

# **Allegheny County Council**

*119 Courthouse  
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Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
Phone: 412-350-6490*



## **Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, March 2, 2016**

**5:00 PM**

**Conference Room 1**

## **Committee on Appointment Review**

*Ed Kress, Chair  
Committee of the Whole*

## I. Call to Order

*The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m.*

## Invited Guests:

*Mr. Davis was present from the Office of the County Executive.*

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

## II. Roll Call

**Members Present:** 4 - Cindy Kirk, Ed Kress, Michael Finnerty and Paul Klein

**Members Absent:** 10 - Tom Baker, John Palmiere, Nick Futules, Chuck Martoni, Bob Macey, DeWitt Walton, Jim Ellenbogen, Denise Ranalli-Russell, John DeFazio and Sam DeMarco

**Members Phone:** 1 - Sue Means

## III. Approval of Minutes

[9481-16](#) Motion to approve the minutes of the Appointment Review Committee Meeting of Allegheny County Council held on February 10, 2016.

**Held in Committee**

[9482-16](#) Motion to approve the minutes of the Appointment Review Committee Meeting of Allegheny County Council held on February 11, 2016.

**Held in Committee**

## IV. Agenda Items

### Appointments

[9433-16](#) Approving the reappointment of Dennis Floyd Jones to serve as a member of the Allegheny County Juvenile Detention Board of Advisors for a term to expire on December 31, 2018.

**Sponsors:** Chief Executive

**Held in Committee**

[9441-16](#) Approving the appointment of Debra Romanelli to serve as a member of the Allegheny County Drug and Alcohol Planning Council for a term to expire on December 31, 2018.

**Sponsors:** Chief Executive

*At the request of the Chair, Ms. Romanelli discussed her interest in the Drug & Alcohol Planning Council, noting that she has a family member who experienced addiction issues and that she is involved in the Bridges to Hope program.*

*Mr. Finnerty and Mr. Klein noted their appreciation of Ms. Romanelli's willingness to*

serve.

*In response to a question from Mr. Klein, Ms. Romanelli discussed the Bridges to Hope program in additional detail, indicating that it provides assistance to families.*

*Ms. Kirk expressed her enthusiasm for Ms. Romanelli's ability to bring her experience with Bridges to Hope to the Planning Council.*

*Ms. Means thanked Ms. Romanelli for her willingness to use her personal experience for the benefit of the Planning Council.*

**A motion was made by Finnerty, seconded by Kirk, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

[9448-16](#)

Approving the reappointment of Reverend Dr. Darryl T. Canady to serve as a member of the Allegheny County Juvenile Detention Board of Advisors for a term to expire on December 31, 2018.

**Sponsors:** Chief Executive

*At the request of the Chair, Rev. Dr. Canady discussed his desire to be reappointed to the Juvenile Detention Board of Advisors, and discussed the tutoring and mentoring programs available, and noting that he views proactive prevention activities as fundamentally important as reactive programs to assist people post-conviction.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Finnerty, Rev. Dr. Canady discussed Shuman Center, noting that he believes that it is heading in the right direction and that reducing the number of children committing offenses that require detention is of fundamental importance. Rev. Dr. Canady noted that children who offend are usually returning to the same environment when they are released, and that teaching them how to navigate that environment is fundamentally important.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Klein, Rev. Dr. Canady discussed his experience in starting on the Board of Advisors approximately one year ago, and expressed a belief that, now that he has some experience with the Board's activities, he can provide more significant input.*

*In response to a question from Ms. Kirk, Rev. Dr. Canady discussed the need to address the issues faced by offenders, including their ability to find gainful employment post-release, as a cycle of unemployment can give rise to recidivism. Rev. Dr. Canday also noted that mental health issues are not necessarily addressed in the most efficient fashion possible, but that progress is being made.*

*In response to a question from Ms. Means, Rev. Dr. Canady shared his thoughts on the merits of creating a comprehensive plan for assisting youth in various communities throughout the County.*

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

[9449-16](#)

Approving the reappointment of Alice Paylor-Dais to serve as a member of the Allegheny County Juvenile Detention Board of Advisors for a term to expire on December 31, 2018.

**Sponsors:** Chief Executive

**Held in Committee**[9450-16](#)

Approving the appointment of Andrea Horton-Meriçli to serve as a member of the Community Services Advisory Council for a term to expire on December 31, 2018.

**Sponsors:** Chief Executive

*At the request of the Chair, Ms. Horton-Mericli discussed her desire to be appointed to the Community Services Advisory Council, noting that she believes that it is fundamentally important to identify areas of need for funding to assist in the education, workforce development, and adult education processes in order to break the cycles of poverty and recidivism.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Finnerty, Ms. Horton-Mericli noted that she would tend to regard education and employment as equally fundamental in breaking those cycles, and that removing the barriers to education and employment that may be presented by a lack of childcare or by the availability of transportation.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Klein, Ms. Horton-Mericli discussed how her career experience has exposed her to a particularly diverse population, and that she therefore has great familiarity with the issues that they face.*

*Mr. Klein expressed concerns relating to the use of funding for community services for administrative costs or other costs other than services directly benefitting the population in need of services, and Ms. Horton-Mericli indicated her agreement.*

*In response to a question from Ms. Means, Ms. Horton-Mericli noted that there are significant populations in the County with issues relating to language barriers, and that there are multiple entities that attempt to assist with re-settlement of immigrants.*

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

[9451-16](#)

Approving the reappointment of Dr. Oladoyin Desalu to serve as a member of the Community Services Advisory Council for a term to expire on December 31, 2018.

