

Allegheny County Council

*436 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone (412) 350-6490
Fax (412) 350-6499*



Meeting Minutes - Approved

Wednesday, April 15, 2015

5:00 PM

Conference Room #1

Committee on Education

Michael Finnerty-Chair

Members: Vice President Futules, Thomas Baker, Charles Martoni

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:06.

Invited Guests:

William D. McKain, CPA, County Manager or Designee

Betty Arenth, Sr. Vice President, Heinz History Museum

Matt Strauss, Chief Archivist, Heinz History Museum

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

Mr. Szefi was present from the Law Department.

Ms. Van Sura and Ms. Breen were present from the Office of the Chief Executive.

Ms. Arenth and Mr. Strauss were present from the Heinz History Center.

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

II. Roll Call

Members Present: 5 - Martoni, Tom Baker, Barbara Danko, Michael Finnerty and Nick Futules

Members Absent: 0

III. Agenda Items

Ordinances

[8773-15](#)

Ordinance of the County of Allegheny authorizing the transfer of custody of certain County records to the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania to allow for their maintenance and preservation at no cost to the County under preservation guidelines established by the Society of American Archivists and for public access to these records at the Senator John Heinz History Center

Sponsors: Chief Executive

At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill and Ms. Van Sura introduced the individuals who contributed effort to the project.

Mr. McKain provided an overview of the history of the concept of archiving the older minute books, noting that the condition of some of the books is deteriorating at an increasing rate as time passes.

Ms. Van Sura described the materials that would be archived, noting that they consist of minute books from the former County Commissioners and the County Institutional District, and that these books in all likelihood not be maintained by the County itself.

Ms. Arenth described some of the conditions that may contribute to the deterioration of the books, and noted that the History Center currently maintains older documents in temperature and humidity controlled environments, with continuous pest elimination activities and the like.

Ms. Arenth and Mr. Strauss noted that there would be no charge to the public for reviewing the materials, with Mr. Strauss noting that a professional archivist monitors all public use of the archived materials.

At the request of the Chair, Mr. Szefi noted that the transfer complies with all applicable laws, and that the archived materials would remain subject to the current Right to Know process.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Mr. Szefi and Ms. Arenth noted that the State archivist had approved of the transfer in writing. Ms. Means asked that a copy of that letter be forwarded to the Chair.

Ms. Means requested clarification relating to gaining access to the archived records, and Ms. Arenth noted that access to archived documents is provided by the History Center at no charge, separate and apart from paying for admission to the Center's exhibits.

In response to a request from Ms. Means, Mr. Szefi described the process that would be followed for Right to Know requests, indicating that the request would be sent to the County exactly as they are currently, and that the requestor would be provided with copies where appropriate, or access through the History Center where photocopies are not appropriate.

In response to a question from Ms. Danko, Ms. Van Sura described the interaction between the County and the History Center, noting that the Center provided extensive information relating to the mechanics of archiving and maintaining the records.

Ms. Danko asked if additional cooperative efforts might be undertaken with the History Center, and Mr. McKain indicated that there may be other ways that the County and the Center could work together with regard to other heritage assets, but that these activities would be undertaken with the cooperation of Council.

Ms. Danko and Mr. McKain discussed heritage asset tracking in general, with Mr. McKain noting that the Office of the Controller tracks all County assets, and that the heritage assets are subject to the same controls as the other assets, but that the more significant ones may be of interest to the History Center for preservation purposes.

Ms. Danko, Mr. McKain and Ms. Van Sura discussed the potential wisdom of employing history students as interns to identify and inventory assets that may be of significance.

The Chair expressed support for the concept and moved to affirmatively recommend the bill to the full Council. Ms. Danko seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Affirmatively Recommended

Enactment No: 13-15-OR

IV. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:31.