

# **Allegheny County Council**

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



## **Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, June 3, 2020**

**4:00 PM**

**Conference Room 1**

## **Committee on Public Safety**

*Liv Bennett, Chair; Sam DeMarco, Bethany Hallam, Cindy Kirk, Paul Klein, Bob Macey  
and Bob Palmosina, Members*

## I. Call to Order

*The meeting was called to order at 4:07.*

### Invited Guests:

**Joe Amon, PhD, MSPH, Director of the Office of Global Health and Clinical Professor in the Department of Community Health and Prevention at the Drexel Dornsife School of Public Health**

**Dr. Homer Venters, Associate Professor, NYU School of Medicine**

**Valerie Arkoosh, MD, MPH, Chair Montgomery County Commissioners**

**Ken Lawrence, Jr., Montgomery County Commissioners**

## II. Roll Call

**Members Present:** 7 - Sam DeMarco ,Bethany Hallam,Cindy Kirk,Paul Klein,Bob Macey,Robert Palmosina andOlivia Bennett

**Members Absent:** 0

## III. Approval of Minutes

## IV. Agenda Items

### Ordinances

#### [11507-20](#)

An ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requiring that the County test all residents of the Kane hospitals, all inmates at the Allegheny County Jail, and all County employees and contractors performing work at either location for current COVID-19 infection.

**Sponsors:** Council Member Hallam and Council Member Bennett

*Chair Bennett asked prime sponsor Hallam to discuss her bill and she said she would be welcome to answer questions.*

*Macey asked if Kane, Warden and Health Department were invited. Hallam suggested they were willing to be invited.*

*Kirk stated she worked in COVID-19 response team and questioned the need to test everyone at this time. Hallam stated that all experts have suggested testing is the key to combat COVID-19. So now is the appropriate time as we go green in Allegheny County. Kirk is stating that testing someone could give a false read as it may be negative today and positive tomorrow. Hallam stated that this is not a perfect method but doing nothing would be worse. Kirk was identifying things that UPMC is currently doing as it relates to patients being sent to nursing homes. Kirk concluded her comments that there is no goal and she is asking for a negative vote on this proposal. Hallam replied that most of the test results have been turned around in less than 24 hours for most. In Montgomery County, they tested everyone and the results came back in 2 days according to Hallam. The goal is to take the positive tests and then protect those that may have come in*

contact or could come in contact with a positive case. Hallam stated that hundreds of millions of dollars are coming in from Federal government and she wants good things done with it. Kirk responded stated Kane director told her 4 days for testing results and the eastern part of the state is closer to New York which is a hot spot.

Palmosina asked what the temperature was and Hallam said 99 degrees. Palmosina thought it was a different number but Hallam stated not for the jail. What is the cost of the screening? Hallam suggested that there is a range and Montgomery County was \$104. Hallam did an analysis for just the jail and stated the cost was approximately \$160,000. Palmosina asked if we are testing all employees, first responders, and public works employees. Bennett and Hallam asked if he wanted to make an amendment, and Palmosina stated not at this time. Palmosina asked about the other speakers and Chair Bennett stated that they did not reply or respond.

Chair Bennett is asking the committee members if they wish to re-invite the guests that did not show up and offer amendments at that time. Macey wishes to have another meeting and invite the directors from Allegheny County. Macey stated that the workers at Kane are being tested and Hallam stated that the workers are not being tested everyday.

Kirk followed up that Macey may have meant screening and not testing. This is a best practice at this point to screen when you come in and out of a building. Bennett mentioned about a jail nurse practitioner that was positive and took it home to his disable sister.

Bennett was suggesting recessing and have another meeting next week.

DeMarco stated that he is concerned about the fact that its an ordinance. The desire to catch anyone having COVID-19. When you find a positive case, then what happens? No sunset on this ordinance even though COVID will not last forever. What other ordinances may be repealed as a result of this ordinance if passed. Agreed with Kirk's comments as it is a snapshot in time. The reason to invite the county directors is to know what is actually happening right now and those directors should be at the meeting to answer the questions.

Hallam said we are the legislative body and we pass legislation. Why should we ask the administration if its ok. DeMarco stated that from his standpoint, this legislation is an attempt to force the administration to do something without coming to an agreement. Hallam sees this ordinance as improving the quality of life in the county to avoid positive COVID people from infecting others in the county.

Klein asked if there is another entity that has done this and Hallam stated Montgomery County. This is her best example of this model. Is testing to be done everyday, once per week? Hallam responded that the ordinance is for one time and a snapshot it time.

Palmosina asked that we would like to have other guests invited and sent to Ken by Friday. We will get another meeting scheduled.

Futules stated if they could not attend maybe submit something in writing. Bennett asked Ken that request is included in the invite.

Macey stated that he believed the county has been doing the right things and suggested that we all care but questions the practicality and the needs of the residents of Allegheny County.

*Kirk talked about a situation where a nurse was picking up extra work at Kane and was denied due to circumstances. Also suggested that all need to continue to wear masks.*

*Hallam suggested to Kirk's comments that quarantining while test results are being done would be appropriate.*

*DeMarco stated he resents the motives being questioned and asked that in future meetings the focus is on the legislation and not personal motives or opinions.*

## **V. Adjournment**

*The meeting was adjourned at 4:51pm.*