

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
436 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone (412) 350-6495
Fax (412) 350-6499*



Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 4, 2007

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 William E. Lestitian -
Members***

I. Call to Order

Summary: *The meeting was called to order at 4:01.*

Invited Guests:

Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee

Amy Griser, Director, Budget & Finance

Derek Uber, Deputy County Manager

Summary: *Invited Guests Present: Mr. Uber, Mr. Schepis, Ms. Griser, and Mr. Flynn.*

Staff Present: Mr. Barker, Ms. Liptak, Mr. Catanese.

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Jim Burn, Susan Caldwell, Joan Cleary, Matt Drozd, Michael Finnerty, Brenda Frazier, Vince Gastgeb, Chair William Robinson, Council Member Jan Rea, Council Member Bob Macey, and Council Member Rich Fitzgerald
Absent: William Lestitian

III. Approval of Minutes

3381-07 Motion to approve the Minutes of the July 11, 2007 Budget & Finance Committee Meeting.

Summary: *Motion to approve (Frazier, Cleary)*

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

IV. Agenda Items**Ordinances**

3344-07 An Ordinance amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Division 1, entitled "Administrative Code," through the creation of a new Article 808, entitled "Taxation," in order to provide a uniform mechanism for the establishment of rates of taxation within Allegheny County should the County's system of real property taxation be altered by the General Assembly to allow for County collection of taxes from sources other than real property.

Sponsors: Jan Rea, Rich Fitzgerald, Vince Gastgeb, Jim Burn, Susan Caldwell, Matt Drozd, Dave Fawcett, Brenda Frazier, William E. Lestitian, Joan Cleary, Michael Finnerty, Bob Macey, William Russell Robinson, Chuck Martoni and John DeFazio

Summary: *The Chair expressed a desire to move the bill, and deferred to Ms. Rea.*

Ms. Rea discussed the bill's potential future impact if other taxes should at some time be authorized, and noted the merits of clarity in the Code.

Mr. Fitzgerald noted that this is consistent with the apparent intent of the Code with

regard to taxes generally, and discussed the merits of consensus with issues as significant as taxes.

Ms. Caldwell discussed the importance of the bill as a means of bolstering the credibility of Council with significant issues such as taxation.

Mr. Gastgeb indicated that he feels this is an important bill because it sets the standard for approval of tax bills that may come from outside the Council, and indicated that he thinks it is important to address revenue other than property taxes in the Code.

Mr. Finnerty noted that the Rules of Council do address the supermajority for tax levies.

Ms. Rea discussed the importance of doing this in the Code rather than the Rules, because the Rules can be waived at any time.

Mr. Drozd indicated that he would prefer a referendum on any tax increase, but does support the 2/3 bill.

*Motion to approve Frazier, Cleary
VV*

Action:

A motion was made by Frazier, seconded by Cleary, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried unanimously.

3345-07

An Ordinance amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Division 1, entitled "Administrative Code," by the creation of a new §5-311.09, entitled "Fee Setting Legislation," in order to provide a uniform mechanism for the alteration of fees set by Allegheny County.

Sponsors: Joan Cleary, Rich Fitzgerald, Michael Finnerty, John DeFazio, Susan Caldwell, Jan Rea, William Russell Robinson, Vince Gastgeb, Bob Macey and Brenda Frazier

Summary:

The Chair summarized the bill and deferred to Ms. Cleary.

Ms. Cleary discussed the merits of consistency, credibility and setting standards for future action.

Mr. Gastgeb asked to be added as a cosponsor and suggested that there may be merit in looking at the 2/3 Rule of Council just to be sure we're consistent.

Council Members Rea, Macey, Robinson, and Frazier asked to be added as cosponsors.

*Motion to approve, Finnerty, Cleary
VV*

Action:

A motion was made by Finnerty, seconded by Cleary, that this matter be Affirmatively Recommended. The motion carried unanimously.

3375-07

An Ordinance amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Division 1, entitled "Administrative Code," through the creation of a new Article 808, entitled "Taxation," in order to provide for the imposition of a County tax on the sale at retail of liquor and malt and brewed beverages within the County.

Sponsors: William Russell Robinson

Summary: *The Chair held this bill pending a public hearing on October 2.*

Action: **Held in Committee**

3379-07

An Ordinance amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Division 1, entitled "Administrative Code," through the creation of a new Article 808, entitled "Taxation," in order to provide for the imposition of a County excise tax on each transaction in which a rental vehicle is rented within the County.

Sponsors: William Russell Robinson

Summary: *The Chair held this bill pending a public hearing on October 2.*

Action: **Held in Committee**

Resolutions**3351-07**

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2007 (Submission #11-07).

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *The Chair deferred to Ms. Liptak, who summarized the bill.*

*Motion to approve Caldwell, Gastgeb
VV*

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

3398-07

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the 2007 Capital Budget for Allegheny County.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *The Chair deferred to Ms. Liptak, who summarized the bill.*

Mr. Finnerty asked about project timeline, and Ms. Liptak indicated that Duquesne design work is completed, but McKeesport is not, and noted that she will have more specific info before final vote.

Mr. Drozd indicated that he would like to have more info on the projects and how they will help the communities in question.

Mr. Macey discussed the history and expected economic impact of these projects, but

indicated that he would also like to stay in the loop as project proceeds.

Ms. Caldwell suggested that Director Donatelli and Director Davin may be able to shed more light on where the projects are and where they're going.

Mr. Fitzgerald discussed how flyovers will impact communities, and said he would not like to see these projects delayed. Mr. Fitzgerald asked if this money was part of the transportation bill that passed in July, and Ms. Griser noted that she is not sure.

*Motion to approve Finnerty, Cleary
VV*

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

3399-07

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2007 (Submission #12-07).

Sponsors: Chief Executive

Summary: *The Chair deferred to Ms. Liptak, who summarized the bill.*

In response to a question from the Chair, Ms. Liptak noted that the funds are from fees charged by the Recorder of Deeds on filed deeds.

Mr. Drozd asked where the money would go, and Ms. Liptak indicated that it would go to affordable housing programs of Department of Economic Development. Ms. Griser and Mr. Schepis discussed the programs.

Ms. Caldwell asked why more revenue was raised than anticipated, and Ms. Liptak discussed how recording fees are dependent upon the housing market, and in years when more are bought, more deeds get recorded and more money comes in. Ms. Griser noted that there were carryover balances from prior years as well.

Ms. Frazier asked if funds could be used by County Housing Authority's use, and Ms. Griser indicated that she thinks they can. Ms. Liptak indicated that she would get more information.

Mr. Drozd asked if funds could be used by flood victims, and Ms. Griser indicated that it depends on whether they meet income guidelines.

Mr. Gastgeb asked about how the guidelines are set and what they are.

Mr. Macey discussed how these programs might dovetail with Action Housing.

*Motion to approve Finnerty, Cleary
VV*

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

Discussion Topic:

2008 Budget Process

Summary: *The chair provided an overview of the budget process for 2008.*

V. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting adjourned at 4:59.*