

Allegheny County Council

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Meeting Minutes - Approved

Thursday, October 1, 2015

5:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Budget and Finance

*Michael Finnerty, Chair;
Nick Futules,
Amanda Green Hawkins,
Heather Heidelbaugh, Terri Klein,
Bob Macey,
Sue Means,
John Palmiere and
Jan Rea
-Members*

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:12.

Invited Guests:

William D. McKain, CPA - County Manager or Designee

Mary C. Soroka - Director, Office of Budget and Finance or Designee

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

Mr. Shanley and Mr. Dillon were present from the Department of Public Works.

Ms. Soroka, Mr. Casciato, Ms. Celestino and Mr. Lentz were present from the Department of Budget & Finance.

Ms. Collins and Mr. Shear were present from Adult Probation and Parole.

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

II. Roll Call

Members Present: 5 - Bob Macey, Sue Means, Jan Rea, Terri Klein and Michael Finnerty

Members Absent: 3 - Amanda Green Hawkins, John Palmiere and Nick Futules

Members Phone: 1 - Heather Heidelbaugh

III. Approval of Minutes

[9192-15](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the Budget and Finance Committee meeting of Allegheny County Council held on September 9, 2015
Passed

IV. Agenda Items

Ordinances

[9187-15](#)

An ordinance authorizing the County of Allegheny to impose a fee of \$5.00 for each nonexempt vehicle registered to an address located within Allegheny County to be used for transportation projects and other authorized expenditures as provided by 75 Pa.C.S. §1935.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill.

In response to questions from Ms. Means, the Chair noted that much of the legislation passed by the General Assembly does reference County Commissioners, rather than any specific form of home rule government.

In response to questions from Ms. Means, Mr. McKain indicated that the liquid fuels tax results in roughly \$4 million per year in revenue for the County according to audited figures, with an additional \$1.5 million or so through Act 89 for each of the last two years.

Mr. McKain also indicated that there are roughly 900,000 vehicles registered in Allegheny County.

Mr. Macey noted that the new fee would result in something like \$4.5 million in additional revenue per year, to be used for transportation related purposes, including roads and bridges. Mr. Macey and Mr. Shanley discussed the importance and lead times involved in some of the larger bridge projects.

In response to a question from Ms. Klein, Mr. Shanley described how projects are prioritized, noting that condition is fundamentally important to making a determination. Mr. McKain noted that road assessments can be fairly fluid, and conditions are more or less continually evaluated, but that bridge evaluations tend to be more structured and regimented because of the comparative complexity and expense of the projects and the evaluations, but that the additional funding should be a significant benefit.

Mr. McKain cautioned the Members, noting that budgeting for the first year of any revenue stream is not particularly easily done, and that it is generally wise to be conservative in forecasting in those situations.

Ms. Rea suggested that it might be helpful to the public's understanding of the infrastructure maintained by the County if a map existed that clearly showed what roads and bridges are the County's responsibility, to the extent that the public may be erroneously assuming that we have a low maintenance burden. Mr. McKain noted that there are over 500 County owned bridges.

In response to questions from Ms. Heidelbaugh, Mr. McKain noted that the administration had noticed an increasing number of requests for road and bridge maintenance and improvement, and that this in large part spurred the decision to pursue the supplemental registration fee under the terms of Act 89 at this time.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Mr. McKain noted that the revenues would be kept in a separate fund, and described the permissible uses to which the funding could be put.

In response to questions from Ms. Means, Mr. McKain noted that the County would not have any interest in allowing the fund balance to grow to the point that distribution of any of the revenues to the local municipalities would become an issue, that the statute does not contain a provision allowing for adjustment of the fee over time, and that the fee would not sunset.

Affirmatively Recommended

Members Yes: 4 - Macey, Rea, Klein and Finnerty

Members Abstain: 1 - Means

Members Absent: 3 - Green Hawkins, Palmiere and Futules

Members No Phone: 1 - Heidelbaugh

[9188-15](#)

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2015 (Submission #09-15).

Sponsors: Chief Executive

At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill and Mr. Szymanski provided

a brief overview of its provisions.

In response to a question from Mr. Macey, the Chair noted that no County match was required for any of the grants at issue.

In response to questions from Ms. Means, Mr. McKain noted that there are roughly 400 sexual assault kits in need of review and characterizable as "backlog." Mr. McKain noted that it is important to maintain communication between law enforcement, medical facilities, and the Medical Examiner in order to assure that this type of evidence is processed as promptly as possible.

In response to a question from Ms. Klein, Mr. McKain noted that he does not have detailed information regarding how the chain of custody between medical facilities, law enforcement and the Medical Examiner flows, but indicated that he would be willing to obtain and provide this information to the Committee.

In response to a question from the Chair, Ms. Collins indicated that the grant funding would be used to obtain improved software to enhance the officers' ability to monitor the individuals assigned to them.

Ms. Means requested a more detailed breakdown of the uses to which the funding would be put, and Ms. Collins noted that about \$300,000 would go to purchasing the technology to be used by the officers, with the balance largely going toward training those officers.

Ms. Means asked that the Chair obtain a copy of any reporting provided by Adult Probation to the funding source for distribution to the Committee, and the Chair and Mr. Shear agreed.

Affirmatively Recommended

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:49.