

MINUTES

Erie County Council

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

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

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Scutella opened the meeting and led the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:00p.m.

OPTIONAL PRAYER OR REFLECTION

Mrs. Schauerman read a reflection.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Terry Scutella- Chair, Rock Copeland-Vice Chair, Charlie Bayle, Chris Drexel, Andre Horton, Ellen Schauerman, and Jim Winarski

Others present: Karen Chillcott, Megan Moore, Tom Talarico, Esq., Jay Stranahan, Esq., and Colin Domowicz, Financial Advisor

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

Others - 3 minutes

Freda Tepfer, City of Erie: Ms. Tepfer reminded listeners that the last day to register to vote in the Primary Election, which was May 5th. She addressed the confusion between the passed budget by the Council and the “imaginary” budget used by the County Executive. She declared her concern about monies that were not allocated by the Council but were spent by the County Executive. She noted that Council directed those funds for other ventures already. Ms. Tepfer expressed the importance for a state audit, especially after the County Controller released their report.

Charlotte, City of Erie: Ms. Charlotte announced that the County Executive and some members of the County Council were fiscally irresponsible. She stated her confusion that the County Executive was challenging the current budget, and past ones. She offered her review of the current budget and how it could be improved. She questioned that deal made with Gannon for prime real estate

rental space at the Blasco Library, rather than with County departments paying three times as much in rent.

Marcus Jacobs, Wesleyville: Mr. Jacobs stated that the report of the County Controller should be taken seriously. He noted that checks and balances were essential to good government. He also stated it was a requirement of the positions of Council to not allow their power to be usurped. He reminded the Council of their unanimous vote to request an audit by the State and to follow up and stand by it.

Matt Texter, City of Erie: Mr. Texter thanked his Council representative for informing the public. He commented that the lack of answers by the Administration amounted to a lack of ability, especially in the areas of truth and transparency. He encouraged the Council to send the letter to the PA State Auditor.

Doris Cipolla, Harborcreek: Ms. Cipolla stated that the news reported that day that an audit report revealed that the Davis Administration changed the 2025 budget without the consent of the County Council as required by law. She noted that Davis failed the legislative process and should be held accountable. She urged the Council to go to the PA State Auditor General.

Cole Schenley, City of Erie: Mr. Schenley announced he represented the Erie Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America and Erie County United. He stated they were looking for follow-up to the County Controller's report. He commented that there was no unity on the budgets, and the Administration had usurped the power of the County Council. He commented that this matter cannot wait until November, for an election to determine a winner, but it needs solved now. He noted that some members of the Council were friends with the County Executive, and they could talk to him to stop the chaos.

Margaret Watts, Washington Township: Ms. Watts stated she supported Councilman Horton's call for an audit prior to the start of the 2025 budget. She discussed the chaos of the 2023, 2024, and 2025 budgets and the dysfunction and lack of leadership in the Davis administration. She emphasized that the Controller's report was just more evidence of that fact. She noted that the County Executive plainly ignores the legal and legislative process of the Home Rule Charter, Administrative Code, and court of law by disregarding Judge Reibman's order. She talked about how she watched the entire budget work session and took notes, and that it was too difficult to make sense with that was given by the administration which was missing information and filled with errors. She called for an audit from the PA Auditor General.

Anna McCartney, North East: Ms. McCartney concurred with others that spoke in support of an audit. She stated that she was there regarding the Blasco Library. She questioned how Gannon and the County Executive were able to begin and continue construction at the library with an ongoing lawsuit to

terminate the lease. She noted the project should never have received ARP funds.

Jerry Servidio, Millcreek Township: Mr. Servidio discussed the money spent on lawsuits because of the Davis Administration and noted he hoped a charge would be brought against the County Executive. He discussed the EMS situation and that the outlying municipalities expected the City of Erie and Millcreek Township to pay for it because they did not want to pay for it themselves.

Gretchen Blough, Edinboro: Ms. Blough stated that the County Executive was fiscally irresponsible and lied repeatedly. She called for transparency and demanded the State Auditor General become involved.

Cathy O'Neil, Millcreek: Ms. O'Neil stated that the people of Erie County deserved to know what was going on with the finances of the County. She called for the State Auditor General to get involved.

Perry Wood, Millcreek Township: Mr. Wood stated that local government worked best when people were engaged and followed the same rules. He remarked it was unfortunate that the Council had to deal with the political stunts of the County Executive trying to lay blame for people's problems with the Council; he gave examples like a low-pressure fire hydrant the Executive found and then blamed the Council because they did not fund his infrastructure plan. He remarked that while this was despicable, it was not illegal; the Executive's handling of the budget was illegal, and the Controller's report proved it. He stated it was the Council's responsibility to see the Auditor General investigated the budget crisis.

