

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, March 12, 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

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, City of Erie-District 2: Chris expressed one's opposition to the Gannon and Blasco Library Lease, citing Right-to-Know emails, media reports, and concerns over fairness and accountability. Chris urged the County Council to consider these factors and reiterated commitment to advocating against the lease agreement.

Gretchen Blough

Gretchen Blough, Edinboro: Gretchen expressed one's opposition to the Gannon and Blasco Library Lease. Gretchen provided information about tax bills for various organizations and highlighted the potential tax revenue from Gannon if they were taxed. One emphasized the need to rescind the lease agreement.

Jerry Servidio

Jerry Servidio, Millcreek: Jerry expressed one's opposition to the EMS Authority, particularly in Millcreek, citing concerns about residents having to pay for a service they do not want. One referenced the State Police Tax and conducted research on other townships and boroughs in Erie County to support one's position. Jerry believes that communities should enact an EMS tax before proceeding with the development of an EMS Authority to ensure equitable distribution of costs.

Krista Perry Lamb	Krista Perry Lamb, City of Erie: Krista expressed surprise at becoming a library activist in 2024. Krista's research on other libraries reinforced one's opposition to private entities occupying public library spaces, leading one to strongly oppose Gannon University's occupancy of the Blasco Public Library.
Kyle Kaboose	Kyle Kaboose, City of Erie: Kyle asked for the support of the Council on legally genetically altering DNA to change one's race. Kyle shared the personal steps in this direction and mentioned a petition one created. Kyle posed a question to the Council about their thoughts on this concept, although there was no response. Kyle also mentioned the nickname, "Triple K," but made it clear that it should not be associated with the KKK.
Beverly Potts	Beverly Potts, City of Erie: Beverly shared extensive history in Erie and one's work at the polls. Beverly expressed dissatisfaction with changes in the city, criticized Brenton Davis for lack of transparency, and urged Gannon University to use its own funds. Beverly's opposition was directed towards the Gannon and Blasco Library Lease, aligning with broader concerns about the city's direction.
Trudy Amond Coy	Trudy Amond Coy - Not Present.
	Others:
	Cathy O'Neal, Millcreek-District 4: Cathy voiced one's opposition to the Gannon and Blasco Lease and expressed being unsuccessful at not having sufficient information to provide to concerned citizens who inquired about the library situation. Cathy specifically appealed to Mr. Winarski to heed the voices of constituents in the district and to support keeping Gannon University out of the Blasco Library.
	Ruth Ann Scanzillo, District 2: Ruth Ann expressed one's opposition to the Gannon and Blasco Lease, directing comments to Mr. Winarski. Ruth Ann emphasized the importance of considering constituents' desires and urged Mr. Winarski to use his vote to rescind the lease and review the contract again.
	Matt Texter, City of Erie: Matt voiced one's opposition to the Gannon and Blasco Library Lease, drawing from a personal experience related to Matt's father's approach to supporting opposition. Matt emphasized the legacy that County Council and County Executives want to leave behind, urging for the preservation of the library by rescinding the lease.
	Nancy Shea, Millcreek-District 1: Nancy thanked Council Members who voted against the Library Lease and expressed disappointment in the partisan nature of the issue. Nancy urged the Council to rescind the lease, emphasizing the importance of character.

Cindy Liotta, Harborcreek-District 5: Cindy expressed opposition to the Gannon Lease and highlighted that the opposition is nonpartisan. Cindy provided a historical context, mentioning past projects and the community's opposition, emphasizing that it is about the projects themselves and not the political affiliations of the leaders involved.

Doris Cipolla, Harborcreek: Doris voiced opposition to the Gannon and Blasco Lease, emphasizing that it is not a partisan issue. Doris provided historical context regarding the library's origins and mentioned the involvement of other political officials in funding Gannon, indicating a broader perspective on the issue.

Jean Gauger, Springfield Township-District 7: Jean expressed opposition to the Gannon and Blasco Lease, citing concerns about the terms of the lease, the use of public resources, and the potential impact on the community. Jean urged the Council to take action to overturn the approval of the lease or, if necessary, to consider using eminent domain to reclaim the property.

