

Allegheny County Council

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Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 26, 2017

6:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Executive Committee

*DeWitt Walton, Chair;
Patrick Catena, John DeFazio, Nick Futules, Cindy Kirk, Ed Kress, Bob Macey and
John Palmiere, Members*

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05.

Invited Guests:**II. Roll Call**

Members Present: 3 - DeWitt Walton, John DeFazio and John Palmiere

Members Absent: 4 - Nick Futules, Cindy Kirk, Ed Kress and Bob Macey

Members 3 - Patrick Catena, Paul Klein and Sue Means

Non-Members:

III. Approval of Minutes

[10136-17](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2017 meeting of the Executive Committee.

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

IV. Agenda Items**Motions**

[10065-17](#)

Motion of the Council of Allegheny County amending Article IV, Rule A.6 of the Rules of Council for Allegheny County Council, entitled "Proclamations & Certificates," in order to provide a uniform structure for the formulation and introduction of proclamations and certificates.

Sponsors: Council Member Macey

The Chair held the bill in the absence of the primary sponsor.

Discussion Topic - Office of County Council Staffing and Personnel

The Chair indicated that the conversation would deal with staffing and personnel, that his intent is to adjourn no later than 7:00, and that his preference would be to avoid moving into an executive session if at all possible.

The Chair noted that he had asked the members to review the Council handbook and look at the various job descriptions with an eye toward potential revisions, and indicated that this discussion would not be undertaken in executive session.

The Chair suggested that the plan is to hire two interns on or about June 1, with one selected by the Democratic Caucus and one by the Republican Caucus and a term to last until July 31. The Chair noted that the Committee would determine duties, pay rates and supervision in the coming weeks.

The Chair noted that the plan is to form a committee of Council to develop a comprehensive internship program for 2018.

Senior Legislative Researcher

The Chair distributed copies of the current job description and invited any suggested changes.

Mr. Klein suggested that drafting legislative matters should perhaps be expressly included, and the Chair noted that the existing description does indicate that the description includes assisting in the formulation of legislative matters.

Mr. Palmiere indicated that the description seemed fairly thorough from his perspective.

The Chair suggested that there may be wisdom in discussing the experience requirement, and the clerk described the process by which the experience requirement was drafted to allow some flexibility for the Council in its hiring decisions.

Ms. Means noted the value of probationary periods, and the Chair noted that his intent is to create a uniform probationary period (among other things) as part of the hiring process.

All of the members agreed to retain the description as-is.

Director of Government Relations & Constituent Services

The Chair distributed copies of the current job description and invited any suggested changes.

Mr. Palmiere suggested two tweaks; the first being that there may be wisdom to providing some flexibility in the 10 year experience requirement and the second being that, from his perspective, the resolution of constituent concerns is the most important component for him.

Mr. DeFazio, Mr. Klein and Ms. Means expressed agreement with Mr. Palmiere's suggestion about the 10 year requirement. The Chair suggested that 5-7 years might be workable.

The Chair suggested that there might be merit in specifically defining the position's role in relation to other staff member.

Ms. Means noted that the Council's policies & procedures manual contains the term "Chief of Staff," which may have to change depending on what happens. Ms. Means and Mr. Palmiere discussed the importance of defining who supervises whom in the office before proceeding too terribly far down the path.

Mr. Catena suggested moving bullet points regarding interaction with the Executive Committee and monitoring staff from the Director of Budget & Administration description to the Director of Government Relations and Constituent Services description, and the members expressed agreement with the concept.

Mr. Klein suggested adding a supervisory experience requirement to the description, and the members expressed support for the concept, although the Chair and Mr. Palmiere suggested that there probably would be wisdom in not delineating experience too carefully in order to allow for case-by-case evaluation of candidates with varying strengths, and the members agreed to adopt that position. Mr. Klein suggested that a good way of accommodating flexibility might be to establish required elements and preferred elements.

Director of Legislative Services & Chief Clerk

The Chair distributed copies of the current job description and invited any suggested changes.

The clerk noted that portions of the Chief Clerk position are required by the Administrative Code, so changing them might require a Code amendment to accomplish.

Mr. Catena suggested adding a bullet point that loops the requirements of the Code, Charter, and the like into the description, and the Chair agreed.

The Chair suggested clarifying the reporting structure in the job description for this and for all other positions.

Mr. DeFazio and the Chair suggested lowering the experience requirements to 5-7 years of general experience, while keeping the specific requirements in place. Mr. Palmiere suggested relaxing the experience requirement for legislative formulation to 3-5 years, and the Chair agreed.

Mr. Klein, the Chair, Mr. Palmiere, and the clerk discussed how the interview practice has been to discuss proficiency with technology.

The Chair suggested that the Committee or Council should undertake the interview process, but that he has no problem with including the appropriate senior staff member to evaluate applicants within the confines of their jobs.

Ms. Means, the Chair, Mr. Klein, and the clerk discussed budgetary considerations.

The Chair indicated a desire to adjourn the meeting due to time constraints, and to pick up the conversation at the next session, most likely to be scheduled for 4:00 on Wednesday, May 3.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05.