

MINUTES

Erie County Council

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Terry M. Scutella, Chairman
Chris Drexel, Vice Chairman
Charlie Bayle
Rock Copeland
André R. Horton
Ellen Schauerma
Jim Winarski

Erie County Courthouse
140 West 6th Street, Room 117
Erie, PA 16501

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Scutella called to order a Regular Meeting of the Erie County Council at 06:00 PM and then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

OPTIONAL PRAYER OR REFLECTION

Mrs. Schauerma recited an inspirational quote.

ROLL CALL

Council Members Present: Chair Terry Scutella, Vice Chair Chris Drexel, Charlie Bayle, Rock Copeland, Andre Horton, Ellen Schauerma, Jim Winarski.
Council Staff: Clerk Karen Chillcott, Deputy Clerk Megan Moore, Solicitor Tom Talarico, Financial Advisor Colin Domowicz -Bonus Accounting

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

Chris Szumigala

Chris Szumigala's discussed the need for scrutiny and potential reversal of the lease agreement between Gannon University and Blasco Library, supported by evidence from the "Right to Know" emails.

Jerry Servidio

Jerry Servidio, Millcreek: Jerry gave remarks centered on advocating for ECGRA oversight, addressing salary disparities of employees and directors in the County, and expressed opposition to the proposed EMS authority.

Gretchen Blough

Gretchen Blough, Edinboro: Gretchen responded to media criticism, Reaffirmed one's opposition to the County Executive, and highlighted the use of Right to Know requests in relation to one's stance against the Gannon and Blasco Library lease agreement.

Anna McCartney

Anna McCartney, Northeast: Anna directed one's statements to Council Members who voted in support of the Gannon and Blasco Library lease. Anna made rebuttal points to persuade the members to vote in favor of a rescission of the Gannon and Blasco lease. Anna provided information about research labs, suggesting alternative locations away from the waterfront.

Maryellen Magoc

Maryellen Magoc, District 4: Maryellen strongly opposed the Gannon and Blasco Library lease, and criticized its handling for lacking transparency and citizen involvement. Maryellen called for immediate action from the Council to rescind the lease agreement.

Freda Tepfer

Freda Tepfer, City of Erie: Freda addressed multiple topics, including Eclipse Day election issues, opposition to the Gannon and Blasco lease, opinions on oversight committees, and the need for more discussion on repository sales by County Council.

Mary Rennie

Mary Rennie, City of Erie: Mary asserted integrity, presented opposition to the lease, critiqued statements made by the County Executive, and underscored the importance of trust, professionalism, and thorough examination in discussions concerning the Gannon and Blasco Lease.

Others:

Ruth Swaney, District 2: Ruth directly addressed Council Member Schauerman, expressed gratitude for those opposing the Gannon Lease, and expressed concerns about potential dangers to air quality from having a lab in the Library.

Krista Perry Lamb, District 4: Krista clarified that opposition to the lease was not based on religious bias, expressed disagreement with the funding allocation from ARPA to Gannon, and urged Council to rescind the lease, advocating for a redirection of resources to those in need.

Jay Kahler, City of Erie: Jay voiced one's opposition to the Gannon Lease, raised questions about the necessity of Gannon's changes to the Library, inquired about taxpayer benefits from the lease, and expressed concerns about the safety of the lab within the Library premises.

Julie Leonard, City of Erie: Julie clarified the opposition to the Blasco Lease, emphasizing it was not solely about economic development, expressed concerns about disrespectful emails in the Right to Know readings, and commented on Chris Carroll's statements, citing unawareness and a lack of proper public information.

Nicole Bukowski, Millcreek: Nicole shared a personal experience to highlight the importance of collaboration and transparency, emphasized the need for Executive Davis to consider the community, and urged the Council to rescind the lease agreement.

Cole Schenley, City of Erie: Cole voiced one's opposition to the current Blasco Library lease, expressed concerns about potential informal meetings regarding the Library's relocation, plans for the Library's future, and highlighting the need for transparency and information.

Brian Graff, City of Erie: Brian voiced support for Project NePTWNE but opposed the lease at the Blasco Library, discussing the bookshelves and questioning various aspects related within the lease agreement.

Cindy Purvis, City of Erie: Cindy expressed gratitude towards those involved, appreciation for factual education provided to the Council and public, and stated opposition to the Gannon and Blasco Lease agreement.

Michael Twohig, District 3: Michael shared personal background as an Erie resident, mentioned one's involvement in auditing a Political Science class with the Library issue as a project, and expressed pride in observing democracy in action during the meeting.