**Sponsors:** Chief Executive

*At the request of the Chair, Dr. Desalu described her past service to the Community Services Advisory Council and her desire to be reappointed, and highlighted her ability to bring her experience running a community service agency has provided her with a background upon which to base her activities with the Council.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Klein, Dr. Desalu highlighted her vision of the Advisory Council's role as an entity to inform the decision-making and provide perspective to the decisions to be made by the Department of Human Services, and through the Department, to assist the Council in its budgetary considerations that relate to the Department.*

*Ms. Kirk expressed her appreciation for Dr. Desalu's willingness to serve on the Advisory Council, and Dr. Desalu discussed her experience with the Department of Human Services and its ability to monitor how effectively funding ultimately reaches the*

*population that it is intended to benefit.*

*In response to questions from Ms. Means, Dr. Desalu noted that she has served on the Advisory Council for approximately six or seven years, and that there is always a mix of needs for any disadvantaged population, and that part of the work of any community services agency is attempting to determine how to prioritize those needs.*

*In response to a question from the Chair, Dr. Desalu noted that there is an increase in HIV rates among certain populations.*

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

[9452-16](#)

Approving the reappointment of Regina Jones to serve as a member of the Community Services Advisory Council for a term to expire on December 31, 2018.

**Sponsors:** Chief Executive

**Held in Committee**

[9453-16](#)

Approving the reappointment of Cynthia Moore to serve as a member of the Community Services Advisory Council for a term to expire on December 31, 2018.

**Sponsors:** Chief Executive

*At the request of the Chair, Ms. Moore described her desire to be reappointed to the Community Services Advisory Council, noting that she is a native and resident of Clairton, and that this has provided perspective for her with regard to the issues that low income families face on a day to day basis.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Finnerty, Ms. Moore noted that she is a social worker by profession, and that she mentors masters-level students who are pursuing careers in social work.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Klein, Ms. Moore discussed the potential issues that are of concern to her in terms of social services, noting that the changing political environment in the country may well result in decreased funding or programs for vulnerable populations.*

*Ms. Kirk expressed her appreciation for Ms. Moore's willingness to mentor individuals who wish to pursue careers in social work, and Ms. Moore expressed her belief that it is fundamentally important to be a good steward of the resources that are available, both in terms of people and funding.*

*In response to questions from Ms. Means, Ms. Moore noted that she was first appointed to the Advisory Council by former Chief Executive Roddey, summarized the role of the Advisory Council as an entity to efficiently allocate federal funding to social services that are priorities for the County, and described her activities as a social worker, as well as the range of options that exist for individuals with masters degrees in social work.*

*In response to a question from the Chair, Ms. Moore indicated that the demand for assistance through the food bank at which she is employed continues to increase. The Chair and Ms. Moore discussed issues faced by individuals who are attempting so secure*

employment when they are in their 50s and 60s.

**A motion was made by Klein, seconded by Finnerty, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

9454-16

Approving the reappointment of Laura Zinski to serve as a member of the Community Services Advisory Council for a term to expire on December 31, 2018.

**Sponsors:** Chief Executive

*At the request of the Chair, Ms. Zinski described her experience with the Mon Valley Initiative and noted that, while she does not possess a human services-specific background, her experience with housing issues does bring a slightly different point of view to the Community Services Advisory Council.*

*In response to a question from the Chair, Ms. Zinski noted that her sense is that Sheriff's Sales are becoming slightly less common in the Mon Valley since the spike in 2008-09.*

*The Chair and Ms. Zinski discussed the history of the Mon Valley and how economic factors have combined to result in very difficult conditions for its residents since the collapse of the steel industry in the area, and noted that the large number of small communities has impacted the development of a coordinated strategy.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Finnerty, Ms. Zinski noted that the Department of Economic Development has provided quite a bit of assistance to needy populations over the years, and indicated that her experience largely involves real estate and development.*

*Mr. Finnerty noted that he is a proponent of rehabilitating properties, rather than demolishing them, and indicated that the Department of Economic Development speaks highly of Ms. Zinski's efforts.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Klein, Ms. Zinski discussed the types of funding issues that tend to appear on the Advisory Council's agenda, noted that there are probably about a dozen agencies that ultimately receive funding through the Community Services Block Grant program, and noted that success criteria are becoming increasingly important and more effectively expressed by the support agencies.*

*Ms. Kirk noted that Ms. Zinski's different background is a positive in her view, and thanked Ms. Zinski for her willingness to serve.*

*In response to questions from Ms. Means, Ms. Zinski noted that she was initially appointed to the Advisory Council by former Chief Executive Onorato and discussed the impact of continued trends of unemployment and underemployment on social services agencies.*

*In response to a question from the Chair, Ms. Zinski noted that she also sees issues of unemployment and underemployment increasingly affecting individuals in their 50s and 60s, and also discussed the impact of even relatively minor criminal records from the distant past on the ability of individuals to obtain employment.*

*The Chair and Ms. Zinski discussed the "welfare cliff" and its impact upon vulnerable populations, as well as minimum wage policy philosophies.*

*The Chair and Ms. Zinski discussed the development plans for the Carrie Furnace site.*

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

**V. Adjournment**

*The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.*