

Allegheny County Council

*County of Allegheny
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Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 25, 2008

5:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Committee on Government Reform

***Rich Fitzgerald, Chair; Jim Burn, Jim Ellenbogen, Nick Futules, Vince Gastgeb,
Amanda Green, Bob Macey, and Chuck McCullough - Members***

I. Call to Order

Summary: *The meeting was called to order at 5:25 PM*

Invited Guests:

Jim Flynn, County Manger or Designee

Jack Cambest, Council's Legal Advisor

Steve Bland, Executive Director, Port Authority

**Charles F. Morrison, Director of City of Pittsburgh Commission
on Human Relations**

**Stephen A. Glassman, Chairperson of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Human Relation Commission**

Dana Elmendorf, Resident of Allegheny County

Reverend Deryck Tines, Resident of Allegheny County

Summary: *Invited guests in attendance: Dan DeBone for Mr. Bland; Mr. Morrison, Mr. Glassman,
Ms. Elmendorf, and Rev. Tines*

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

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Nick Futules, Amanda Green, Bob Macey, Chuck McCullough, Rich Fitzgerald, and
Council Member Michael Finnerty
Absent: Jim Burn, Jim Ellenbogen, and Vince Gastgeb

III. Approval of Minutes

4481-08 Motion to approve the Minutes of the October 2, 2008 Government Reform
Committee meeting.

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

IV. Agenda Items**Ordinance**

4201-08 An Ordinance amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of
Ordinances, Division 2, entitled "County Government Operations," Chapter 215,
entitled "Boards, Commissions and Committees," through the creation of a new
Article V, entitled "Human Relations Commission," in order to establish a
Countywide nondiscrimination requirement in housing, employment, and other
contexts, as well as to establish a formalized means of resolving disputes based
on allegations of such discrimination.

Sponsors: Amanda Green, Rich Fitzgerald, Jim Burn, Nick Futules, Bob Macey,

William Russell Robinson, Jim Ellenbogen, Matt Drozd, John DeFazio, Michael Finnerty, Joan Cleary and Chuck Martoni

Summary: *Ms. Green provided the committee with a summary of the bill. She said that the bill would establish an Allegheny County Human Rights Commission, as well as Countywide anti discrimination requirements in employment, real estate, public accommodations and housing settings.*

She said, as currently written, the bill would prohibit discrimination based upon any individual's race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry or place of birth, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, age or use of a guide or support animal because of blindness, deafness or physical disability in the aforementioned areas. The bill would also create a 16 member County Human Relations Commission to investigate complaints of impermissible discrimination and, where appropriate, provide penalties for violations of the County anti discrimination requirements. Enforcement of the Commission's findings could only be accomplished through the Court of Common Pleas, and the Commission would be required to report to the Chief Executive and Council regarding its activities.

Mr. Glassman distributed a document (on file) which contained his testimony in support of the bill. He read his testimony to the committee. He said that he urges Council to continue its civil rights leadership by supporting this bill. He said that he also urges Council to amend the current bill by expanding the definitions of those class of people that the bill intends to protect.

Mr. Morrison said that the reason for his presence is to support the bill. He explained his reasons for his support.

Ms. Elmendorf and Reverend Tines both spoke in support of the bill.

The Chair asked Mr. Glassman how many counties in Pennsylvania have a Human Relations Commission. Mr. Glassman said that Erie and Philadelphia counties do. The Chair asked him what the advantage would be for the county to create a Human Relations Commission if the state already has one. Mr. Glassman said that cases move very slowly on a state level and that having this on a local level would provide more sensitivity and speed. He also said that he thought that passage of this by County Council would prompt the state to upgrade their laws regarding this.

The Chair said that the committee will meet again in a couple of weeks to further discuss the bill and some of the changes to the bill that were proposed at this meeting.

Action: **Held in Committee**

Discussion Topic:

Port Authority Status Update

Summary: *Mr. DeBone attended in place of Mr. Bland. He said that Mr. Bland had every intention of appearing before the committee but was busy in Washington DC with contract negotiations. Mr. DeBone provided the committee with an update on the current negotiations. He distributed a document (on file) to Council which contained a summary of Port Authority's contingency plan. He reviewed this document with the committee.*

He provided a detailed description of the contingency plan in the event of a strike by employees represented by the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 85. He said that there is a meeting of the local union scheduled on Sunday, November 30, 2008. He said that if the employees do not report to work on Monday, December 1, 2008, management would consider this a strike since their doors are open. He said that without major concessions they will be forced to reduce services. He said ACCESS will be available for those in need of transportation for medical services.

V. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM*