

Allegheny County Council

*436 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone (412) 350-6490*



Meeting Minutes - Approved

Wednesday, June 24, 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 4pm

Invited Guests:

William D. McKain, CPA - County Manager or Designee

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

Walter Smith - Children, Youth, and Families Advisory Committee

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

Ms. Soroka, Mr. Casciato and Mr. Lentz were present from the Department of Budget & Finance.

Mr. Shanley and Mr. Dillon present from the Department of Public Works.

Dr. Smith was present from the CYF Advisory Committee.

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

II. Roll Call

Members Present: 6 - Heather Heidelbaugh, Sue Means, John Palmiere, Jan Rea, Terri Klein and Michael Finnerty

Members Absent: 3 - Amanda Green Hawkins, Bob Macey and Nick Futules

III. Approval of Minutes

[9021-15](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the Budget and Finance Committee meeting of Allegheny County Council held on June 10, 2015
Passed

IV. Agenda Items**Ordinances****Resolutions**

[9010-15](#)

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the 2015 Capital Budget for Allegheny County.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill, and Mr. Szymanski provided an overview of its provisions.

In response to a question from Ms. Heidelbaugh, Mr. Shanley noted that the funds being provided by EQT will pay for a portion of the cost of repairing Pangburn Hollow Road in Forward Township, with the amount of EQT's contribution negotiated.

Ms. Heidelbaugh requested additional detail regarding to these types of contributions, whether others of this type are being pursued, how they are going to be arranged, and

how the industry is assisting with infrastructure maintenance and repair going forward. Mr. McKain noted that this is the first instance of this type of arrangement with the gas extraction industry.

Affirmatively Recommended

9011-15

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the 2015 Capital Budget for Allegheny County.

Sponsors: Chief Executive

At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill and Mr. Szymanski summarized its provisions.

In response to questions from Ms. Klein and Ms. Means, Mr. McKain provided a general overview of the provisions of Act 89 as they relate to funding of the sort relevant to the resolution and the source of the funding in question.

In response to a question from Ms. Heidelbaugh, Mr. Shanley described the process by which bridges are inspected and classified for maintenance purposes.

Affirmatively Recommended

9012-15

A Resolution ratifying certain year-end transfers pursuant to Section 805.03 of the Administrative Code

Sponsors: Chief Executive

At the request of the Chair, the clerk read the title of the bill and Mr. Szymanski summarized its provisions.

The Chair noted that the members were provided with a written summary and a list of each of the transfers that were made for the 2014 budget year.

In response to a question from Ms. Rea, Mr. McKain described the year end transfer process and how funds do need to be shifted around slightly at the end of virtually every budget year, and Ms. Soroka provided additional details regarding the transfers that were made in relation to the Law Department.

In response to Ms. Means, Mr. McKain provided some additional detail regarding the reasons that may give rise to a year end transfer.

In response to a question from Ms. Heidelbaugh, Ms. Soroka explained a transfer relating to the County Jail in which funds were transferred from employee fringe benefits and used to cover the costs of alternative housing services. Mr. McKain noted that there were excess funds in the fringe benefits line item, because turnover at the County Jail had resulted in fewer positions not being filled for the full year than had been budgeted.

Ms. Heidelbaugh, Mr. McKain, Ms. Soroka and Mr. Lentz discussed the County's budgetary position through the first six months of 2015, noting that there does not appear to be any material departure of expenditures from the budgeted amounts.

Affirmatively Recommended

Discussion Topic: Children, Youth, and Families Advisory Committee

The Chair invited Mr. Cherna and Dr. Smith to the table to provide an overview of the operations of Children, Youth and Family services and the Advisory Committee. Dr.

Smith described the purpose of CYF services, staffing levels and budgeting, contracted services, and the nature and extent of supervision that is undertaken. Dr. Smith discussed the extent of the Department of Human Services' other operations and how they may interplay with CYF services, noting that roughly 60% of the individuals who are served by the Department are receiving services from multiple programs and that integrating those efforts has greatly enhanced the efficiency with which services are provided. Dr. Smith and Mr. Cherna indicated that the Commonwealth's new child protection laws have created a fundamental change in the reporting landscape, and that this is taking place at exactly the same time as the institution of a new statewide computerized reporting system.

In response to a question from the Chair, Dr. Smith provided additional detail regarding the integration of DHS services.

The Chair and Mr. Cherna discussed the County's history of providing integrated services.

In response to a question from Ms. Klein, Dr. Smith discussed how resource allocation has changed as a result of changes to the Commonwealth's sexual assault statutes.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Mr. Cherna noted that funding must be tracked for each funding source.

Ms. Means and Mr. Cherna discussed the County's efforts at ensuring compliance with the new background check statutes, with Mr. Cherna noting that the General Assembly currently undertaking efforts to balance the burden of requiring extensive background checks with the interests of safety.

Mr. Palmiere complimented Mr. Cherna and Dr. Smith on their efforts.

Ms. Rea, Mr. Cherna and Dr. Smith discussed the standards that are applied in order to evaluate compliance by the entities with which DHS contracts for services.

The Chair and Mr. Cherna discussed DHS' role in providing breakfast and lunch programs during the summer month, and Mr. McKain noted that the programs were now being coordinated with the summer basketball program.

In response to a question from the Chair, Mr. Cherna described the Department's relatively limited interaction with summer camp programs.

In response to a question from Ms. Klein, Dr. Smith described caseloads for CYF employees, noting that the mere numbers aren't necessarily instructive without evaluating the relative complexity of the cases, and indicating that there are multiple strategies in place for managing caseloads taking all relevant factors into consideration. Mr. Cherna noted that turnover can have a significant impact on caseloads, particularly because the process of hiring a new employee and training them to the point that they're fully prepared to handle cases can take a few months.

Ms. Klein and Mr. Cherna discussed case assignment among family court judges.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Mr. Cherna generally described the licensing and inspection dynamic as it applies to group homes, and noted that reviews of group home performance are undertaken.

Ms. Means, Mr. Cherna and Dr. Smith discussed the extent of training and supervision that are made available to caseworkers and the function of the director's action line.

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:07.