

# **Allegheny County Council**

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



## **Meeting Minutes - Approved**

**Tuesday, May 13, 2014**

**4:00 PM**

**Conference Room 1**

## **Committee on Economic Development & Housing**

*Amanda Green Hawkins, Chair*

*Members:*

*Tom Baker*

*Barbara Daly Danko*

*Michael Finnerty*

*Nick Futules*

*Ed Kress*

*Bob Macey*

*John Palmiere*

*Jan Rea*

## I. Call to Order

*The meeting was called to order at 4 PM.*

## Invited Guests:

*Walter Szymanski, Lori Sicard and Erin Grainey were present from the staff of County Council.*

*Jack Exler, were present from the Department of Economic Development*

*Angie Hicks was present from the Authority of Improvement to Municipalities*

*Jim Webster, was present as Bond Counsel for the issuance.*

*Leslie Montgomery was present as Public Relations for the Authority*

## II. Roll Call

Green Hawkins  
Barbara Danko  
Michael Finnerty  
Nick Futules  
Ed Kress  
Bob Macey  
John Palmiere  
Jan Rea  
Tom Baker

## III. Approval of Minutes

[8251-14](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the Economic Development and Housing Committee Meeting of Allegheny County Council held on April 16, 2014.

**Passed**

## IV. Agenda Items

### Resolutions

[8184-14](#)

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny adopting and authorizing financing of a project by the Authority for Improvements in Municipalities on behalf of Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh (the "Borrower") as desirable for the health, safety, and welfare of the people in Allegheny County.

**Sponsors:** Chief Executive

*Ms. Hicks of the Authority for Improvements for Municipalities came to the table to explain the provisions of the Resolution.*

*Ms. Sally Taylor of the Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services came to the table to explain the programs offered through the organization.*

*Mr. Finnerty inquired as to what the 7 million would fund. Ms. BVR stated that the funds would be used to renovate a building to house offices and training program for the blind and disabled. Training on independence is the goal for the programs enrollees.*

*Mr. Finnerty asked to see literature on the programs offered by BVRS. Ms. Sally Taylor, Public Relations for BVRS, passed pamphlets to the Council Members giving an overview of offered programs.*

*Jim Webster, Bond Counsel for the project, interjected that the building renovation had been approved by the appropriate authorities.*

*Mr. Finnerty inquired about the nature and size of the building to be renovated. Mr. Macey inquired about other programs that service the blind and what set BVRS apart. Ms. Taylor clarified that the other organizations that he referenced were actually under the umbrella of BVRS.*

*Ms. Danko, as the representative of Homestead, inquired as to the chosen location for Homestead. Ms. Taylor stated that the central location of the new location was imperative to access to clients and convenience especially in the wake of Port Authority cuts.*

*Mr. Macey inquired as to the history of the building in which they were formerly housed. The new location will not be ready until the Spring of 2015 and the sale of the former BVRS building will be used to pay down some of the debt.*

*Ms. Means asked for clarification regarding the Notes and the tax-free status. Mr. Webster explained that the BVRS as a nonprofit organization cannot issue bonds on its own which is why it is necessary to partner with an authority such as the Municipal Improvements Authority to issue bonds for these kinds of projects.*

*Ms. Taylor stated that the organization receives money from the state, federal, private donations, private industry, a very diverse source of funding.*

*Ms. Means inquired as to capacity. Ms. Taylor stated that there are currently 10 residential units for the program and the average stay is four to sixteen weeks for an immersion program.*

*Ms. Means inquired about measurement of success in the program. Ms. Taylor stated that independence was the measure of success, and is highly individual per client.*

*Mr. Finnerty stated his belief that this proposal will serve the public interest.*

**Affirmatively Recommended**

**Council Members Yes:** 5 - Danko, Finnerty, Futules, Kress and Macey

**Council Members** 1 - Green Hawkins

**Abstain:**

**Council Members** 2 - Palmiere and Rea

**Absent:**

**Council Members** 1 - Baker

**Phone:**

Enactment No: 17-14-RE

**V. Adjournment**

*The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 PM*