

Allegheny County Council

119 Courthouse
436 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
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Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

5:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Government Reform

Nick Futules, Chair; Tom Baker, Liv Bennett, Sam DeMarco, Cindy Kirk, Paul Klein and Anita Prizio, Members

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:09pm.

Invited Guests:

William D. McKain, CPA, Allegheny County Manager or designee(s)

II. Roll Call

Members Present: 6 - Olivia Bennett, Sam DeMarco, Cindy Kirk, Paul Klein, Anita Prizio and Nick Futules

Members Absent: 0

Members Phone: 1 - Tom Baker

III. Approval of Minutes

IV. Agenda Items

Ordinances

[11371-20](#)

An ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, directing that a referendum question regarding the amendment of Article III, §6 of the Home Rule Charter of Allegheny County, which places restrictions on the ability of certain persons to run for federal, state, county and local elected office, be placed on the November 3, 2020 General Election ballot.

Sponsors: Council Member Futules, Council Member Catena and Council Member Macey

Chair Futules said this has been controversial with Council Members asking why this needs to be done. It has failed in the past.

Mr. Klein asked why is this being tried again now. Chair Futules stated that it works with the other ordinance on the agenda. Mr. Klein asked why the provision was put in law. Chair Futules stated he understood that it was meant to stop Council Members from running against state elected leaders. Ms. Kirk stated that the talking points were public was mad as electeds were not doing their jobs. Council was supposed to be of the people and that is why this provision was in. Mr. Macey stated that the Legislature was concerned this was a stepping stone to run against others. He stated it wasn't fair and this is about fairness to have an opportunity while still serving. Mr. Walton asked as a non-member of the committee, Members all knew the terms and conditions of the job. It is disingenuous to say we do not want to honor the rules in place. Ms. Hallam stated that once elected you have the opportunity to make changes like members stipends. Mr. DeMarco stated the state had to approve the county to move from commissioner to executive and council form of government. Government Reform Commission came out with a recommendation to eliminate this provision. It is a part time job and the reason was to get quality skill sets but it may be a hindrance. How do we address the running for an office of President of Council running against County Executive could be problematic. Ms. Hallam talked about not being able to run for two offices because terms fall at the same time as row offices. It has to be sold to the public so how should it be treated if a row office. Mr. Walton stated there is no specific requirement to resign. And he continued that if members believe they want another office, respect constituents

enough to resign. Mr. Klein stated that the public will ultimately decide. President Catena asked about current members run through current cycle. Government Reform Commission report was asked to be provided to all Members of Council. Mr. Walton suggested beginning this 6 years out. Mr. Macey talked about congress persons and mayors and all should be equal. Mr. DeMarco said that the very best people should be running and there should be no hurdles for the members. Acting on the GRC report and asking the people to decide. Ms. Bennett asked if language could be added that a member had to serve a full term before running for another office.

[11372-20](#)

An ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, directing that a referendum question regarding the amendment of Article III, §5(b) of the Home Rule Charter of Allegheny County, which establishes term limits for certain independently elected County officials, be placed on the November 3, 2020 General Election ballot; and further amending Article 301 of the Administrative Code of Allegheny County, contingent upon the passage of the referendum question.

Sponsors: Council Member Futules, Council Member Duerr and Council Member Catena

Chair Futules suggested this ordinance needs amended and wishes to have discussion about changes to it. May change to 4 terms but not until the next election. Lets discuss and offer amendments or vote it down. Asking any elected official if they will put a term limit on themselves is always a tough decision. Desire to get both items on the ballot as a give and take. Mr. Walton stated term limits are already in place by virtue of elections. This ordinance is an unneeded distraction. Ms. Hallam stated term limits exist with elections today. This legislation is not fair as it does not add any rows offices. Ms. Kirk stated that the GRC should be reviewed for each issue that was reported on. Mr. Macey said this is undemocratic by telling people they are only able to serve for so many terms. Mr. DeMarco suggests to adjourn the meeting and Chief of Staff to distribute the GRC report and discusses this as an overall package. Chair Futules stated no votes will be taken and he is supportive of Mr. DeMarco's suggestion. President Catena supports term limits now but has not always been supportive of that. Term limits breeds new ideas and new suggestions as the longer a member is on the more likely they are to get stale. Ms. Hallam stated that Council is submissive to Executive branch so term limits could make Council more submissive.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:03pm.