

Allegheny County Council

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Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 13, 2016

4:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Budget and Finance

Mike Finnerty, Chair

Members; Sam DeMarco, Nick Futules, Paul Klein, Ed Kress, Bob Macey, Chuck Martoni, Sue Means, John Palmiere

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:00.

Invited Guests:

William D. McKain, CPA County Manager or Designee
Mary Soroka, Director Budget and Finance or Designee
Robert Hurley, Director Economic Development or Designee
Jan Lauer, Agricultural Land Preservation Board

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

Ms. Soroka and Ms. Celestino were present from the Department of Budget & Finance.

Mr. Hurley, Mr. Earley and Mr. Exler were present from the Department of Economic Development.

Ms. Lauer and Mr. Burgess were present from the Agricultural Land Preservation Board.

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

II. Roll Call

Members Present: 3 - Finnerty, Sam DeMarco and Sue Means

Members Absent: 5 - Nick Futules, Paul Klein, Bob Macey, Chuck Martoni and John Palmiere

Members Phone: 1 - Ed Kress

Members 1 - DeWitt Walton

Non-Members:

III. Approval of Minutes

[9555-16](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the Budget and Finance Committee meeting held on April 6, 2016.

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

IV. Agenda Items

Resolutions

[9548-16](#)

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2016 (Submission #02-16).

Sponsors: Chief Executive

At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill, and the Chair referenced supporting materials that had been provided to the members.

Ms. Soroka and Ms. Celestino provided a brief overview of the DHS/AAA on Aging Title XIX Pre-admission Assessment grant, noting that it is an increase in the appropriation to

accommodate additional revenue that had been made available by the Commonwealth. Ms. Celestino noted that the program involves pre-assessment of individuals who are attempting to receive medical care in their homes. Ms. Celestino noted that the 2016 budget already includes an appropriation of about \$2.9 for the initially expected funding.

In response to questions from Ms. Means, Ms. Celestino noted that certified caseworkers perform the assessments and Ms. Soroka noted that the point of the assessment is not to evaluate outcomes, but rather to place individuals in contact with the appropriate services for their needs. The Chair and Ms. Soroka noted that there are periodic reassessments.

Mr. Hurley, Mr. Early and Mr. Exler gave a brief overview of the CDBG projects for Year 42. Mr. Hurley noted that each of the members should have received a packet from the County Manager outlining all of the Year 42 projects, and summarized the revenues that have been made available for Year 42, noting that the federal funding was about \$40,000 lower than had been anticipated, due to the participation of additional counties in the program. Mr. Hurley noted that 82 communities would receive CDBG funding in Year 42, and that the largest group of those communities is located in the Mon Valley due to the program's requirements relating to providing funding to low or middle income communities.

In response to questions from Ms. Means, Mr. Hurley indicated that he would be willing to provide the overall summary data regarding Year 42 and described how the figures granted for demolition projects are derived, noting that the federal government is beginning to watch demolition projects more closely for community benefits, which will likely tend to result in funding for larger scale demolition projects.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Mr. Hurley discussed the program regulations that relate to requiring spending the program funds in a timely fashion.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Mr. Hurley noted that the touchstone for funding eligibility is community benefits, at least 70% of which must be realized by low to moderate income communities.

The Chair noted that the packets that the members had received contain a legend that explains the codes used within the report.

Mr. Hurley gave a brief overview of the Emergency Solutions Grant amendment, indicating that the federal government had made an extra \$2,109 available beyond the anticipated grant amount.

In response to a question from Mr. DeMarco, Mr. Exler noted that Auberle is funded through the CDBG program and Mr. Hurley indicated that the emergency solutions program is designed to help people who may be in the process of foreclosure proceedings.

Mr. Hurley provided a brief summary of the Home Investment Partnerships Program amendment, noting that the program generally aids in securing low income housing tax credits in the form of matching state low income tax credits, and that the amendment is being made to accommodate an additional \$101,574 in funding beyond the initial appropriation. Mr. Hurley described the program's current endeavors.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Mr. Hurley noted that the Department works with a number of housing agencies, including Action Housing and the County Housing Authority, through the program.

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

Discussion Topic - Agricultural Land Preservation Board

At the request of the Chair, Ms. Lauer and Mr. Burgess provided a brief overview of the farmland preservation program, highlighting the history of the Conservation District, the role of the Conservation District, and the history and current structure of farmland preservation in Allegheny County. Mr. Burgess noted that the County provided just under \$95,000 for administrative support through March of 2020, described the board structure, and outlined future goals and plans for the program.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Ms. Lauer noted that the program is primarily geared toward preserving farmland, but that there is also value in preserving blocks of green space.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Ms. Lauer and Mr. Burgess discussed the mechanisms that can be used to calibrate the spread of manure on farmland in order to avoid stream contamination.

Ms. Means and Mr. Burgess discussed farm development programs that exist to aid farmers in succeeding. Ms. Lauer noted that the targets for the program are existing, stable farms.

In response to a question from Mr. DeMarco, Mr. Burgess noted that the Conservation District maintains a website that allows the public to see the properties involved in the preservation programs.

In response to a question from Mr. DeWitt, Ms. Lauer and Mr. Burgess noted that essentially all of the land involved in the preservation programs are family farms.

The Chair and Ms. Lauer discussed the prevalence of smaller farms in Allegheny County.

The Chair emphasized that the Conservation District is an instrumentality of the Commonwealth, not the County.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:57.