

Allegheny County Council

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Meeting Minutes - Approved

Wednesday, May 13, 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 4:03 PM.

Invited Guests:

William D. McKain, CPA - County Manager or Designee

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

Frank Aggazio-Executive Director, Allegheny County Housing Authority

Ms. Celestino, Mr. Lentz, Mr. Casciato, and Ms. Soroka were present from the Office of Budget and Finance.

Ms. Perez and Ms. Sicard were present from the staff of County Council.

Mr. Aggazio was present from the Housing Authority.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: 3 - Heather Heidelbaugh, Sue Means and John Palmiere

Members Absent: 4 - Barbara Danko, Amanda Green Hawkins, Bob Macey and Jan Rea

Members Phone: 1 - Nick Futules

III. Approval of Minutes

[8955-15](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the Budget and Finance Committee meeting of Allegheny County Council held on April 22, 2015
Passed

IV. Agenda Items

Resolutions

[8950-15](#)

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2015 (Submission #05-15).

Sponsors: Chief Executive

The clerk read the title into the record and Ms. Perez summarized the grants for the members.

The Chair made note of the thorough summaries provided with the bills and opened the floor to questions.

Ms. Means inquired about the grant for the event held on May 12th and if the passage of the resolution after-the-fact would affect the payment. Ms. Soroka and Mr. McKain came to the table to explain the expenditure and that the event would have to be paid out of other funds in the event that the grant was not approved.

Mr. Palmiere reflected upon the change in attitudes in schools in recognizing disabilities for treatment instead of resorting to punishment and gave accolades for the training program funded by the grant.

The Chair inquired if there could be a measurement of success for the training program

grant. Mr. McKain replied that there was a data set available and they can create a baseline with the technology made possible by the funding. Mr. McKain stated that they could return to council when they came up with more specific outcomes for measurement.

Ms. Means inquired if there was already a fiscal analysis group in existence for the second grant or if this would be created by the grant. Mr. McKain stated that there is already a unit that analyzes data but this would allow them to work with a contractor and supplement the analysis with additional resources.

Ms. Soroka stated that the grant monies allow for an ever evolving group of data that reaches across all programs within Human Services.

Mr. Palmiere inquired about the Human Service Budget, Mr. McKain stated it was around 800 million. Ms. Soroka offered to send Ms. Perez a link to more specific information on the budget break-down for Human Services for the benefit of the members of Council.

Ms. Heidelbaugh reflected upon a commencement speech she had listened to recently by a member of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation regarding statistics on a national study focusing on the poorest sections of each metropolitan area of the nation and the spending of Human Services monies in relation to those areas and a theory that a focus of spending on those geographic areas would actually save communities a substantial amount of money if spending was focused there. Strategies were suggested to target those areas by the RWJ Foundation. Mr. McKain stated that they would look into the theory.

Ms. Heidelbaugh said she would provide the link to the administration, and stated that the commencement speaker was Jane Isaacs Lowe, PhD, Senior Advisor, Program Development for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation which provided reference to the study regarding Human Services spending.

Live Well Allegheny Grant:

Ms. Means inquired about the division of the total 750K to the various services mentioned in the grant. Ms. Celestino stated that the Food Bank already has a program in place and they would be partnering with the Health Department to grow the program to distribute fresh produce. Just Harvest also has a program in place for SNAP benefits to be used in smaller markets and would also be supplemented by the grant to the Health Department.

Ms. Heidelbaugh recalled her experience with food give-aways and stated that those who can benefit from the program have identification for the programs prior to receiving the food which they show at the time of the distribution.

Ms. Means asked for Mr. McKain to reveal the exact communities to benefit from the grant which are currently listed as "10 Communities" within the summary. Mr. McKain stated that he would provide that information.

Mr. Palmiere made a comment about the growth of community gardens in the County.

Affirmatively Recommended

Enactment No: 12-15-RE

[8951-15](#)

Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the 2012 Capital Budget for Allegheny County.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

The clerk read the title into the record and Ms. Perez reviewed its provisions.

Ms. Heidelbaugh inquired about the regularity of occurrence of Municipalities coming forward and asking for supplemental help for an ongoing project. In this instance the County was already digging up the road and the Municipality asked that additional sewage work be done at the same time and the Municipality would cover the cost. Ms. Heidelbaugh addressed concerns about correct payment in these circumstances and concerns that there be no windfall benefit to either party in these joint projects.

Affirmatively Recommended

Discussion Topic: Allegheny County Housing Authority

Mr. Aggazio approached the table and was asked to give his presentation on the Allegheny County Housing Authority.

Mr. Aggazio gave a summary of ongoing projects with the Authority with the assistance of a hand-out "Changing the Face of Public Housing" which summarizes all of the public housing developments in the County maintained by the Authority.

Tax credits were applied for and used in conjunction with CDBG funds for many of the housing projects. The County has also partnered with PNC bank and other private entities.

Dilapidated public housing was rejuvenated by program funding and partnerships were formed with child care services and other community services, one example being the Pleasant Ridge development.

A common problem of maintenance and cleaning of common hallways is remedied by each unit having a private entrance to create a sense of ownership for the residents.

McKees Rocks Terrace, or Myers Ridge is one of the newest renovations with a new community building, a computer lab for children assisted by HUD, CDBG grants and partnerships.

Forest Glen Hall is a non-smoking facility with geo thermal heating and cooling and handicap accessible which is a phase in plan for the other senior living facilities.

Mr. Aggazio explained a "working preference" which means in some developments, families who are "working" get pushed to the top of the wait list for subsidized housing. Mr. Aggazio explained the funding issues related to public housing in a graph included in the handout.

Mr. Aggazio stated that they have had 16 audits and ten consecutive audit years without issue. The Housing Authority has their own police force which they concentrate in "hot-spots". They pre-screen residents for criminal records, Megan's law and fraud.

Ms. Heidelbaugh inquired if HUD required the Authority to have a board and if they had any rule requirements for such a board. Mr. Aggazio states that HUD oversees the board but does not get involved with the day to day operations, clarifying that the Housing Authority Board was independent of HUD.

Ms. Means inquired about the waiting list for housing. Mr. Palmiere inquired about the renovations of the deteriorated public housing units. Mr. Aggazio explained the procedure

for wait lists and reviewed renovations in detail through his presentation of each housing development under the control of the Housing Authority.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 PM.