Nicole Bukowski, Millcreek: Nicole expressed opposition to Project NePTWNE being placed in the Blasco Library. Nicole mentioned the presence of other water researchers in Erie County and urged the Council to vote in favor to rescind the lease.

Arin Misner District 2: Arin shared personal childhood experiences and relationship with the library and books to support one's opposition to the Gannon and Library Lease. Arin urged the Council to vote in favor of rescinding the lease.

Cole Schenley, City of Erie: Cole voiced opposition to the Gannon and Library lease, expressing concern for the impact on the library staff. Cole disagreed with what one perceives as silencing of the staff by the Executive and Administration and advocated on behalf of the staff and constituents who are unable to attend the meeting.

Susan Payne, City of Erie: Susan expressed one's opposition to the Gannon and Blasco Lease and questioned the extent of power held by the Executive. Susan urged the Council to vote in favor of appealing or rescinding the Lease due to the lack of public input.

Juan Llarena, City of Erie: Juan expressed one's opposition to the Blasco and Gannon Lease, citing concerns of corruption. Juan urged the Council to vote in favor of rescinding the lease based on these concerns.

Scott Rastetter, Former Council Member from District 6: Scott expressed one's nonpartisan opposition to the Gannon and Blasco Lease, mentioning concerns about the Administration's actions and Gannon's threat of a lawsuit. Scott also supported one's belief that the lease is a bad deal based on the perception of the Executive's qualifications.

Darryl Lyons, City of Erie: Darryl expressed opposition to the Gannon and Blasco Lease and emphasized the importance of the library, particularly for the homeless community. Darryl shared personal experience of how the library played a significant role in one's life when Darryl was homeless.

Duane Bennett, City of Erie: Duane expressed opposition to the Gannon and Blasco Lease and supported one's stance with evidence from one's professional background as a venture capitalist and presented a cost analysis.

Carol Boyer, Summit Township: Carol voiced opposition to the Gannon and Blasco Lease, drawing attention to the historical closure of library branches and expressing concern about the impact on access to books if the Blasco Library is occupied by Gannon.

Kathy Lutz, District 1: Kathy requested that the Council thoroughly research and discuss Ordinance 19, 2024 before the second reading. Kathy stressed the importance of having enough information to make a sound decision regarding the rescinding of the lease.

Paige Bosnyak, District 2: Paige voiced opposition to the Gannon and Blasco Lease and expressed appreciation for Ordinance 19, 2024 being on the agenda. Paige hoped that Council members would consider rescinding the lease, especially those who previously voted for it.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

**November 28, 2023- 2024
Budget Meeting**

**January 30, 2024- Regular
Meeting**

Horton moved to approve the minutes from the Budget and Regular Meetings. This was seconded by Copeland and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

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

REPORTS OF COUNTY OFFICIALS

**County Executive and/or
his Designee**

**Finance Committee –
Mr. Copeland**

Mr. Copeland reported that the Finance Committee met on March 7th, and submitted to the agenda Old Business: A -D and New Business: A- D.

**Personnel Committee -
Mr. Winarski**

Mr. Winarski reported that the Personnel Committee met on March 7th and submitted to the agenda New Business E, F & H.

Other

Copeland explained that Ordinance 19, 2024 is in the first reading juncture and will not be voted on during this session. He also mentioned his intention to request the striking of item G from the agenda, citing lack of support from the Executive for his selection for the Library Advisory Board.

OLD BUSINESS

Vice Chair Drexel then moved to amend the resolution on extending the deadline to register to vote by making the following changes in the 6th and 9th, whereas Clauses change the word Sheriff's Department to Sheriff's Office and strike the paragraph beginning with 'therefore be it resolved' and replaced with the following paragraph, "therefore be it resolved by the County of Erie Board of Elections pursuant to the home Rule Charter Article 1, section 2 the Pennsylvania election code in the order of Court dated March 8th 2024 a copy of which is attached here to and Incorporated herein the deadline for the last day of register to vote in the County of Erie for the 2024 primary election shall be extended one day from April 8th 2024 to April 9th 2024 as recommended to Council by the Erie County Board of Elections" at the time the agenda was published we did not have a court order to reference and this language had since been provided by our solicitor.