Scott Rastetter, Former Council Member from District 6: Scott voiced concerns about Mr. Carroll's speech, criticized the County Executive for creating chaos, shared one's personal approach to politics as being community-focused, and observed criticism of the system by some individuals.

Cathay Kramer, City of Erie: Cathay expressed opposition to the Gannon and Blasco Lease, called for its rescindment, and acknowledged the public stance against the lease agreement.

REPORTS OF COUNTY OFFICIALS

County Executive and/or his Designee

Chris Carroll, Public Information Officer: Chris, provided an update on the Great Lakes Research Facility planned for the Blasco Library. Chris stated that the County was interested in engaging with the public and that sessions for this purpose will be announced in March or early April.

Finance Committee - Mr. Copeland

Mr. Copeland reported that the Finance Committee met on February 22nd, and submitted to the agenda Old Business: A & B and New Business: A & B, D-G and I & J.

Personnel Committee - Mr. Winarski

Mr. Winarski reported that the Personnel Committee met on February 22nd and submitted to the agenda Old Business item C and New Business item C.

Other

Chair Scutella clarified that there was no proposal for the Blasco Library's relocation, expressed one's intention to vote "no" on such a proposal if it arises, confirmed Gannon University's continued presence, and reiterated one's consistent opposition to leasing any part of the Library to other organizations.

OLD BUSINESS

Vice Chair Drexel moved to amend the agenda to combine New Business D E & F as one item. This was seconded by Horton and carried in a 7-0 vote.

Scutella-Y	Drexel-Y
Bayle-Y	Copeland-Y
Horton-Y	Schauerman-Y
Winarski-Y	

Vice Chair Drexel moved to amend the agenda to combine New Business I & J as one vote. This was seconded by Horton and carried in a 7-0 vote.

Scutella-Y	Drexel-Y
Bayle-Y	Copeland-Y
Horton-Y	Schauerman-Y
Winarski-Y	

Second Reading of Ordinance Number 9, 2024 "Waiver of Purchasing Code and Approving a Single Vendor Contract and Renewal of Three Year West Library Maintenance Agreement for County Law Library and Court Library" (First Read 2/13/24) (Finance Committee)

Ms. Chillcott gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 9, 2024 "Waiver of Purchasing Code and Approving a Single Vendor Contract and Renewal of Three Year West Library Maintenance Agreement for County Law Library and Court Library"

This was moved by Horton, seconded by Schauerman and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Scutella-Y	Drexel-Y
Bayle-Y	Copeland-Y
Horton-Y	Schauerman-Y
Winarski-Y	

Second Reading of Ordinance Number 10, 2024, "Third 2024 General Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation of \$9,270 for Correction of Court Budget Oversight of Court Solicitor Wages" (First Read 2/13/24) (Finance Committee)

Ms. Chillcott gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 10, 2024, "Third 2024 General Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation of \$9,270 for Correction of Court Budget Oversight of Court Solicitor Wages". This was moved by Schauerman, seconded by Winarski.

Mr. Horton expressed one's support for the motion while also requesting that the Administration be more diligent in submitting materials on time in the future.

Roll call vote and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Scutella-Y	Drexel-Y
Bayle-Y	Copeland-Y
Horton-Y	Schauerman-Y
Winarski-Y	

Second Reading of Ordinance Number 13, 2024, "2024 Appointed

Mr. Copeland motioned to table item C and was seconded by Horton.

Mr. Copeland mentioned the allocation of ARP dollars to a homeless project with ECCM, noted discussions on the Library issue, and emphasized the importance of

Official's Salary Ordinance - Director of Administration" (First Read 2/13/24) (Personnel Committee)

individuals in the body protecting one's individual duties, no matter who was in charge.

Mr. Horton reiterated one's opposition to new appropriations, expressed concerns about the Finance Director's duties, and stated one's stance against moving forward with approvals until certain conditions were met regarding supplemental appropriations and the Administration's approach.

Roll call vote and carried by a 4 - 3 vote.

Scutella-Y	Drexel-Y
Bayle-N	Copeland-Y
Horton-Y	Schauerman-N
Winarski-N	

NEW BUSINESS

- First Reading of Ordinance Number 14, 2024 "An Ordinance of The County of Erie, Pennsylvania Authorizing and Directing the Execution and Delivery of a Guaranty Agreement for the Benefit of Pleasant Ridge Manor and Compliance with the Provisions Thereof and Incurring Nonelectoral Debt Thereby; Approving a \$700,000 Letter of Credit Agreement from Pleasant Ridge to First National Bank of Pennsylvania; Directing the Proper Officers of The County to Take Necessary Actions; and Repealing all Inconsistent Ordinances"**
(Finance Committee)
- Ms. Chillcott gave a first reading of Ordinance Number 14, 2024 "An Ordinance of The County of Erie, Pennsylvania Authorizing and Directing the Execution and Delivery of a Guaranty Agreement for the Benefit of Pleasant Ridge Manor and Compliance with the Provisions Thereof and Incurring Nonelectoral Debt Thereby; Approving a \$700,000 Letter of Credit Agreement from Pleasant Ridge to First National Bank of Pennsylvania; Directing the Proper Officers of The County to Take Necessary Actions; and Repealing all Inconsistent Ordinances"
- First Reading of Ordinance Number 15, 2024, "Fourth 2024 General Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation of \$5,520 for Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Grant in the District Attorney Office."**
(Finance Committee)
- Ms. Chillcott gave a first reading of Ordinance Number 15, 2024, "Fourth 2024 General Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation of \$5,520 for Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Grant in the District Attorney Office."
- First Reading of Ordinance Number 16, 2024, "Approving the Salary Change for Director of Erie County Library"**
(Personnel Committee)
- Ms. Chillcott gave a first reading of Ordinance Number 16, 2024, "Approving the Salary Change for Director of Erie County Library"

Possible Adoption of Resolution Number 6, 2024 "Appointment of Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC to Perform an Audit of Pleasant Ridge Manor and Preparation of Form 990 for Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2023" (Finance Committee)

Ms. Chillcott read in title only Resolution Number 6, 2024 "Appointment of Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC to Perform an Audit of Pleasant Ridge Manor and Preparation of Form 990 for Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2023";

Resolution Number 7, 2024 "Appointment of Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC to Perform an Audit of Pleasant Ridge Manor Pension Plan for Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2023", and

Resolution Number 8, 2024 "Appointment of Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC to Perform an Audit of the Erie County HealthChoices Program for Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2023".

Possible Adoption of Resolution Number 7, 2024 "Appointment of Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC to Perform an Audit of Pleasant Ridge Manor Pension Plan for Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2023" (Finance Committee)

This was moved by Schauerma, seconded by Winarski and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Scutella-Y	Drexel-Y
Bayle-Y	Copeland-Y
Horton-Y	Schauerma-Y
Winarski-Y	

Possible Adoption of Resolution Number 8, 2024 "Appointment of Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC to Perform an Audit of the Erie County HealthChoices Program for Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2023" (Finance Committee)

Possible Adoption of Resolution Number 9, 2024 "Appointment of Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC to Perform an Audit of Erie County Care Management and preparation of form 990 for Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2023" (Finance Committee)

Ms. Chillcott read in title only Resolution Number 9, 2024 "Appointment of Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC to Perform an Audit of Erie County Care Management and preparation of form 990 for Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2023". This was moved by Schauerma, seconded by

Winarski and carried in a 7 - 0 vote

Scutella-Y	Drexel-Y
Bayle-Y	Copeland-Y
Horton-Y	Schauerma-Y
Winarski-Y	

Possible reappointment of Gary Carmosino to the Erie County Board of Assessment Appeals. Term to expire 12/31/27. (Scutella & Schauerma)

Ms. Chillcott announced the possible reappointment of Gary Carmosino to the Erie County Board of Assessment Appeals. Term to expire 12/31/27. This was moved by Schauerma, seconded by Copeland and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Scutella-Y	Drexel-Y
Bayle-Y	Copeland-Y
Horton-Y	Schauerma-Y
Winarski-Y	

**Exoneration of Delinquent
Property Taxes at Parcel:
26-003-011.0-013.50**

**Exoneration of Delinquent
Property Taxes at Parcel:
33-016-019.0-268.53**

Ms. Chillcott stated parcel number 26-003-011.0-013.50, brought forth for exoneration and parcel number 33-016-019.0-268.53, brought forth for exoneration.

Mr. Horton apologized for not being present on Thursday and requested information on exoneration, indicating a desire to stay informed about relevant matters discussed during one's absence.

This was moved by Schauerman, seconded by Winarski and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Scutella-Y	Drexel-Y
Bayle-Y	Copeland-Y
Horton-Y	Schauerman-Y
Winarski-Y	

ADJOURNMENT

Horton moved to adjourn at 07:28 PM

County Council Meetings are documented by action minutes. For a detailed account of the meeting, please view the recording at

<https://www.youtube.com/@eriecountypa>

/jk