

MINUTES

Erie County Council

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Brian Shank, Chairman
Mary Rennie, Vice Chairwoman
Charlie Bayle
André R. Horton
Ellen Schauerman
Terry M. Scutella
Jim Winarski

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 3, 2022

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Smith called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance .

OPTIONAL PRAYER OR INVOCATION

The invocation was led by Mrs. Schauerman.
Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better person.

ROLL CALL

All members present: Andre Horton, Mary Rennie, Brian Shank, Ellen Schauerman, Terry M. Scutella, Jim Winarski;
via phone: Charlie Bayle
Also present: Doug Smith, Megan Moore, Nicole Inan, Tom Talarico, Amy Swartzfager

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Nomination of Council Officers; Chair and Vice Chair

Mrs. Schauerman nominated Mr. Shank as County Council Chairman, seconded by Mr. Bayle.
Mr. Horton nominated Mrs. Rennie as County Council Chairwoman, seconded by Mr. Scutella.
Mr. Smith stated they would vote on the first nomination, Mr. Shank, and continue to the second nomination if necessary.
Acceptable by the County Council members.
Mr. Shank was elected as Chairman of the Erie County Council by a vote of 4-3.
Chairman Shank asked for nominations for a Vice Chair.
Mr. Horton nominated Mrs. Rennie, and this was seconded by Mr. Scutella.
Mrs. Rennie was elected as Vice Chairwoman of the Erie County Council by a vote of 7-0.

Comments by the Chair and Members

Chairman Shank stated these are elections, and there are consequences, and he appreciated the support. There is a new administration with new directions, we're in a historic place, and we're still stuck in this Covid trench. There is a lot to do. He and County Executive Davis spoke about directions. He doesn't always agree with him, and that is a fair thing for the Chair. Mr. Shank stated he is not a rubber stamp for Mr. Davis. He is here for his constituents and the others on Council.

Mrs. Rennie stated 2022 is a year for new faces in County government. Losing experience is a loss, but newness brings strengths and advantages as well. It also brings challenges and vulnerabilities. With great power comes great responsibilities. The size of the budget and the sheer scope of County reach translates into money, power, influence balanced with, and sometimes against, great need in our community. Any gaps in experience and knowledge, unfortunately, will be filled in many cases by people who assume a mantle of knowledge and authority encompassing decades, when, in reality, their direct experience is limited and their shelf life short. We have seen unprecedented challenges over the past few years. There is so much at stake, and so much being asked of government and so little trust of government at the same time. These things go beyond one job or any one person's needs. The government has the potential to meet immediate needs, but more importantly to lay the foundation for the future and for all people to meet their potential. What we do on County Council is important, but she would say how we do it is as important. They must operate with integrity, honesty, transparency, facts, and knowledge. To do this, our process has to be a good one. There has to be an understood conduct of meetings, the schedules for agendas set, meetings, ordinances, resolutions, they should not be last minute additions. Fact finding should be thorough and there should be time to find those facts. Discussion should be kept to facts and issues. Decorum should be maintained. All Council people should be heard. She hopes to move forward this year in the spirit of that wish that what they do, and the integrity of what they do has to be upheld and maintained.

Mr. Horton would like to welcome the new members to Erie County Council. He stated they would find a behemoth of services. Things are underfoot, and change is coming. We have a new administration, which hasn't happened in over twenty years. He stated he'd leave them with these three C's: Always look for common ground. Where there is no common ground, look for consensus. If there is no consensus, always know and be willing to compromise.

Mr. Scutella stated he came to the Council in a different way than the other new members. The Council voted him in by a 6-0 vote, with three Democrats and three Republicans. Today there is a difference, but he hoped they look forward to doing good for the people of Erie County. He hopes they will have civil conversations, even if they argue on subjects. With what is going on in the country right now, and how vile it can be, let's have Erie County stop that behavior.

Mr. Winarski stated his thanks to everyone. He looks forward to working with the Council and the Administration. It is not about Ds or Rs, but we are a team

doing what is right for Erie County.

Mrs. Schauerman stated she would like to welcome everyone. She has seen in the last two years how well everyone can work together, and she sees that for this new group as well.

Chairman Shank offered words of motivation to the Council. “He appreciates everyone stepping up and taking the challenge. We know this is a tough game. This is going to be a good year. We've got a lot of changes coming up. We're going to stay on course. I'm not going to derail this. I can't speak for the County Executive. He's not going to derail this. We're going to work together. We're going to bring this thing home. We're going to have a good Erie County. We're going to get through this pandemic. We're going to get through this budget. In closing, thank you for your support. We got a lot of work to do, and we are going to get it done.”

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Scutella made a motion, and Chairman Shank adjourned the meeting at 1:31 pm.

The next Finance/Personnel Committee Meetings are on Thursday, January 13th at 4pm in room 114A, Erie County Courthouse. The next Regular Meeting of County Council is Tuesday, January 18, 2022 at 6pm in room 117, County Courthouse.

Members of the public wishing to speak at an upcoming Regular Meeting of Council or those requiring specific accommodation are encouraged to call or email the Council Office at (814) 451-6303 or Councilrequests@eriecountypa.gov.