Vice Chair Drexel stated the move to amend Resolution 10, 2024 was with regard to the solar eclipse that is coinciding with the last day to register to vote is April 8th. 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 then moved to amend Ordinance 16, 2024, to not exceed \$75,000, seconded by Copeland.

Mr. Horton explained that the monetary figure is to be included.

Roll call vote carried in a 7-0 vote.

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

**Ordinance Number 13,
2024 "2024 Appointed
Official's Salary Ordinance
- Director of
Administration" (First
Read 2/13/24) (Tabled
2/27/24)**

No action taken

Second 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 Read 2/27/24) (Finance Committee)

Ms. Chillcott gave a second 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 "

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

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

Second 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 Read 2/27/24)(Finance Committee)

Ms. Chillcott gave a second 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"

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

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

Second Reading of Ordinance Number 16, 2024 "Approving the Salary Change for Director of Erie County Library" (First Read 2/27/24)(Finance Committee)

Ms. Chillcott gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 16, 2024 "Approving the Salary Change for Director of Erie County Library". This was moved as amended 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	

NEW BUSINESS

First Reading of Ordinance Number 17, 2024, "Fifth 2024 General Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation of \$50,000 for Shared Costs between the Planning Department and the County GIS Office"(Finance Committee) Ms. Chillcott gave a first reading of Ordinance Number 17, 2024, "Fifth 2024 General Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation of \$50,000 for Shared Costs between the Planning Department and the County GIS Office"

First Reading of Ordinance Number 18, 2024, "Approval of Waiver of the Bid Requirements under the Purchasing Code and Approval of the Sole Vendor Contract between Erie County and SOE Software Corporation dba SCYTL as Recommended by the Erie County Board of Elections" (Finance Committee) Ms. Chillcott gave a first reading of Ordinance Number 18, 2024, "Approval of Waiver of the Bid Requirements under the Purchasing Code and Approval of the Sole Vendor Contract between Erie County and SOE Software Corporation dba SCYTL as Recommended by the Erie County Board of Elections"

First Reading of Ordinance Number 19, 2024 "Repeal of Resolution No. 36, 2023 and Rescission of Agreement Between The County of Erie and Gannon University"(Finance Committee) Ms. Chillcott gave a first reading of Ordinance Number 19, 2024 "Repeal of Resolution No. 36, 2023 and Rescission of Agreement Between The County of Erie and Gannon University"

Possible Adoption of Resolution Number 10, 2024 "Approval of the Extension of the Deadline to Register to Vote in the County of Erie to April 9, 2024 as Recommended by the Erie County Board of Elections" (Finance Committee)

Ms. Chillcott read in title only Resolution Number 10, 2024 "Approval of the Extension of the Deadline to Register to Vote in the County of Erie to April 9, 2024, as Recommended by the Erie County Board of Elections". This was moved As Amended 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	

Possible appointment of Ronald Bole to the Erie County Planning Commission. Term to expire December 31, 2025. (Schauerman)

Ms. Chillcott announced the possible appointment of Ronald Bole to the Erie County Planning Commission. Term to expire December 31, 2025. 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	

Possible appointment of Gregory Gnacinski to the Erie County Human Relations Commission Advisory Board. Term to expire December 31, 2024. (Schauerman)

Ms. Chillcott announced the possible appointment of Gregory Gnacinski to the Erie County Human Relations Commission Advisory Board. Term to expire December 31, 2024. This was moved by Schauerman, seconded by Copeland and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

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

Possible appointment of Mary Rennie to the Erie County Library Advisory Board. Term to expire December 31, 2026. (Copeland)

Copeland made a motion to strike the item, the possible appointment of Mary Rennie to the Erie County Library Advisory Board. Term to expire December 31, 2026, seconded by Horton, and passed 6-1.

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

Possible appointment of Robin L. Dowling to the**Erie County MH/ID Board. Term to expire December 31, 2026. (County Executive)**

Ms. Chillcott announced the possible appointment of Robin L. Dowling to the Erie County MH/ID Board. Term to expire December 31, 2026. (County

Executive)

This was moved by Schauerman, seconded by Winarski and carried in a 4 - 3 vote.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Horton moved to adjourn at 07:34 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