

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
436 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
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Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 21, 2015

5:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Government Reform

John DeFazio-Chair

Members: Jim Ellenbogen, Mike Finnerty, Nick Futules, Amanda Green Hawkins, Ed Kress, Charles Martoni, & Sue Means

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:00.

Invited Guests:

William D. McKain, CPA, Allegheny County Manager or Designee

Mr. McKain was present from the Office of the County Manager.

Mr. Barker was present from the Office of County Council.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: 4 - DeFazio, Michael Finnerty, Nick Futules and Sue Means

Members Absent: 4 - Jim Ellenbogen, Amanda Green Hawkins, Ed Kress and Chuck Martoni

Members 2 - Bob Macey and Jan Rea

Non-Members:

III. Approval of Minutes

[9240-15](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2015 meeting of the Committee on Government Reform.

A motion was made by Finnerty, seconded by Means, that this matter be Passed. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Members Yes: 3 - DeFazio, Finnerty and Futules

Members No: 1 - Means

Members Absent: 4 - Ellenbogen, Green Hawkins, Kress and Martoni

Members 2 - Macey and Rea

Non-Member:

IV. Agenda Items

Ordinances

[8849-15](#)

An Ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, amending Article 1203, *Government Review Commission*, of the Administrative Code by clarifying the procedure by which the five appointees of the County Council to the Commission are nominated and selected.

Sponsors: Council Member Means

At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill and Ms. Means provided a brief summary of the bill's provisions and explained her rationale in introducing it. Ms. Means noted that her desire was to establish a means of fostering diversity and thorough vetting of candidates.

The Chair explained the process that he employed to select the individuals that Council

nominated, noting that he asked multiple Council Members for suggestions. The Chair noted that it may not be wise to establish a procedure for these appointments now, given that a new Government Review Commission will not be appointed for another 10 years and there may be significant turnover among the Council Members between now and then.

Ms. Rea indicated that she doesn't personally have any particular reluctance to alter the procedure now if that's the desire of Council, in the interest of clarity.

Ms. Rea and the Chair discussed the possibility of reintroducing the bill at a later date.

Mr. Futules and Ms. Means discussed the procedure that Ms. Means was suggesting.

Mr. Finnerty indicated that he sees no issue with the current wording of the section governing nomination, and suggested that the last minute nature of the appointment process this past spring likely contributed to some of the perceived hastiness of the process. Mr. Finnerty suggested that the caucuses should be more than capable of selecting and vetting their prospective nominees, and that subjecting all nominees to questioning by all Members of Council, all of whom may have selected their own nominees, may actually discourage qualified nominees from being willing to serve.

Mr. Finnerty and Ms. Means discussed the mechanics of caucus meetings.

The Chair suggested that the nomination procedure should perhaps mirror that for vacant Council seats, so that only the caucus chairs can deliver nominations to the full Council.

Mr. Futules and the Chair indicated that improved communications among the caucuses might be the best way of alleviating any concerns.

Mr. Macey suggested that the existing procedure is transparent, and agreed with the Chair that the new Council Members probably should be provided the opportunity to participate in any discussion. Mr. Macey continued to agree that improved communication among the caucuses would likely remedy any of the issues that might exist.

Ms. Means suggested that amendment of the bill may resolve some of the concerns.

Mr. Finnerty expressed a willingness to introduce a bill on the subject matter, in order to establish that the majority and minority caucus chairs are the only individuals permitted to make nominations, with a deadline for nominations to be made.

Ms. Rea suggested that only allowing the caucus chairs to mane nominations may not resolve all potential issues, and Mr. Finnerty indicated that the appropriate remedy would be to vote the caucus chair out.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:29.