

MINUTES

Erie County Council

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

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Friday, October 7, 2022

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Shank.

OPTIONAL PRAYER OR INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Mrs. Schauerma.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Chairman Shank, Vice-Chairwoman Rennie, Charlie Bayle, Andre Horton, Ellen Schauerma, Terry M. Scutella, and Jim Winarski (arrived at 4:25pm)

Others Present: Julie Slomski, Megan Moore, Solicitor Tom Talarico, and Amy Swartzfager C.P.A, County Executive Brenton Davis, Doug Smith, and Paul Lichtenwalter

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

Freda Tepfer, Erie: Ms. Tepfer objected to the sheriff's rule and not having access to her phone. She stated concern about ARPA monies being used for development schemes or leverage ideas. She stated the purpose of ARPA was to address those affected by the pandemic, systemic poverty, and educational and health issues. She urged the Council to be the independent entity they are, intelligently review proposals and not automatically approve things from the County Executive.

Art Leopold, Millcreek: Mr. Leopold stated the country was in a pivotal moment, and there would be no other time to see this kind of money for the communities intended. He stated Project Resolve may be a good project, and if other money is available it could be used, but ARPA money should not be used except for the correctly intended entities.

Carl Anderson, Erie: Mr. Anderson stated how great it was working on the Council with everyone, and the best thing was they compromised for the good of the community. He stated the intent of the ARPA money was to help those that were impacted most egregiously by the pandemic. He noted that there was an agreement with the Administration that the money would not replace existing programs, but new, innovative programs. He asserted that this meeting was to

reallocate the entire 2022 ARPA Fund Budget, when it had been said it would only be tweaked. He urged the Council to stand together as one as they had before, and look at if programs qualify or don't qualify.

Jerry Servidio, Millcreek: Mr. Servidio quoted amounts of PSU's budget, including \$240M in state funds. He questioned EGRA, and how and when it would lessen the tax burden on citizens. He also questioned the jobs that would be brought to Behrend in the plastic industry that is supported by the Administration.

Danny Jones, Erie: Mr. Jones stated that the population affected by these cuts would be seniors and youth programs, both that were severely impacted by the pandemic.

Scott Rastetter, Washington Township: Mr. Rastetter reminded the Council that they had awarded money to the Rail of the Future Commission, which would have been a collection of industry and community leaders to work together to find money and projects for \$1M in ARPA funds. He stated that would have been more beneficial, as a think tank.

ARPA Ad Hoc UPDATE

Questions and Comments

Chairman Shank stated everyone has had the paperwork and time to ask questions.

Vice-Chair Rennie stated she didn't have paperwork, and thought there would be new information from the ad-hoc group.

Mr. Horton stated that he was frustrated after requesting information and details, that this (one page) was all that had come forward.

Chairman Shank said that there were no additional meetings or information to give them, and the County Executive had sent them several emails.

Mr. Horton stated he was dumbfounded that they were having this meeting, an emergency meeting. He stated it listed an update on the agenda, and it was said when they had a discussion the other day that there would be updates. He stated there was extensive discussion with the County Executive. He questioned if the new information was an email.

Mr. Davis stated he thought this was going to be a working session with conversation. He sent information about the legality of ARPA from the White House, unless Paul wanted to add anything, and anything beyond that was a moot point.

Mrs. Schauermaier stated that she was under the impression that this was going to be a work session, and not that there would be any major updates.

Chairman Shank stated he also thought it was a special meeting to talk about any changes, and shared a copy of the email from the County Executive. He stated this was how we presented it, and asked if anyone wanted to discuss it.

Mrs. Schauermaier stated it would be like previously, where they would discuss each item. She contended that the reason for this was because the guidelines had changed, and it was impressed upon them to revisit it for that reason. She noted

that nothing was written in stone, a lot stayed the same, and some changed. She maintained that they are being told to look to the future to fix current problems, like creating new jobs.

Mr. Davis stated in two line items for MH/ID there is \$4.8M for homelessness. He stated they should be filling the gaps with ARPA money. He stated the only update, based on Tuesday's vote, was the legality of Project Resolve.

A member of the public, Carl Anderson, spoke out of turn and was asked to leave the meeting.

Mr. Davis stated that the allocations made last year were ruled on five months into his term. He stated the amendments to the law were made into the month of July of this year.

Solicitor Talarico stated this isn't a letter from the White House, it the Treasury updates.

Chairman Shank stated they could go line by line.

Mr. Horton stated that it had been determined there is no designation, and a vote would write a blank check. There is no plan, they did not see any plans or details about the plans, and to have a conversation without is ludicrous.

Mrs. Rennie stated their accountant advised that there should be exhibits for the ordinance, and there are none. She stated there was no movement or possibility of discussion, and they were spinning their wheels.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Horton made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Rennie. The meeting was adjourned.