

MINUTES

Erie County Council

View More At
www.eriecountypa.gov



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

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 15, 2023

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Shank led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Chair Brian Shank, Charlie Bayle, Andre Horton, Ellen Schauerma, Terry M. Scutella, and Jim Winarski (via phone)

Others Present: Megan Moore, Jill Pennsy

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

No speakers wished to be heard.

NEW BUSINESS

Question and Answer Period

Larry Sapienza, Erie: Mr. Sapienza expressed his gratitude to the Council for the opportunity and trust they had shown in him. He emphasized the importance of public safety in Erie County, drawing from his experience as a long-time Constable and understanding the challenges faced by first responders. He mentioned his role as a Board Member at the Erie County Convention Center Authority, where he worked with large budgets and brought momentous events to the area. He highlighted his background in budgeting and human resources, which he believed would provide valuable insights for the upcoming budget. He also noted his work at the Multicultural Resource Center, where he learned the importance of diversity and teamwork. He stressed his qualities of patience, understanding, and thoroughness. He promised to make decisions that benefited all residents of Erie County, regardless of their status. He believed he had provided a clear picture of his background and values. He expressed his deep commitment to the role and thanked the Council for their time and attention. He hoped he had demonstrated his dedication to serving the people of Erie County and asked for their votes. He proudly mentioned his son's presence in support of him.

Thomas Spagel, Erie: Mr. Spagel began by expressing his appreciation for the opportunity to speak, highlighting his unscripted nature. He shared his unique family background, with a mix of political views, which he believed shaped his open-mindedness. He described his resume, which included his business

success, and the company growing from three employees to around forty. He recounted their decision to relocate their business to 25th and Ash, emphasizing the importance of staying close to their roots and maintaining a strong neighborhood relationship. He expressed that he cherished their bond with the community, noting the neighborly gesture of closing an open door. He mentioned his involvement in local non-profits, such as Erie Saints and Sinners and the Erie County Veterans Memorial Park. He explained that volunteering became a passion of his after leaving the military. He expressed his desire for his children to stay in Erie, emphasizing his love for the city and his dedication to its betterment. He described himself as a "numbers guy" and showed interest in addressing budgetary matters for the community. He acknowledged the support of his wife, who shared his commitment to the community. He reaffirmed his dedication to serving the community to the best of his ability.

Rock Copeland, Erie: Mr. Copeland expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to join the meeting virtually. He described himself as a long-time advocate for uplifting others and mentioned that advocating for himself was a new experience. He highlighted his personal background and shared his journey from working in an auto parts factory to a warehouse job. He recalled that when the factory laid him off, the warehouse offered him a position that shaped his career. Through his strong work ethic and eagerness to learn, he earned several promotions and became a subject matter expert in his current 18-year job. He mentioned that contractors in multiple states recognized him as a go-to authority in his field. He noted that people often sought his advice, even to the extent of him training electrical engineers on his staff despite lacking that specific degree. He emphasized his commitment to continuous improvement in his current role and expressed his readiness to bring that dedication to the table in his pursuit of the new opportunity.

Nomination and Vote for District 3 Seat

Mr. Horton made a motion to nominate Rock Copeland to fill the Third District Seat, seconded by Mr. Scutella.

Mr. Shank asked for a roll call vote.

Mr. Horton suggested checking if there were any other nominees before moving to close the nominations.

Mr. Shank stated his interpretation was that nominations would have a second roll call vote, up or down.

Mr. Horton clarified that parliamentary wise the interpretation was incorrect.

Mr. Shank asked if there were any other nominees.

Mr. Winarski made a motion to nominate Larry Sapienza to fill the Third District seat. There was not a second.

Mr. Bayle made a motion to nominate Thomas Spagel, seconded by Mrs. Schauerma.

Mr. Bayle explained that he chose Mr. Spagel due to his well-rounded resume and extensive experience, which included being a native of the neighborhood he aimed to represent. He believed Mr. Spagel met all the necessary criteria for the role.

Mr. Horton expressed his gratitude to all the candidates and stated that he would be privileged and honored to serve alongside any of them. He explained that he chose Mr. Copeland because he had been nominated through a Democratic Party process, and had been selected to replace his former colleague, Mrs. Rennie, on the ballot. He stated he believed Mr. Copeland's electability and the high probability of him serving in January made him the right candidate. He emphasized the importance of having someone who could examine the budget effectively since, if elected, they would be working on it in January. He noted Mr. Copeland's regular attendance at council meetings and stated that the short four-month term meant it was crucial for the new council member to quickly grasp the budget. He also mentioned that Mrs. Rennie had recommended Mr. Copeland, indicating a shared set of constitutional values.

Mr. Horton made a motion to close the nominations to fill the Third District seat, which was seconded by Mrs. Schauerman.

Ms. Moore did a roll call vote on the motion to nominate Rock Copeland by Mr. Horton, seconded by Mr. Scutella, and tied 3-3. (Schauerman, Bayle, Shank)

Ms. Moore did a roll call vote on the motion to nominate Thomas Spagel by Mr. Bayle, seconded by Mrs. Schauerman, and carried 4-2. (Scutella, Horton)

Ms. Moore announced that Thomas Spagel won the nomination by a 4-2 vote.

Mr. Horton extended his congratulations and welcomed Mr. Spagel to the County Council.

Mr. Shank expressed his gratitude to the candidates and the staff for their contributions to making the nomination process possible.

Oath of Office

Mr. Spagel officially took the Oath of Office, administered by Mrs. Pennsy.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Horton made a motion to adjourn the meeting.