

# Allegheny County Council

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



## Meeting Minutes

**Wednesday, October 17, 2018**

**4:00 PM**

**Conference Room 1**

## **Committee on Budget and Finance**

*Paul Klein, Chair; Sam DeMarco, Nick Futules, Bob Macey, Chuck Martoni, Sue Means  
and John Palmiere, Members.*

## I. Call to Order

*The meeting was called to order at 4:00. Mr. Palmiere presided over the meeting on the Chair's behalf, as Mr. Klein was detained.*

### Invited Guests:

**The Honorable Chelsa Wagner, Allegheny County Controller or Designee(s)**  
**The Honorable John K. Weinstein, Allegheny County Treasurer or Designee(s)**  
**William D. McKain, CPA, County Manager or Designee(s)**  
**Mary C. Soroka, Director, Budget and Finance or Designee(s)**

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

*Ms. Weise was present from the Office of the Controller.*

*Ms. Vinci was present from the Office of the Treasurer.*

*Ms. Soroka was present from the Department of Budget and Finance.*

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

## II. Roll Call

**Members Present:** 3 - Sue Means, John Palmiere and Paul Klein

**Members Absent:** 4 - Sam DeMarco, Nick Futules, Bob Macey and Chuck Martoni

**Members** 1 - Anita Prizio

**Non-Members:**

## III. Approval of Minutes

[10814-18](#) Motion to approve the minutes of the Committee on Budget and Finance meeting held on August 30, 2018.

**A motion was made by Means, seconded by Palmiere, that this matter be Passed. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

## IV. Agenda Items

### Resolutions

[10784-18](#) A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2018 (Submission #08-18).

**Sponsors:** Chief Executive

*At Mr. Palmiere's request, the clerk read the title of the bill and Mr. McKain summarized its provisions, noting that the grant in question is from the PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning in order to fund early intervention services for children age 5 and under, and that the change contemplated by the amendment would be made in order to accommodate revenue received in excess of the initial estimates for the grant amount. Mr. McKain gave a brief overview of the services provided and noted that there is a high demand for these types of services.*

*In response to questions from Ms. Means, Ms. Soroka provided additional detail regarding the services provided, noting that there is a one on one interaction in each instance in order to determine what services are appropriate.*

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

10795-18

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2018 (Submission #09-18).

**Sponsors:** Chief Executive

*At Mr. Palmiere's request, the clerk read the title of the bill and Mr. McKain summarized its provisions, noting that it is a new grant to be used to provide support for veterans aged 65 and over in order to identify any service or medical needs, promote exercise and wellness, assist with home upkeep, and provide general assistance and social interaction. Mr. McKain noted that about 18 volunteers would be undertaking the visits, with approximately three to five individuals being served by each volunteer, and that the goal is to enable as many veterans in the population to be served to maintain quality of life at home, rather than having to enter some sort of assisted living environment.*

*In response to questions from Ms. Means, Mr. McKain offered to obtain additional detail regarding the funding source, and noted that the individuals who volunteer to participate receive a per-visit stipend, about which he offered to provide additional information, as well. Mr. McKain noted that the individuals who volunteer to participate will be screened in the same fashion as other contracted service providers through the Department of Human Services, and expressed confidence in Mr. Cherna's ability to monitor the volunteers effectively. Ms. Soroka noted that the Department already has effective screening and monitoring procedures in place for programs that provide similar services to seniors. Mr. McKain noted that the program would be funded for three years, and expressed a hope that the County would be able to build on the program once it begins.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Palmiere, Mr. McKain confirmed that the focus of the program will be veterans aged 65 and over.*

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

## Discussion Topic

### Financial Status of the County Presented by Allegheny County Controller Chelsa Wagner Status of County Revenue Presented by Allegheny County Treasurer John K. Weinstein

*Ms. Vinci extended Treasurer Weinstein's regrets for being unable to attend due to a previous engagement.*

*Ms. Vinci gave a brief presentation summarizing the status of County revenues, highlighting total revenues, overall revenue trends, Airport Authority reimbursements for County Police costs, real estate tax collections, alcoholic beverage tax collections, rental vehicle tax collections, state sales tax allocations, hotel tax collections, interest income, gaming revenues, license revenues, and ATM fee revenues. In terms of overall trends, Ms. Vinci indicated that the County's total revenues are expected to be up by approximately 2.2% at the end of 2018 in comparison with 2017, with most revenue sources remaining fairly stable from 2017 to 2018.*

Ms. Vinci highlighted interest revenues, which are anticipated to grow by 86.7% from 2017 to 2018, noting that the increase is attributable to increased interest rates and other market conditions, and emphasizing the Treasurer's investment policy's prioritization of safety in County investments.

Ms. Means thanked the Treasurer and his office for their diligence throughout the year, as did Ms. Prizio.

In response to a question from the Chair, Ms. Vinci discussed the difficulties inherent in collecting hotel taxes from entities like AirBnB and the like, despite the County's recent enactment of an ordinance on the topic.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Ms. Vinci noted that she did not have the number of establishments with liquor licenses that have closed immediately available, but that the aggregate number of entities paying the poured drink tax has increased slightly in 2018.

Ms. Weise extended Controller Wagner's regrets for being unable to attend, and introduced Ms. Montino, who will be succeeding Mr. Lentz upon his retirement.

Ms. Weise gave a brief presentation that reviewed the funds that relate to the operating budgeting process, briefly summarized the other funds relating to the capital budget process, delineated the County revenue streams that fund the operating budget, gave an overview of the collections for each revenue stream, expenditures to date in 2018, reviewed the general fund balance, summarized debt and debt service payments, and discussed the transportation fund balance.

Ms. Weise noted that she has some concerns regarding real estate tax receipts, noting that in previous years collections were running very slightly ahead of where they are at the same point in the year. Ms. Weise also indicated that real estate refunds were slightly down from previous years, however, which will offset some of the collections lag.

Ms. Weise noted that the Kane Regional Centers are accounted for slightly differently than they had been in previous years, so the Commonwealth funding is on par with previous years, rather than behind as it might appear at first glance.

Ms. Weise expressed some concerns regarding expenditures at the County Jail and Emergency Services. With regard to Emergency Services, Ms. Weise indicated that the concern stems from 911 local matching revenues in comparison to the rate of expenditures, but that she is not precisely sure about whether or exactly how expenditures may differ from prior years. With regard to the Jail, Ms. Weise indicated that the overtime amount expended already exceeded the budgeted amount back in August, while the cost of pharmaceuticals has increased substantially from 2017 and additional nursing services have had to be contracted.

Ms. Weise noted that the County debt per capita is at the highest rate that it has been since at least 2009, and while there are legitimate reasons for the issuance of the additional debt, suggested that there may be wisdom in attempting to reduce that figure.

Ms. Means thanked the Controller and her staff for their diligence throughout the year.

In response to a question from Mr. Klein, Ms. Weise indicated that the County funds a few employees at the Penn State Cooperative Extension, which is why an expenditure exists for that purpose.

**V. Adjournment**

*The meeting was adjourned at 4:54.*