

Allegheny County Council

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Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 15, 2017

4:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Budget and Finance

Paul Klein, Chair; Patrick Catena, Samuel DeMarco, Nick Futules, Ed Kress, Bob Macey, Charles Martoni, Sue Means and John Palmiere, Members.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:01.

Invited Guests:

William D. McKain, CPA, County Manager or Designee

Mary C. Soroka, County Budget Director or Designee

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

Ms. Soroka and Ms. Berbekec were present from the Department of Budget & Finance.

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

II. Roll Call

Members Present: 3 - Sam DeMarco ,Paul Klein andSue Means

Members Absent: 5 - Nick Futules,Ed Kress,Bob Macey,Chuck Martoni andJohn Palmiere

Members 1 - Patrick Catena

Non-Members:

III. Approval of Minutes

[10023-17](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the Budget and Finance Committee Meeting held on January 25, 2017.

**A motion was made by Means, seconded by Klein, that this matter be Passed.
The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

IV. Agenda Items

Resolutions

[10015-17](#)

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2017 (Submission #02-17).

Sponsors: Chief Executive

At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill and Mr. Szymanski summarized its provisions.

With regard to the revenue for the data driven mental health diversion project, Ms. Soroka noted that the intent is to aid in identifying mental health needs and services that may be available for individuals released from the County Jail, and that the grant will be used to set up a tracking and reporting system in order to generate the relevant data.

In response to a question from the Chair, Ms. Soroka noted that she is not aware of any in depth tracking of this nature.

In response to questions from Ms. Means, Ms. Soroka noted that there would be no new staff hired, and that the grant will be used for technological hardware and software, and that she believes that the intent is to select one or more vendors through competitive

bidding.

In response to a question from the Chair, Ms. Soroka indicated that the Department of Human Services has a division which handles data gathering and analysis, and that this project would fall within that division's purview.

Ms. Means expressed support for the concept of attempting to connect individuals who need mental health services with appropriate service providers in this fashion.

Mr. DeMarco indicated that he believes that there is a benefit to gathering data in order to evaluate what services are available and being used.

Ms. Means and Mr. DeMarco discussed the concept of a "dashboard" in the technological sense, and the Chair, Mr. DeMarco and Ms. Soroka discussed the merits of providing information on one screen.

Mr. Szymanski provided a brief summary of an additional component of the new grant funding, and he and Ms. Soroka noted that it is intended to improve identification of individuals with mental health needs before criminal trials are conducted in order to attempt to ensure correct placement for those for whom a mental health care placement would be more appropriate.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Ms. Soroka noted that JRS stands for Justice Related Services, a group that works with the County Jail and Human Services in order to coordinate mental health services.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Ms. Soroka noted that the grantor is listed as PCCD, but that the revenue source is actually federal.

With regard to the third proposed amendment, Mr. Szymanski noted that it will be used by the Medical Examiner's Office, and Ms. Soroka indicated that the funding would aid in the process of seeking the renewal of an accreditation by funding a portion of the expense of training staff to receive necessary staff certifications.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Ms. Soroka noted that the Medical Examiner's Office continuously strives to have the highest possible accreditations relating to its work.

In response to questions from Mr. DeMarco, Ms. Soroka indicated that the accreditation would be national and would relate to forensic laboratory functions, and provided some detail regarding the accrediting agencies. Ms. Soroka offered to obtain additional data relating to the number of accredited medical examiners nationally. Ms. Berbekec indicated that she believes the accreditation lasts for five years.

With regard to the final proposed amendment, Mr. Szymanski provided a brief summary, and Ms. Soroka noted that the grant funding will be used for the purpose of providing community education regarding drug use and how the court system addresses it.

In response to a question from the Chair, Ms. Soroka noted that she believes that the education programs would principally be presented by Court staff to other Court staff members at the outset, and then presented to the community from there.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Ms. Soroka indicated that the program is designed to present education to school districts or communities who request it, and offered to obtain information regarding how those requests are to be made.

A motion was made by DeMarco , seconded by Means, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:24.