Hugh McCartney, North East, District 2: Mr. McCartney stated that he worked for a corporation that received ten percent of their funds from the County. He reported that because of this, the company was audited every three years by the County and the State, and in turn the company hired their own auditors to prepare for it. He urged the Council to have the County Executive audited.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

March 25, 2025 - Regular Meeting

A motion to accept the minutes from the March 11, 2025 meeting was made by Mr. Copeland, seconded by Mrs. Schauerma, and carried 7-0.

Yea: All

Nay: None

REPORTS OF COUNTY OFFICIALS

County Executive and/or Designee	The County Executive or a designee offered no report.
Finance Committee - Mr. Copeland	Mr. Copeland reported on the items from the Finance Committee that were moved to the Council's meeting agenda.
Personnel Committee - Mr. Winarski	Mr. Winarski reported on the items from the Personnel Committee that were moved to the Council's meeting agenda.
Other	Councilman Copeland offered thanks to the public. He stated he had been talking about this for months, had read his letter at the meeting, and amended the lawsuit and it did not seem like it was getting through, so he was glad for the reporting. Councilman Drexel offered thanks to all who spoke or came to show support. He thanked Mr. Wood for bringing up the examples from his district related to the County Executive's political stunts. He stated that the County Executive has no care for the community and expected him to continue to ignore the law. He stated the Council was fighting and trying to do their best. Councilman Horton noted he had one more budget prior to the end of his term. He stated he had been requesting the Executive be audited for over a year. He remarked that if the Auditor General refused to undertake the audit, he would put forward a resolution for the County to pay for an audit. He stated the Council did not see the wisdom in duplication of efforts. Chair Scutella wanted the public to know that they had not forgotten what was happening and a letter would be started the day after this meeting. He stated they were in court because it was their only avenue. He highlighted that he and the Clerk would start the letter tomorrow and he would include the Controller's report and the news article. He thanked people for being there.

OLD BUSINESS

Ordinance Number 16, 2025, "First 2025 Planning Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation of \$160,736 from DCED Existing Owner Occupied Housing (EOOH) Grant and the Creation of an Existing Owner Occupied Housing Bureau" (First Read 3/25/25) (Finance Committee)	A motion to approve Ordinance 16, 2025 was made by Mrs. Schauerma, seconded by Mr. Winarski, and carried 7-0. Yea: All Nay: None
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Ordinance Number 17, 2025, "Approval of a Waiver of the Bid Requirements under the Purchasing and Sales Procedures of the Administrative Code and Approval of a Sole Vendor Contract between Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI) and the County of Erie" (First Read 3/25/25) (Finance Committee)

A motion to approve Ordinance 17, 2025 was made by Mrs. Schauerman and seconded by Mr. Winarski.
Mr. Copeland stated he should have mentioned this before, but the GIS department had not come to any prior meetings to explain the ordinance and sole vendor, and so he would vote no.
Motion failed 3-4.
Yea: Bayle, Schauerman, Winarski,
Nay: Drexel, Copeland, Horton, Scutella

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinance Number 18, 2025, "First 2025 Library Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation of \$77,330 for State Aid-District Deferred Revenue for July-December 2024" (Finance Committee)

The ordinance received a first reading from Ms. Chillcott.

Ordinance Number 19, 2025, "2025 Appointed Official Salary Ordinance-Part Time Assistant Public Defender" (Personnel Committee)

The ordinance received a first reading from Ms. Chillcott.

Resolution Number 6, 2025, "Authorizing the Exoneration of Outstanding Property Tax, Penalties, Interest, and Fees for Tax Year 2023 for Erie County Parcel No. 41-004-008.0-004.02" (Finance Committee)

Resolution 6, 2025 was read into the record. A motion to adopt was made by Mr. Copeland, seconded by Mrs. Schauerman, and carried 7-0.

Yea: All
Nay: None

Possible appointment of Carl J. Anderson, III to the Erie County Community College Board of Trustees. Mr. Anderson will replace

Rev. Dr. Charles Mock who resigned. Term to expire August 31, 2026. (Winarski) (Tabled 3/25/25) (Personnel Committee)

Possible appointment of Karen Tobin to the Erie County Board of Health. Term to expire December 31, 2028. (County Executive) (Personnel Committee)

A motion to approve the appointment of Karen Tobin was offered by Mrs. Shauerman, seconded by Mr. Winarski, and carried 7-0.

Yea: All
Nay: None

ADJOURNMENT

***The next Finance/Personnel Committee Meetings are Thursday, April 17, 2025.
*The next Regular Meeting of County Council is Tuesday, April 22, 2025.**

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Copeland. The meeting adjourned at 6:39pm.