

# **Allegheny County Council**

*436 Grant Street  
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## **Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, June 1, 2016**

**4:00 PM**

**Conference Room 1**

## **Committee on Budget and Finance**

*Mike Finnerty, Chair*

*Members; Sam DeMarco, Nick Futules, Paul Klein, Ed Kress, Bob Macey, Chuck Martoni, Sue Means, John Palmiere*

## I. Call to Order

*The meeting was called to order at 4:03.*

### Invited Guests:

**William McKain, CPA, County Manager or Designee**

**Mary Soroka, County Budget Director or Designee**

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

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

*Mr. Barker was present from the Office of County Council.*

## II. Roll Call

**Members Present:** 4 - Finnerty, Sam DeMarco, Ed Kress and Sue Means

**Members Absent:** 4 - Paul Klein, Bob Macey, Chuck Martoni and John Palmiere

**Members Phone:** 1 - Nick Futules

## III. Approval of Minutes

[9672-16](#) Motion to approve the minutes of the Budget and Finance Committee held on May 18, 2016.

[9673-16](#) Motion to approve the minutes of the Budget and Finance Committee held on May 25, 2016.

## IV. Agenda Items

### Resolutions

[9669-16](#) A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2016 (Submission #05-16).

**Sponsors:** Chief Executive

*At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill. The Chair described the supporting materials, noting that the grant amounts are \$70,000 and \$10,203, respectively, and that the first section deals with the fireplace conversion project, while the second deals with the HOME Investment Partnership Program.*

*Ms. Celestino noted that the fireplace conversion project incentivizes the replacement of wood burning fireplaces with natural gas fireplace units.*

*In response to a question from the Chair, Ms. Celestino noted that low-income applicants would receive a \$1,500 stipend, while non-low-income applicants would receive a \$400 stipend. Ms. Soroka noted that the income threshold had not yet been determined, and that the Health Department would ultimately determine the amount.*

*Ms. Means indicated that she probably would vote against the amendment, as she*

*disfavors the notion of pitting neighbors against each other.*

*Mr. Kress suggested that the greater danger for asthma triggers in the air might be outdoor wood burning.*

*Mr. McKain noted that this is a new pilot program and that the revenue involves the expenditure of no County tax dollars, and suggested that there may be wisdom in accepting the grant and then evaluating the effectiveness of the program once it proceeds. Mr. McKain indicated that participation by homeowners is strictly voluntary. Ms. Soroka suggested that the program would be effectively a small scale test, as no more than 175 households could participate even if all applicants are ultimately low-income.*

*In response to a question from Ms. Means, Mr. McKain discussed the criteria that would be used to determine the program's effectiveness, noting that one criterion would be the number of households that enroll, but that others would involve air quality measures.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Kress, Ms. Soroka and Mr. McKain described the mechanisms that would be used to inform the public of the program.*

*At the request of the Chair, Ms. Celestino described the HOME Investment Partnership program, noting that it is funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Ms. Celestino indicated that the final amount of the grant had increased due to additional federal funding becoming available, and that the program provides funding for communities that partner with nonpdpofit groups to build, purchase, and/or rehabilitate affordable housing.*

*Mr. Kress suggested that he would like to see the program benefit older County residents who are having difficulty maintaining their homes. Ms. Soroka indicated that she did not believe that HUD's regulations would prohibit the program from benefitting older residents. Mr. McKain offered to forward a link to the HUD program regulations and additional information regarding the program's applicability.*

*Ms. Means noted that the two grants are both subject to aproval through the same ordinance, so they must be voted on together, and that, while she favors this program, she would likely vote against the bill due to the fireplace conversion funding.*

*In response to a comment by Ms. Means, Ms. Soroka noted that none of the funding goes directly to homeowners, but, rather, goes to the relevant nonprofit entities.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Kress, Ms. Celestino described the process of applying for these grants.*

*Mr. DeMarco expressed a desire for assurances that any administrative costs associated with the program be kept to a minimum in order to ensure that as much of the funding as possible reaches the intended recipients. Ms. Celestino described the grant reporting process, noting that it necessarily requires that sub-recipients adhere to application and program guidelines. Mr. McKain and Ms. Soroka discussed the Single Audit Act and other audit requirements, and agreed to provide the Chair with copies of the last few years of reporting related to this program.*

**A motion was made by Kress, seconded by Futules, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Members Yes:** 3 - Finnerty, DeMarco and Kress

**Members No:** 1 - Means

**Members Absent:** 4 - Klein, Macey, Martoni and Palmiere

**Members Yes Phone:** 1 - Futules

**V. Adjournment**

*The meeting was adjourned at 4:30.*