

Allegheny County Council

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Meeting Minutes - Approved

Thursday, November 12, 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 4:07.

Invited Guests:

William D. McKain, CPA, Allegheny County Manager or designee
Mary Soroka, Director, Department of Budget and Finance

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

Ms. Soroka, Mr. Brandon, Ms. Celestino and Mr. Cox were present from the Department of Budget & Finance.

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

II. Roll Call

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

Members Absent: 3 - Amanda Green Hawkins, John Palmiere and Nick Futules

III. Approval of Minutes

[9274-15](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2015 meeting of the Committee on Budget and Finance.

Passed

IV. Agenda Items

Resolutions

[9250-15](#)

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2015 (Submission #11-15).

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.

Ms. Klein described prior experience with the individual who would be providing services under the terms of the grant, and noted that she had been extremely impressed.

Ms. Means echoed Ms. Klein's sentiment.

In response to questions from Ms. Means, Ms. Celestino described the train the trainer scenario that would be put in place through the program, and noted that there would be an attempt made to make monthly evaluations of the program's results.

The Chair and Ms. Celestino noted that this is the first time that this type of training would be provided through grant funding.

Affirmatively Recommended**Discussion Topic - County Operating and Capital Budgets**

The Chair indicated that he had prepared capital and operating budget resolutions, and provided copies of both to each of the Members.

At the request of the Chair, Ms. Soroka provided a brief overview of the 2016 Comprehensive Fiscal Plan, noting that there had been some changes to the format of the CFP book and that the Department had begin using new budgeting software. Ms. Soroka highlighted several of the changes and gave a capsule summary of the CFP contents.

In response to a request from the Chair, Ms. Soroka described the agency funds, noting that these funds do not actually belong to the County, but which the County holds for some period of time.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Ms. Soroka discussed the process that the Department uses in order to forecast hotel/motel room tax revenues.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Ms. Soroka noted that most road projects are not budgeted individually or by name, although bridges are. Ms. Soroka noted that, although Public Works has a plan for the projects to be undertaken each year, they do need to be able to remain at least somewhat flexible to adapt to changing circumstances and potential emergencies.

In response to a question from Ms. Heidelbaugh, Ms. Soroka noted that the Department's projections for the hotel/motel tax in 2016 do contain some increase from 2015 due to new hotel construction, and agreed to provide additional information relating to the current projections.

Ms. Means asked about a significant increase to the M/W/DBE Department budget, and Ms. Soroka noted that this is due to two new employees within the M/W/DBE Department.

In response to a question from Ms. Heidelbaugh, Ms. Soroka noted that the budget does not contemplate new employees at the 911 call center, as the new funding for the center has not yet been realized or determined with complete precision. Ms. Soroka noted that the County had budgeted approximately \$25 million in years past, and provided roughly \$4.5 million in County funding for the center's operations. Ms. Soroka indicated that the hope is that the new 911 center funding mechanism would fully fund the center, and that no County funding would have to be committed.

Ms. Heidelbaugh, Ms. Means and Ms. Soroka discussed the mechanics of allocating funding to each County department and function.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Ms. Soroka pointed out how one could determine the repair and maintenance appropriations contemplated throughout the CFP.

Ms. Means and Ms. Soroka discussed the capital budget portion of the CFP, with Ms. Soroka discussing the in-house capital construction appropriation.

The Chair and Ms. Soroka noted that the capital budget had increased overall from about \$80 million in 2015 to just under \$92 million in 2016.

In response to a question from Ms. Klein, Ms. Soroka described the emergency services special account budget.

In response to a question from Ms. Heidelbaugh, Mr. Cox noted that the Kane hospitals are exempt from the fine provisions of deferal statutes relating to electronic medical records.

Ms. Heidelbaugh and Mr. McKain discussed the mechanical process of converting the Kanes' records to an electronic format.

In response to a question from Ms. Heidelbaugh, Mr. McKain noted that the County is in the process of reviewing Corizon's activities relating to electronic medical recordkeeping at the County Jail.

In response to a question from Ms. Means, Mr. McKain noted that the \$5 supplemental registration fee would begin to apply for all registrations renewals due in January of 2016 and after.

Ms. Means and Mr. McKain discussed the dynamic that typically applies in payment in lieu of tax settings.

The Chair noted that the time for the committee's adjournment was approaching, and passed out summaries of his operating and capital budget resolutions, noting that they would be on the agenda for a first reading at the November 17 regular meeting. The Chair gave a brief overview of how his resolutions would differ from those introduced by the Chief Executive in October.

In response to a question from Ms. Klein, Ms. Soroka explained the principle of fringe benefit recovery, noting that fringe benefits are paid from the non-departmental budget, and then charged back to each department at the proportionally correct amounts per department.

Ms. Means, Ms. Heidelbaugh, Mr. McKain and Ms. Soroka discussed the mechanics of adjusting fringe benefit recovery amounts.

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:01.