

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
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Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 12, 2008

4:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Budget and Finance

William Russell Robinson, Chair; Jim Burn, Joan Cleary, John DeFazio, Matt Drozd, Mike Finnerty, Brenda Frazier, Vince Gastgeb, Bob Macey, and Chuck McCullough - Members

I. Call to Order

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

Invited Guests:

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Amy Griser, Director, Budget & Finance

Derek Uber, Deputy County Manager

Summary: *Invited guests in attendance: Ms. Griser and Mr. Uber*

Recognized attendees: Pete Schepis, Office of Budget & Finance

Council staff in attendance: John Mascio and Jennifer Liptak

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Matt Drozd, Michael Finnerty, Bob Macey, Charles McCullough, and Chair William Robinson
Absent: Jim Burn, Joan Cleary, and John DeFazio
Phone: Vince Gastgeb
Non-Member: Brenda Frazier

III. Approval of Minutes

3741-08 Motion to approve the Minutes of the January 22 & January 29, 2008 Budget & Finance Committee Meeting.

Action: **A motion was made by Finnerty, seconded by Macey, that this matter be Passed. The motion carried unanimously.**

IV. Agenda Items**Ordinances**

3662-08 An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, directing the Allegheny County Airport Authority to repay the sum of \$42,500,000 to the County.

Sponsors: Chuck McCullough, William Russell Robinson, Joan Cleary, John DeFazio, Matt Drozd, Michael Finnerty and Vince Gastgeb

Summary: *This bill was taken second. Mr. McCullough offered an amendment to the bill which would reflect the 19.9 million dollars that the county has received since the bill was originally introduced. He said that the amendment would also address the issue as to whether interest should be charged. He said that the substance of the bill remained the same.*

Mr. Gastgeb said that he agrees that interest should be paid.

The Chair asked Mr. Mascio to explain to the committee the procedure that would follow should the amendment be passed. Mr. Mascio said that if the bill was amended in

committee it would be referred to the full Council as amended. He said that printed on the face of the bill would be an indication that it is a Version 2 bill as amended in committee, and that Council Members would have both a clean copy and a redlined version of the bill before them at the Regular Meeting.

The amendment was passed unanimously.

Action: **A motion was made by Finnerty, seconded by McCullough, that this matter be Amended and Affirmatively Recommended as Amended. The motion carried unanimously.**

3663-08 An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Division 4, entitled "Finances," through the creation of a new Chapter 480, entitled "Essential Services and Tax Exempt Certification," in order to provide for a tax exempt certification and essential services fee for certain properties within the County for which an exemption from the real property tax is claimed.

Sponsors: Chuck McCullough, William Russell Robinson, Joan Cleary, John DeFazio, Michael Finnerty, Rich Fitzgerald, Vince Gastgeb and Bob Macey

Summary: *This bill was taken last. Mr. McCullough provided the committee with a summary of the bill. He said that the bill would create an Essential Services and Tax Exempt Certification in order to provide for a tax exempt certification and essential services fee for certain properties within the County for which an exemption from the real property tax is claimed.*

He further explained that the bill would require, on an annual basis, each property for which an exemption is claimed in whole or in part from the Real Estate Property Tax to obtain exemption from the real property tax and pay a Tax Exempt Certification and Essential County Services Fee.

The Chair said that the bill requires a Fiscal Note and that since the note is not available yet no action will be taken on the bill.

Mr. McCullough said that he anticipates that some of the revenue from the bill would be used to offset part or all of the drink tax revenue. He said that he plans to offer an amendment to the bill which he distributed to the committee. Ms. Liptak explained the technical changes found in the amendment. She also indicated that there are over 26,000 parcels involved in this and that it will be very difficult to identify each one so she said that there may need to be an appeal process included in the bill.

No action was taken on the amendment or the bill.

Action: **Held in Committee**

3673-08 An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Division 4, entitled "Finances," through the creation of a new Chapter 485, entitled "Gaming Revenues," in order to provide a uniform mechanism for accepting and disbursing revenues provided to the County under the terms of the Pennsylvania Racehorse Development and Gaming Act, 4 P.S. §1101 et. s

Sponsors: Chuck McCullough, Matt Drozd, Vince Gastgeb, Jan Rea, William Russell Robinson, Joan Cleary, Michael Finnerty, Rich Fitzgerald and Bob Macey

Summary: *This bill was considered third. Mr. McCullough provided the committee with a summary of the bill. He said that the bill would create a uniform mechanism for accepting and disbursing revenues provided to the County under the terms of the Pennsylvania Racehorse Development and Gaming Act.*

He also said that when the Chief Executive determines that the County will receive gaming revenues, he would be required to provide written notice of the anticipated receipt to both Allegheny County Council and the Allegheny County Treasurer. He said that the written notice shall include the approximate amount of revenue anticipated, and the proposed use(s) for the revenue.

He said that all revenue classified as gaming revenue will be classified for County budgetary purposes as special revenue, and will only be made available for expenditure by the County by ordinance or resolution approved by Allegheny County Council.

Ms. Griser expressed concern over the funds being identified as special revenue. She said that the Controller indicated that according to general accounting principals these funds should be placed in the general fund.

The Chair said that it is the purview of this Council to decide where the money should go. He said that this bill is a reflection of that prerogative. He said that he believes that Council is within their right to do this.

Mr. McCullough said that this would serve more as a tracking device than anything and would be more for informational purposes.

The Chair said that he is not concerned about how the accountants reflect the money they receive. He thanked Ms. Griser for her comments and said that they should work this out with the Controller and the accountants.

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

Resolution

3717-08

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2008 (Submission #02-08).

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *This bill was taken first. Prior to discussion on the bill the Chair discussed the budget process for the upcoming 2009 budget sessions.*

Mr. Finnerty asked about the status of the CJPSIS grant which deals with the development and implementation of an information system among county justice agencies throughout the state. Mr. Schepis provided an explanation of the purpose of the grant. Regarding the status of the project, Ms. Griser said that question should be directed to the Courts.

Mr. Finnerty asked for information regarding WIA project which would be used by Youthworks, Inc. targeting youth in foster care or those aging out of foster care. Mr. Schepis provided the committee with an explanation of the program and said that he would provide the committee with further information at a later date. The Chair asked him to submit that information to Ms. Liptak prior to the Regular Meeting of Council scheduled for February 19, 2008.

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

V. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM*