

Allegheny County Council

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Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 19, 2018

5:45 PM

Conference Room 1

Executive Committee

DeWitt Walton, Chair; John DeFazio, Sam DeMarco, Nick Futules, Cindy Kirk, Bob Macey and Robert Palmosina, Members

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:21.

Invited Guests:

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

II. Roll Call

Members Present: 6 - John DeFazio, Nick Futules, Cindy Kirk, Bob Macey, Robert Palmosina and DeWitt Walton

Members Absent: 1 - Sam DeMarco

Members 5 - Patrick Catena, Paul Klein, Sue Means, Anita Prizio and Denise Ranalli-Russell
Non-Members:

III. Approval of Minutes

[10663-18](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2018 meeting of the Executive Committee.

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

IV. Agenda Items**Discussion Topic - Office Policies, Procedures and Staffing**

The Chair provided a brief overview of the history of the Council's recent discussions regarding staffing, and indicated a desire to review the Council's policies and procedures manual first. The Chair noted that the new draft language had been circulated among the members, and that no requested changes or concerns had been provided by any of the Members. The Chair noted that there may be legal issues surrounding a potential anti-fraternization policy, and that Mr. Cambest was in the process of creating a draft.

The Chair began a page-by-page review of the proposed changes to the policies and procedures manual.

Ms. Kirk and the Chair discussed the need for the staff to receive copies of the new language, once it is finalized.

The Chair and Mr. Varhola discussed the proposed new language that would allow Council staff to carry over up to 5 vacation days from year to year, beginning in 2019. Ms. Kirk inquired about the feasibility of allowing staff to sell accrued time back to the County, and the members and Mr. Varhola discussed the notion, ultimately determining that the administrative overhead would likely be disproportionate to the benefit. The Chair expressed his belief that the Council is free to make its own rules, whether they are consistent with County policy or not, so long as they do not violate applicable law, but also expressed his agreement with the decision.

Ms. Kirk suggested adding a delineation of office holidays, and Mr. Macey noted that it may be sufficient to merely adhere to regular County holidays, but the Chair indicated that that list may fluctuate depending upon which branch of the government individuals

work in or whether they are covered by collective bargaining agreements. Mr. Varhola suggested that Council delineate its own holiday schedule for 2019.

The Chair and members briefly discussed the dress code.

The Chair and Mr. Varhola discussed the office calendar.

Ms. Kirk and Mr. Varhola discussed the wording of the media communication policy, but agreed to the substance of the proposed change.

Mr. Futules asked whether the new policy was intended to apply to right to know requests in order to provide the Chief of Staff with de facto control over those responses, and the Chair and Mr. Varhola indicated that it is.

Mr. Catena suggested that there may be wisdom in underaking regional community events in the nature of a town hall meeting in order to utilize staff. The Chair and members expressed agreement with the concept. Ms. Kirk discussed the mechanics of how some of these types of events had taken place in the past. The Chair, Mr. Futules and Mr. Varhola discussed a framework for how future meetings of this nature might work.

Ms. Kirk raised the issue of staff helping with parades, noting that it had taken place in the past. The Chair noted the potential applicablility of FLSA, and his strong desire to avoid even the appearance of impropriety regarding staff participation in these types of events. Ms. Means suggested that there may be a difference between activities that occur during normal business hours and those that do not, and the Chair noted that his focus is on eliminating staff activities that are representative of any one specific member outside of regular business hours. Mr. Palmosina expressed reservations about situations that may arise in which the policy precludes attendance at meetings that may be relevant and important. The Chair suggested that it is likely impossible to craft a policy which never has undesirable consequences, but that his goal is to craft a rule that is equitable to the extent possible. Mr. Varhola suggested allowing for case-by-case departures from the general policy by the Chief of Staff only.

Mr. Varhola recommended reviewing the policies each time the Council reorganizes.

At 7:10, the Chair moved the meeting into executive session in order to discuss employee organization and pending litigation, and to vote on a proposed organizational chart, and Mr. Barker and the public were instructed to leave the room.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23.