

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
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Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

4:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Budget and Finance

William Russell Robinson, Chair; Jim Burn, Joan Cleary, John DeFazio, Matt Drozd, Mike Finnerty, Vince Gastgeb, Amanda Green, Bob Macey, and Chuck McCullough - Members

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

Derek Uber, Deputy County Manager

Summary: *Invited guests in attendance: Mr. Flynn, Ms. Griser, and Mr. Uber*

Council staff in attendance: John Mascio, Jennifer Liptak, Jared Barker, and Joe Catanese

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Joan Cleary, Matt Drozd, Michael Finnerty, Vince Gastgeb, Amanda Green, Bob Macey, Chair William Robinson, and Council Member Nick Futules
Absent: Jim Burn, John DeFazio, and Chuck McCullough

III. Approval of Minutes

4365-08 Motion to approve the Minutes of the September 16, 2008 Budget & Finance Committee Meeting.

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

IV. Agenda Items

Summary: *Except for Bill No. 4343-08, the Chair elected to discuss the bills collectively as budget related legislation. He said that he sponsored the budget bills and that all bills are open for amendments from any Member of Council. Said that the bills have been available to the public beginning on Friday, September 19, 2008. He asked if everyone present had a chance to read the bills. Ms. Green said that she did not. Ms. Cleary said that she would like more time to review the bills and would like further discussion on them. The Chair explained to the Committee the purpose of the bills, and deferred to Ms. Liptak to provide the Committee with a general description of all the budget related bills. Ms. Liptak provided that information to the Committee, including the budgetary impact the bills would have should they be approved as written.*

The Chair asked Ms. Liptak to discuss the issue of the Port Authority and how some of these bills were written to take this issue into consideration. A discussion took place between the Chair and Ms. Liptak regarding revenue for the Port Authority. They discussed the Drink Tax and Car Rental Tax revenue as sources of funding for public transit. Ms. Liptak said that the revenue raised from these taxes were placed in a contingency account and must be used for public transit. She said that \$3 million of that would need Council approval to be released and approximately \$24 million could be released by the Chief Executive without Council approval. The Chair said that Council agreed to this arrangement.

The Chair opened the floor for questions. Ms. Cleary had some concerns regarding the

loss of revenue the County would experience if they passed Bill No. 3854-08, which would provide exemptions from the County tax on rental vehicles. Ms. Liptak said that approximately \$700,000 would not be collected. The Chair said that was a matter of fairness since the State already provides these exemptions. Ms. Cleary asked if there was an issue regarding how the County would identify non profit groups eligible for exemption. The Chair said that the State has definitions for this and that the County should use their's. Mr. Macey, Mr. Futules, and Ms. Green said that they wish to be listed as co-sponsors of Bill No. 3854-08. The Clerk said that he will add them.

Mr. Drozd and Mr. Gastgeb spoke in favor of Bill No. 3854-08.

Mr. Finnerty said that he would like to have his name removed as a co-sponsor of Bill No. 3855-08 since approval of this bill would result in a property tax increase. The Clerk said that he will remove his name from the Bill.

Mr. Gastgeb said that he was not in total agreement with some of the provisions contained in the Chair's Budget Bills. He also expressed concern over the distribution of the revenue collected from the drink tax. He said that the thought the County was over collecting from the tax.

Mr. Drozd and Mr. Gastgeb said that they are opposed to any increase in property tax. Mr. Drozd asked the Chair to consider pulling any bills which would result in a tax increase.

The Chair discussed the process for amending Budget Bills, and deferred to Ms. Liptak who provided a detailed explanation of this process.

Mr. Finnerty said that he would like to see Fiscal Notes on the Budget Bills. The Chair directed Ms. Liptak to provide the Fiscal Notes on these bills as soon as possible. Ms. Liptak said that she would do that.

Ordinances

3854-08

An Ordinance amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Division 1, entitled "Administrative Code," Article 808.B, "Rental Vehicle Taxation," in order to provide consistency with regard to exemptions from the County tax on the rental of certain motor vehicles within the County and the exemptions from taxes imposed by the Commonwealth on such rentals.

Sponsors: William Russell Robinson, Joan Cleary, Vince Gastgeb, Michael Finnerty and Matt Drozd

Action:

Held in Committee

3855-08

An Ordinance amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Division 1, entitled "Administrative Code," Article 809, entitled "Real Property Taxation," in order to provide a uniform mechanism for the periodic adjustment of the rate of property taxation in order to account for inflationary costs borne by the County.

Sponsors: William Russell Robinson and Michael Finnerty

Action: **Held in Committee**

4337-08 An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, establishing the tax levy upon all real property subject to taxation within the limits of Allegheny County.

Sponsors: William Russell Robinson

Action: **Held in Committee**

4341-08 An Ordinance amending the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Division 1, entitled "Administrative Code," Article 808.A, in order to establish the rate of County taxation on the sale at retail of liquor and malt and brewed beverages within the County at eight percent (8%).

Sponsors: William Russell Robinson

Action: **Held in Committee****Resolutions**

4343-08 A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2008 (Submission #13-08).

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *Ms. Liptak provided the Committee with a summary of the bill. She said that everything seemed to be in order.*

Action: **A motion was made by Macey, seconded by Gastgeb, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried unanimously.**

4345-08 Resolution of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, adopting an Operating Budget pursuant to Article IV, §2 and Article VII, §4 of the Home Rule Charter, by setting forth appropriations to pay the expenses of conducting the public business of Allegheny County and for meeting debt charges for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2009 and ending December 31, 2009.

Sponsors: William Russell Robinson

Action: **Held in Committee**

4346-08 Resolution of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, adopting a Capital Budget pursuant to Article IV, §2 and Article VII, §4 of the Home Rule Charter by setting forth appropriations to pay the expenses for capital expenditures during the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2009 and ending December 31, 2009.

Sponsors: William Russell Robinson

Action: **Held in Committee**

4347-08

Resolution of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, adopting the Grants, Special Accounts, and Agency Fund Budgets, by setting forth appropriations to pay said expenses during the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2009 and ending December 31, 2009.

Sponsors: William Russell Robinson

Action: Held in Committee

V. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting adjourned at 5:05 PM*