

Allegheny County Council

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Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 9, 2006

4:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Budget and Finance

William Russell Robinson, Chair; Jim Burn, Susan Caldwell, Joan Cleary, Matt Drozd, Mike Finnerty, Brenda Frazier, Vince Gastgeb, and Rich Nerone

I. Call to Order

Summary: *The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM*

Invited Guests:

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Amy Griser, Director, Budget & Finance

Tim Johnson, Director, Administrative Services or Designee

Mark Wolosik, Manager, Elections

Summary: *Invited Guests Present: Derek Uber for Mr. Flynn; Greg Casciato for Ms. Griser; and Mr. Johnson.*

Recognized Attendees: Angela Chan, Deputy Director, Administrative Services

Council Staff Present: Joe Catanese, John Mascio, Jennifer Liptak, Stephanie Buka and Tracy Salsi.

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Jim Burn, Susan Caldwell, Joan Cleary, Matt Drozd, Michael Finnerty, Brenda Frazier, and Chair William Robinson
Absent: Vince Gastgeb, and Rich Nerone

III. Approval of Minutes

2571-06 Motion to approve the Minutes of the April 25, 2006 Budget & Finance Committee Meeting.

Action: **A motion was made by Finnerty, seconded by Burn, that this matter be Passed. The motion carried unanimously.**

IV. Agenda Items**Resolution**

2487-06 A Resolution of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, setting forth County policy regarding the construction of a tunnel, commonly known as the North Shore Connector project.

Sponsors: Matt Drozd

Summary: *The Chair requested that Mr. Burn not make any definitive statements regarding the bill since he is a sitting Member of the Port Authority of Allegheny County. The Chair said that the committee has not received any additional information on this project. He said that he believes that Port Authority wanted to wait until they were sure that they were going to move forward on the project before they shared any information.*

The Chair deferred to the sponsor of the bill, Mr. Drozd, who provided a summary of the bill. He said that the bill is a proposed resolution that would establish a new County policy regarding the North Shore Connector project, and expressed opposition to using

County money to fund the project.

He explained that the County's share of funding for the North Shore Connector is three and one third percent; with a current estimated project budget of roughly \$390 million, this equates to \$12.87 million. He also said that the bill advances the argument that other transportation infrastructure could be constructed with this revenue, and that improving the connection between the North Side and Downtown Pittsburgh could be done more cheaply. He said that the bill therefore expresses opposition to the North Shore Connector, and requests that the United States Congress reallocate federal funding from this project to other infrastructure improvements in the County.

Mr. Drozd said that he believes that the funds should be used for bridge, road, and other county public works projects. He passed out information regarding an underground road project in Boston referred to the Big Dig Project. The information indicated that the project, which was described as the most expensive road project in American history, was officially bankrupt. Mr. Drozd said that he believed that this could happen with the North Shore Connector project.

The Chair said that when departments and row offices come before the committee to discuss their budget, he will make sure that Public Works Director Tom Donatelli is available to answer questions relative to the project. He asked Mr. Drozd if he would mind holding his remarks until that time.

Ms. Caldwell said that she would like to see concrete figures on paper regarding the cost of the project. The Chair said that he was told by Budget Director Amy Griser that the county's fiscal status was not being jeopardized by their participation in this project since to date no county money has been forwarded to Port Authority. He suggested that Ms. Caldwell engage Ms. Griser and Mr. Donatelli in this discussion when they come before the committee relative to budget matters.

The Chair asked Ms. Liptak to send a letter to Chief Executive Dan Onorato asking him what contractual obligation there is to date for this project and whether Council will be involved in appropriating any funds, and if so, what would be the exact amount.

Mr. Drozd said that he feared that the county's participation in the project would jeopardize other county capital projects. The Chair said that he will obtain as much specific information that he can relative to what implications this project would have on other capital projects.

The Chair said that he anticipates Mr. Donatelli being at the next Budget & Finance Committee meeting scheduled for May 23, 2006, and he would prefer holding the bill until that time. Mr. Drozd said that he is concerned that he may be called to active duty in the reserves and the project may start during that time. He said that he would prefer taking a vote on the bill at this meeting. The Chair indicated that if Mr. Drozd would like to put the bill to a vote he can but he cautioned him about the consequences should the bill not receive an affirmative recommendation from the committee. The Clerk, Mr. Mascio, explained to the committee that if a vote for an affirmative action is taken at this meeting and that vote fails, then the bill would be moved to the full Council with a negative recommendation. Mr. Drozd then deferred to the Chair. The Chair said that he would prefer to hold the bill until the May 23, 2006 Budget & Finance Committee

Meeting. Mr. Drozd accepted the Chairs recommendation.

Action: **Held in Committee**

Discussion Topic:

Budgeting for the maintenance of the voting system.

Summary: *The Chair indicated that there was some concern raised over whether money has been budgeted for repair and maintenance of the new voting machines. He wanted to know if there was money budgeted for this and if so, how much. Mr. Casciato said that there was about \$3 million dollars set aside to purchase printers in the event that voter verified paper trail technology was authorized by the state, and another \$4 million was reserved for voter and poll worker training and future maintenance of the machines. He said that those funds can be used for on-going maintenance of the machines.*

The Chair asked if council could specifically identify money for maintenance and repair. Mr. Casciato said that although there is not a specific budget line item for that the administrations plans to use the funds for that anyway. He also said that council could amend the HAVA line item appropriation for that specific purpose if they want to, but he said that he did not think it would be necessary.

The Chair asked Mr. Johnson what impact training and education would have on the over all cost and would there be enough funding available for maintenance. Mr. Johnson said that this is a work in progress and they have been with this vendor for just 40 days. He said that he could provide a better assessment of this as time progresses. The Chair asked him if they could have that discussion prior to the conclusion of the budget process. Mr. Johnson said yes, they could.

The Chair asked Mr. Johnson if he felt that the poll workers and trainers will be ready in time for the election. Mr. Johnson said that he was confident that they would be. The Chair said many of these questions will be answered after the Primary Election.

V. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting adjourned at 5:09 PM*