier, Gastgeb and Chair Robinson
Abstain: 1 - Caldwell
Absent: 2 - Burn and Nerone

IV. Agenda Items**Resolutions**

2450-06 A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2006 (Submission #02-06).

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *At the request of Ms. Cleary, Mr. Milliron provided the committee with a summary of the New Communities Main Street Program. He indicated that the program was a grant which provides state funds to assist with business development in disadvantaged neighborhoods on a county-wide basis. He said that the funds will be used to supplement existing county programs and that CDBG funds will be used to match these*

state funds.

Ms. Frazier asked him who would work on this. Mr. Milliron said that they would utilize the skills of technical assistance providers.

Discussion took place relative to the application process.

Ms. Caldwell asked if this program was separate from the City of Pittsburgh's program. He said it was and that they were attempting to duplicate the city had with this program.

Ms. Cleary asked him for a list of the communities that would be involved in this. Mr. Milliron said that he would forward that information to the chair.

Mr. Gastgeb spoke in favor of the program.

Mr. Drozd said that he believes that the communities need to make a commitment too. Mr. Milliron agreed.

Ms. Frazier asked when the Community Gun Violence Protection Program would be up and running. Ms. Botsford said that they are in the process of doing that and part of it is already being implemented.

At the request of the Chair, Mr. Schepis provided a summary of the Child Mental Health Initiative. He said that this is a grant to expand the Child Mental Health system of care of children ages Birth to 6. Although there is no county match involved they do accept in-kind services from the county. Mr. Drozd asked if there was any audit process regarding this. Mr. Schepis said that the Department of Human Services reviews financials and program monitors. He said that the county does a good job of monitoring the money and the program itself.

Action:

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

2463-06

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the 2006 Capital Budget for Allegheny County.

Sponsors: Vince Gastgeb

Summary:

Mr. Gastgeb provided the committee with a summary of the bill. He said that the capital budget amendment outlined in the bill would transfer bond proceed appropriations from the HAVA Compliant Voting Machines project and establish a new project entitled HAVA Compliant Voting Machines Paper Verification System Upgrade with an appropriation in the amount of \$3,000,000.

He said that the amendment is made to utilize county bond funds to establish a new project to provide for a system upgrade to the HAVA Voting Machines project to allow for paper ballots that leave an audit trail for voting verification. He said that the amendment as presented will result in a balanced 2006 Capital Budget.

He said that he is trying to find a measure stronger than a Sense of Council Motion which would ensure verified paper trail capabilities in voting machines.

The Chair asked what impact this would have since a paper trail is not required by state or fed government.

Mr. Gastgeb said that the county needs to show that they appropriated money for this apparatus. He said that he feels strongly about the need to do this and that he would consider purchasing these machine without federal money so that certification is not an issue.

He said that they are being held up because the state has not certified the machines they want. He said that passage of this bill would put them on record that they have the money and that they may have to consider purchasing these ourselves. He said that if they are serious about providing a paper trail they need to make some moves in this committee so that their constituents know they want this.

The Chair agreed that they should be true to their stance that they purchase machines that provide a paper trail but he said that they should be careful that they do not put the administration in a position where there is a legal question. He agreed that they should appropriate the money but said that they need clarity that the money is there for the administration if there are no legal impediments to this.

He also said that they should be careful that the privacy of votes are safeguarded and not compromised. He said that the Sequoia machines have the capacity to retrofit there machines to provide for this and he asked Mr. Gastgeb if he knew what the administration's position was on this. Mr. Gastgeb said he did not know what the administration's position was on this, but all that his bill does is appropriate money that is already there if they need it. He said that he does not see any risk involved with passing this bill

Ms. Cleary commented that the bill does not indicate when this would be done and asked Mr. Gastgeb if he knew when.

Mr. Gastgeb said that it is the Chief Executive's prerogative to enter into contracts and spend the money and that they can not do anything more. He said that this should have been done during the budget process.

Ms. Cleary asked what would happen to the money if they do not use it for that purpose.

The Chair said that it would be reprogrammed. He also said that if they have the money to do this then they should prevail upon the administration to upgrade the machines and the voting poll locations.

Mr. Drozd asked if this bill would add money in the budget for voting machines. Mr. Gastgeb said no, it was already budgeted.

The Chair said that the bill is addressing a concern that many of their constituents said was important to them. He said that it was his opinion that they support this legislation and move it forward to the full council. He said that council still has control over the budget process and any member of council is free to alter this budget as they see fit. He said that they are the crafters and recrafters of the budget.

Ms. Griser explained the capital budget process to the committee. She said that she has no problem with this bill since they had anticipated this anyway. She said this was planned funding and would not affect their financing plan.

Discussion took place on the Capital Budget process. Mr. Gastgeb said that he thought that the Capital Budget was too small for a county this size.

Action: **A motion was made by Gastgeb, seconded by Cleary, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried unanimously.**

V. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM*