

# **Allegheny County Council**

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## **Meeting Minutes - Approved**

**Wednesday, April 2, 2014**

**4:00 PM**

**Conference Room 1**

### **Committee on Budget and Finance**

*Michael Finnerty, Chair*

*Members:*

*Barbara Daly Danko*

*Amanda Green Hawkins*

*Heather Heidelbaugh*

*Bob Macey*

*Chuck Martoni*

*Sue Means*

*John Palmiere*

*Jan Rea*

**I. Call to Order**

*The meeting was called to order at 4:00.*

**Invited Guests:**

**William D. McKain, CPA - County Manager**

**Warren Finkel - County Budget and Finance Director**

**Dennis Biondo - Executive Director, Kane Regional Centers**

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

*Mr. Schepis was present from the Department of Budget & Finance.*

*Mr. Biondo was present from the Kane Regional Centers.*

*Mr. Barker and Mr. Szymanski were present from the Office of County Council.*

**II. Roll Call**

**Council Members** 4 - Finnerty, Means, Palmiere and Rea

**Present:**

**Council Members** 5 - Daly Danko, Green Hawkins, Heidelbaugh, Macey and Martoni

**Absent:**

**Council Members** 1 - Futules

**Phone:**

**III. Approval of Minutes**

[8161-14](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the Budget and Finance Committee Meeting of Allegheny County held on March 26, 2014.

**Passed**

**IV. Agenda Items****Discussion Topic****Presentation on the functions and state of the Kane Regional Centers**

*The Chair introduced the invited guests and invited Mr. McKain, Mr. Biondo and Mr. Schepis to the table.*

*Mr. Biondo gave a brief presentation describing the history of the Kane Centers, as well as their function, resident capacities, and operations. Mr. Biondo noted that one unit at the Scott center is closed at the moment in order to allow for its conversion to a memory care unit, and that the overall occupancy rate is about 90% when that unit closure is taken into consideration. Mr. McKain provided some additional detail relating to the memory care unit, which is scheduled to open in May.*

*In response to a question from the Chair, Mr. Biondo noted that the new unit will have 45 beds.*

*Mr. Biondo continued to describe the specialty units at the other Kane centers, also noting that the independent living center at the Ross center has increased occupancy numbers since it opened. He also indicated that, while the McKeesport center does not have a dedicated specialty unit, that center does provide extensive therapy services to residents.*

*Mr. Biondo summarized the Kanes' efforts at using technology to improve services, including the provision of medical services and allowing for family communications through teleconferencing or social media, noting that the health care industry is rapidly changing, and the Kanes are attempting to be as responsive to patient needs as possible.*

*Mr. Biondo and Mr. McKain discussed the advertising campaign that has been undertaken, with Mr. McKain noting that the ad campaign has more than paid for itself through increased occupancy rates.*

*Ms. Rea expressed agreement that the services provided at the centers are very highly regarded. In response to Ms. Rea's question about occupancy, Mr. Biondo noted that he could not specifically identify a reason that the occupancy rates in the various centers are different, but suggested that the proximity of hospitals to some of the centers may at least play into the variability of occupancy rates.*

*Ms. Rea suggested that there may be merit in considering altering the name of the centers in order to remove any negative connotations that have been associated with the centers in the past, and Mr. Biondo indicated that the notion has been considered from time to time over the years, but never progressed beyond discussion.*

*Mr. Palmiere suggested that the unfortunate reality is that some County residents may have varying impressions of the municipalities in which the different centers are located, and this may feed into the varying occupancy rates, as well.*

*The Chair noted that the County's history regarding institutions such as Woodville and Mayview may give rise to a negative perception of the Kanes in those residents who can remember the older facilities.*

*Ms. Means expressed agreement for the notion that a name change might prove to be beneficial.*

*In response to questions from Ms. Means, Mr. Biondo noted that there are 12 senior apartments at the Glen Hazel facility, and that the centers typically provide significantly more nursing care per patient per day than required by state law.*

*Ms. Means asked about the costs of the recent advertising campaign, and Mr. Biondo indicated that the current expenditures total roughly \$143,000.*

*In response to questions from Ms. Means, Mr. Biondo indicated that the Kanes do not discharge individuals if they should happen to be unable to pay their bills, noting that the centers do everything in their power to assist those patients that are eligible for medical assistance but who for one reason or another have not met the procedural requirements for receiving it. Mr. Biondo also noted that the Kanes' annual budget runs near \$100 million, and that the County provided roughly \$3,000,000 in funding during 2013.*

*Ms. Means asked about the average length of stay in the Kanes at this time, and Mr. Biondo noted that it is 272 days.*

*Ms. Means, Mr. Biondo and Mr. McKain discussed the possibility of providing inpatient hospice care as a part of the Kanes' services.*

*In response to questions from Ms. Rea and Ms. Means, Mr. Biondo provided additional detail relating to the family video conferencing program, which is currently being*

*implemented by a CMU student, as well as the centers' internship programs.*

*Mr. Palmiere suggested that the Council may wish to consider providing as much assistance as possible for the Kanes, given the quality of care provided.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Palmiere, Mr. Biondo indicated that the current patient ratio is roughly 60% women to 40% men.*

*The Chair asked how occupancy plays into reimbursement or subsidies, and Mr. Biondo noted that, while at one time the reimbursement rate did vary with occupancy, the current system provides a flat medical assistance reimbursement per patient per facility.*

## **V. Adjournment**

*The meeting was adjourned at 5:04.*