

Allegheny County Council

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Meeting Minutes - Approved

Wednesday, August 12, 2015

4:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Budget and Finance

*Michael Finnerty, Chair;
Nick Futules,
Amanda Green Hawkins,
Heather Heidelbaugh, Terri Klein,
Bob Macey,
Sue Means,
John Palmiere and
Jan Rea
-Members*

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:02.

Invited Guests:

William D. McKain, CPA - County Manager or Designee

Mary C. Soroka - Director, Office of Budget and Finance or Designee

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

Mr. Tzyskiewicz was present from the Department of Administrative Services.

Ms. Soroka, Mr. Casciato and Ms. Celenstino were present from the Department of Budget & Finance.

Ms. Vinci and Mr. Fisher were present from the Office of the Treasurer.

Ms. Griser and Ms. Chirdon were present from the Office of the Controller.

Mr. Evrard was present from Juvenile Probation.

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

II. Roll Call

Members Present: 4 - Sue Means, Jan Rea, Nick Futules and Michael Finnerty

Members Absent: 4 - Amanda Green Hawkins, Heather Heidelbaugh, John Palmiere and Terri Klein

Members Phone: 1 - Bob Macey

Members 1 - Jim Ellenbogen

Non-Members:

III. Approval of Minutes

[9076-15](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the Budget and Finance Committee meeting of Allegheny County Council held on June 17, 2015

Passed

IV. Agenda Items

Resolutions

[9066-15](#)

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2015 (Submission #06-15).

Sponsors: Chief Executive

At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill and Mr. Szymanski provided an overview of its provisions.

In response to questions from Ms. Means, Ms. Celestino provided additional detail regarding funding to be used to provide wraparound services through the PCCD Mental

Health and Justice Housing initiative, noting that the funding would provide for housing, MH or drug and alcohol counselling services, and the like, and Mr. McKain suggested requesting a report on the success indices from the jail oversight board in order to provide an indication of program effectiveness.

In response to a question from Mr. Ellenbogen, Mr. McKain discussed how the PCCD program fits into the general activities of the Department of Human Services.

In response to a question from Ms. Rea, Ms. Celestino and Mr. McKain described the process through which the grant was secured, and noted that this revenue was in addition to the revenue that had been anticipated for the program during the process of formulating the grants and special accounts budget.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Mr. Evrard described the JPO Aggression Replacement Training program and the means by which the program's success criteria were derived, and explained the process of training individuals to provide services through the program.

The Chair, Ms. Means and Ms. Celestino discussed the services to be offered by the Area Agency on Aging with the funding, and the potential merits of receiving a copy of any reporting that is done with regard to those services.

Ms. Means noted that it appears that the CSBG discretionary grant is additional funding for an existing program, and asked that any documentation of program effectiveness be provided to the Council.

In response to a question from the Chair, Mr. McKain indicated that he is not aware of whether a waiting list exists for the services, but that Ms. Celestino could check on that concern.

In response to a question from Ms. Means relating to the Allegheny Cares Hotline funding, Ms. Celestino noted that home visitation programs are by no means new, but that this funding piece would aid in establishing the infrastructure to facilitate referrals and the like. Mr. McKain and Ms. Soroka noted that the funding would allow for the addition of technology to correctly match individuals with the appropriate services, and not for personnel.

Mr. Ellenbogen and Mr. Futules described placement for signage and waste receptacles under the Keep America Beautiful Cigarette Litter Prevention Program.

Ms. Means expressed support for the acquisition of a drone to document fire scene documentation. Mr. McKain noted that every effort will be made to avoid improper use of the drone, and that the District Attorney would be involved in order to assure that the drone is used appropriately.

Affirmatively Recommended

Discussion Topic: Update on Exemption and Abatement Summaries

At the request of the Chair, Mr. Szymanski provided a summary of the existing tax abatement and exemption programs that included a review of the fiscal impact of the programs over prior years. The Chair highlighted some of the data that had been surprising to him.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Ms. Vinci discussed the procedure for obtaining the discount, and Mr. Fisher described efforts that have been undertaken to

inform taxpayers who may be eligible to participate.

Mr. Ellenbogen and Ms. Vinci discussed the impact of rising income on participation in the senior discount program, and Mr. Fisher noted that it actually is fairly easy for someone to be pushed over the participation income limit with even an incremental change in household income.

The Chair discussed the aggregate effect of the abatement and exclusion programs, noting that the amount of tax revenue forgone by the County under the abatement programs is just over \$33 million per year.

Mr. Futules and Ms. Rea discussed homestead exemption programs in general.

Ms. Rea noted that her biggest concern is the significant revenue that is not collected as a result of tax exempted properties. Mr. McKain noted that the County is still in the process of evaluating those exemptions.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:56.