

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
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Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 16, 2006

4:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Appointment Review

John DeFazio - Chair; Committee of the Whole

I. Call to Order

Summary: *The meeting was called to order at 4:10 PM*

Invited Guests:

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Shawn Fox, Executive Assistant

Summary: *Invited Guests in attendance: Mr. Flynn and Mr. Fox*

Recognized attendees: John Dziak, Cheryl Grahameason, and Hariett Oakley - CCAC Faculty

Council Staff in attendance: Joe Catanese, John Mascio, Jared Barker, and Stephanie Buka

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Council Member Burn, Council Member DeFazio, Council Member Cleary, Council Member Drozd, Council Member Finnerty, Council Member Fitzgerald, Council Member Frazier, and Council Member Martoni
Absent: Council Member Fawcett, Council Member Gastgeb, Council Member Jabbour, Council Member Nerone, Council Member Rea, and Council Member Robinson

III. Approval of Minutes

2386-06 Motion to approve the Minutes of February 2, 2006 Appointment Review Committee Meetings.

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

IV. Agenda Items**Proposed Appointments**

2307-06 Appointment - Approving the appointment of Al Ahmed to serve as a Member of the Allegheny County Board of Health for a term to expire on January 6, 2010.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *Mr. Ahmed provided the committee with a summary of his background and qualifications. Mr. Finnerty expressed concern over the fact that Mr. Ahmed was not a medical doctor. Ms. Frazier said that she would like minority health issues to be a priority.*

Ms. Cleary asked him if he was familiar with environmental issues. He said that he was. Mr. Fitzgerald asked him if he was familiar with a standing conflict between the Health Board and Council over who sets policy. He said he was. Mr. Fitzgerald asked him what his view was on that. He said that he believes that although Council should have an upper hand in these matters they should pay close attention to the recommendations of the board.

Mr. Finnerty said that he would prefer someone with a medical background. Ms. Cleary said that the board deals with environmental issues also and she did not think that it was necessary to have all medical doctors on the board.

Action: **A motion was made by Fitzgerald, seconded by Cleary, that this matter be Returned Without Recommendation. The motion carried unanimously.**

2312-06

Appointment - Approving the reappointment of Duane T. Ashley to serve as a Member of the Parks and Recreation Commission of Allegheny County for a term to expire on December 31, 2009.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *Mr. Ashley provided the committee with a summary of his background and qualifications and highlights of his current term on the board. Mr. Fitzgerald spoke very highly of Mr. Ashley.*

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

2316-06

Appointment - Approving the reappointment of George Fechter to serve as a Member of the Allegheny County Community College Board for a term to expire on December 31, 2011.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *Mr. Fetcher provided the committee with a summary of his background and qualifications and highlights of his term on the board. Mr. Burn asked him to explain to the committee the reason for declining enrollment at the college. Mr. Fetcher said that it was related to the economy and that the board is taking measures to try to increase enrollment.*

Mr. Finnerty asked him if anything was being done to address low morale among the faculty and students. Mr. Fetcher said that there has been some town meetings where the board interacts with faculty and staff to discuss these issues. He also said that the board completed a strategic plan to address this.

Ms. Frazier asked him if he approved the relocation package for recruits. He said that he did because the recruits were high sought after and that the region needs this type of talent and it should not be limited to a local pool of candidates. He said to get the best talent they needed the right packages and that included relocation expenses. He said that he would not apologize for any of the relocation expenses for these recruits.

Ms. Cleary said that there should be some limit on that type of spending and that people that are coming here should realize that these are public funds and they should not expect such packages.

Mr. Fechter said that they are trying to elevate the role of the college. He said that the relocation costs was less than 50 cents per student. He said that these people had extraordinary resumes and the only way to get them here was to cover there relocation expenses. He said that in the future he would never again fund relocation expenses with public funds but would approve relocation expenses if they were paid for with private

funds.

Mr. Burn asked him about recent construction to the offices of senior administrators. Mr. Fechter said that the president's office was too far from the students and he wanted to move closer to the campus. Mr. Burn asked him if he voted for the expenditure for the construction. Mr. Fetcher said that the vote was unanimous.

Mr. Finnerty asked him if he could explain why morale was low? Mr. Fetcher said that there is a presumption that morale was low but that may not be totally the case. He said that one of the reasons could be that they had to combine a number of positions and restructure some of the courses. He said that some courses had to be eliminated because of a low number of students signing up for those courses. He said that could impact the morale of those people that liked these courses and the teachers that taught them. He said that they could not afford to offer these classes and that he believed that could be a contributing factor to a morale problem.

Mr. DeFazio asked him if he ever met with students and faculty to discuss some of these problems. Mr. Fetcher said that they do that. He went on to speak of the benefits and strengths of the college and he said that he believes that the majority of people in the region think that they are moving in the right direction.

Mr. Finnerty asked him if the president has membership to private clubs. Mr. Fetcher said that part of the condition for hiring the president was that he was to be a member of the Duquesne Club because that is where the money is. He said that philanthropy money more than doubled and he attributed that to the president being a member of the Duquesne Club. He said that since there was a lot of public pressure regarding this, the president voluntarily quit the club.

Mr. Drozd said that he thinks that his (the president) membership in the Duquesne Club sent a bad signal to the students and faculty and he did not think it was a good thing.

Mr. Fitzgerald said that he was concerned that Middle States accreditation gave the college a bad recommendation and then the president was given a \$20,000 bonus after that. Mr. Fetcher said that the factors contributing to the bad recommendation did not occur on the president's watch. He said that they were based on existing problems that were there before he got there. Mr. Fitzgerald again asked him why the president would get a \$20,000 bonus. Mr. Fechter said that incentive was in his contract and the board felt that he deserved it. Mr. DeFazio said that the board should have waited a few months after the recommendation to give him the bonus.

After the voting took place, John Dziak, President of the CCAC Faculty Union, commented. He expressed dissatisfaction with the way the CCAC Board operates. He said that they need to have a list of goals and policies. He said that the board does not have a measurement of accountability and that he thinks some of the reductions the board made were not wise. He also said that the town meetings that Mr. Fechter spoke of were always after the fact and that faculty and students had virtually no input into the plans for the college.

Cheryl Grahameason from the North Campus faculty, commented on the low morale at the college. She said that low morale had nothing to do with classes being eliminated.

She said that the board operates in secret and that there is a club like atmosphere among the administration. She said that the board does not share many of there decisions with the faculty.

Harriett Oakley a faculty member of the Nursing staff, said that morale in the nursing department was very low.

NOTE: AT THE FEBRUARY 23, 2006 APPOINTMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING, A MOTION WAS APPROVED TO AMEND THESE MINUTES TO REFLECT THAT COUNCIL MEMBER MARTONI DID NOT VOTE ON THIS ITEM.

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

Votes: Yes: 6 - Burn, Chair DeFazio, Cleary, Finnerty, Fitzgerald and Frazier
 Abstain: 2 - Drozd and Martoni
 Absent: 6 - Fawcett, Gastgeb, Jabbour, Nerone, Rea and Robinson

2317-06 Appointment - Approving the reappointment of Jerry Fedele to serve as a Member of the Allegheny County Community College Board for a term to expire on December 31, 2011.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *Mr. Fedele was not present at the meeting.*

Action: **A motion was made by Fitzgerald, seconded by Cleary, that this matter be Returned Without Recommendation. The motion carried unanimously.**

V. Adjournment

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