

# **Allegheny County Council**

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## **Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, October 7, 2020**

**4:00 PM**

**Conference Room 1**

## **Executive Committee**

*John Palmiere, Chair;  
Committee of the Whole*

## I. Call to Order

*The meeting was called to order at 4:02.*

### Invited Guests:

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

## II. Roll Call

**Members Present:** 1 - DeWitt Walton

**Members Absent:** 2 - Sam DeMarco and Robert Palmosina

**Members Phone:** 12 - Tom Baker, Olivia Bennett, Patrick Catena, Tom Duerr, Nick Futules, Bethany Hallam, Cindy Kirk, Paul Klein, Bob Macey, Anita Prizio, Paul Zavarella and John Palmiere

## III. Approval of Minutes

[11618-20](#)

Motion to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2020 meeting of the Executive Committee.

**A motion was made by Macey, seconded by Bennett, that this matter be Passed.**

**The motion carried by a unanimous vote.**

### Discussion Topic

*The Chair indicated that the Committee was undertaking the scheduled bi-annual review of the policies and procedures, as per the timeline established in 2018. The Chair noted that he believes that all of the changes are technical in nature, and that he would recommend approving the policies with the technical changes.*

*Mr. Macey moved to approve the policies with the technical changes included, Mr. Duerr seconded, and the motion passed unanimously via voice vote.*

*The Chair noted that a draft staff evaluation form had been circulated among the members, and that his belief is that most of the members supported the concept of evaluating staff members each year. The Chair indicated that his desire would be for the Chief of Staff to conduct staff evaluations by December 1 each year, subject to the Committee's approval, with the Committee undertaking the Chief of Staff's review directly on the same timeline.*

*Mr. Walton expressed his agreement with the general structure, but also indicated that he believes that each employee should be included in the process in a fashion that allows them to express opinions regarding areas to improve and goals for themselves, and suggested a six month timeline for evaluations.*

*Mr. Macey expressed agreement with Mr. Walton, noting that he believes that a year is a long time between evaluations, and that it would be fair and consistent with what the private sector does in his experience.*

*Ms. Kirk expressed agreement with the six months timeline for discussing staff performance and goals with the Chief of Staff, and suggested that above or below average gradings should have to be accompanied by explanations in order to make the*

*rationale clear. Ms. Hallam expressed agreement with the notion of explanations for above or below average ratings.*

*Mr. Varhola noted that he had incorporated Ms. Kirk's suggestion in the revised draft evaluation form that had been sent to the members earlier in the afternoon.*

*Mr. Catena expressed agreement with all of the points raised so far, but suggested that he would be supportive of providing feedback to employees in real time, because he believes that no employee should ever be surprised by anything that appears in a six month or one year evaluation.*

*Mr. Futules suggested that perhaps quarterly evaluations with additional evaluations as needed based on performance would be a midrange alternative.*

*Mr. Walton expressed a belief that it is inherent in the role of the Chief of Staff to support, admonish, and document those activities with staff, because staff evaluations are designed to be objective in nature and evolve as circumstances warrant, while establishing the reasons for the Council's actions relative to staff. Mr. Walton suggested that there may be wisdom in creating a budgetary appropriation for staff development, should training or other opportunities exist.*

*Ms. Kirk noted that at her workplace, employees meet with supervisory staff monthly as a means of building staff-supervisory relations, and suggested that perhaps a monthly informal meeting might be helpful.*

*Mr. Catena suggested that there are two parts to the equation in his opinion, one of which is a periodic evaluation, and the other is more of an informal coaching type concept, which he regards as entirely separate from the formalized periodic evaluations.*

*The Chair noted that he does not want to lose sight of the forest for the trees and, while he supports creating a process for evaluations, he does not want to get so far into the details that the evaluation process becomes burdensome.*

*Mr. Macey suggested that re-writing the evaluation procedure taking everyone's comments into account may be wise, but that he personally would advocate for a six month evaluation timetable.*

*The Chair asked Mr. Varhola to draft an evaluation procedure that accounts for the comments above, and to provide it to the members in advance of the next Committee discussion.*

*In response to a question from Mr. Varhola, the Chair indicated that his sense is that the evaluation form is likely acceptable, but that the process of evaluation may need some additional detail.*

*Mr. Walton indicated that he appreciates the existence of a self-evaluation column on the form, he would also like to see staff members set goals for themselves and that the extent to which those goals are met should be part of the periodic review process.*

*The Chair indicated that he would like the timetable to be six months, based on the remarks at the meeting.*

*Mr. Catena indicated that his understanding would be to roll out the new evaluation process in January of 2021, with additional annual reviews at the start of each year and a*

*single mid-year review each year.*

*Mr. Walton, Ms. Kirk, and the Chair briefly discussed the concept of annual pay adjustments.*

*Ms. Bennett moved to adopt a six month review timetable, with a revised form as discussed in the meeting, Ms. Kirk seconded, and the motion passed unanimously via voice vote.*

*The Chair indicated that the next session would be devoted to discussing proposed changes to the Rules of Council.*

## **V. Adjournment**

*The meeting was adjourned at 4:27.*