

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, March 25, 2025

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Scutella opened the meeting and led the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:01p.m.

OPTIONAL PRAYER OR REFLECTION

Mrs. Schauerman offered a quote of 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, Esquire, and Colin Domowicz, Financial Advisor

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

Others - 3 Minutes

Gary Snyder, City of Erie: Mr. Snyder introduced himself as the president of AFSCME Local 2666, which represents approximately 300 employees of Erie County. Mr. Snyder announced that they had been working on the amendment since October 2024. He addressed the issues between the County Council and the County Executive and mentioned the ongoing legal battle regarding the budgets of the last three years. He emphasized that due to under-staffing and the removal of eight bargaining positions, the money was available for the pay raises. He noted that this pay raise would help the 911 Center become fully staffed, and remarked it would be a bad reality for the residents of the county if 911 failed to deliver services.

Freda Tepfer, City of Erie: Ms. Tepfer commented that she was still confused by the budget and tax rate discrepancies. She also commented on the confusion of the County website offering grants through funding that was removed in the Budget by the Council. She mentioned her concern about the status of the Gaming Revenue Fund and her worry about the Community College funding. She stated she wanted to know what was going on because she had taxes to pay

and cared about the Community College. She also reminded the audience to register to vote for a primary political party by May 5 to participate in the primary election.

Paul Johnson, Wesleyville Borough: Mr. Johnson introduced himself as the Mayor of Wesleyville. He explained that the Wesleyville Borough was refurbishing Morrison Park. He stated that the Borough had secured \$60k through state funding, and thought they had the other \$60k through county funding. He mentioned he had met with the County Executive but did not understand the issue with their funding. He suggested the Council get it together, and stated he had never had an issue getting money from the County before. He noted they would lose the state funding without the matching funds. He offered a folder to Council members with information.

Regina Julius, Wesleyville Borough: Ms. Julius introduced herself as the President of the Wesleyville Council. She noted that none of their parks had been updated since the 1970s, and Morrison would be the last upgraded park with ADA compliance out of three in the community. She noted that the Morrison family had volunteered to host fundraisers, but they would not come close to the funds needed. She stated that Wesleyville had the second-highest tax rate in the county and was strapped for money. She requested the Council's help with the Greenways grant. She asked if the Council had comments.

Mr. Horton interjected that although the Council did not normally respond to speakers, he felt the need to comment. He responded to Mr. Johnson's comment that the Council should get itself together by stating he had been on the Council for 12 years, and they had their stuff together. He noted that they make an annual budget, and stick to it. He stated anything that deviates from the budget must be sent down and certified from upstairs. He said it would be folly to just start appropriating funds, and that they were in court over the budget for the last three years.

Ms. Julius brought up the fact that Union City came to the Council and got funding for their park, and the Wesleyville park was just as deserving.

Mr. Horton countered that they came at budget time, which was when the Council could appropriate money.

Ms. Julius thanked the Council for their time and hearing them out.

Cole Schenley, City of Erie: Mr. Schenley stated he thought it would be helpful if the County Executive showed up to the meetings to answer questions. He remarked on the difficulty of watching the Finance and Personnel Committee meetings with the fighting back and forth and lack of answers from the Administration. He noted it was a frustrating process to watch as a taxpayer, and hoped it was fixed soon.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

March 11, 2025 - Regular Meeting A motion to accept the minutes from the March 11, 2025 meeting was made by Mr. Horton, seconded by Mrs. Schauerman, and carried 7-0.
Yea: 7
Nay: 0

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 Reports Mr. Copeland commented on budget issues. He noted that he had concerns about the executive branch having the exclusive decision to disperse \$8M in funding, and so the attributed funds for EMS, Municipal GAP, and Act 13 Greenways were cut during the budget process. He remarked at the same time Union City approached the Council about the ball park, and he felt that it was a worthy project and appropriated funding in a transparent way. He stated the Wesleyville project was fair and right, and if the Administration brought forth a supplemental appropriation, he would support it. He also remarked that Wesleyville was being used as a pawn to exacerbate an already tense situation because of the litigation.

OLD BUSINESS

Ordinance Number 13, 2025, "Amending Ordinance 89, 2023 and Approval of Memorandum of Agreement for Public Safety Telecommunicators in the AFSCME Clerical/Technical Labor Agreement" (First Read 3/11/25) (Finance Committee) A motion to adopt Ordinance Number 13, 2025 was made by Mr. Copeland and seconded by Mrs. Schauerman.
Mr. Copeland made a motion to amend the ordinance to include "provided the reclassification and promotional wage increases referenced under the attached amendment and approved by the Council shall be expensed under the current 2025 Public Safety Fund Budget, and not by the transfer of funds from the General Fund Budget." The motion was seconded by Mrs. Schauerman and carried 7-0.
Yea: 7
Nay: 0
Chair Scutella called for the vote on Ordinance 13, as amended. Mr. Copeland called for a point of order, and noted his vote was not registered for the record. Ms. Chillcott corrected the vote. The vote was 7-0.
Yea: 7
Nay: 0

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinance Number 14, 2025, "County Council Action to Override the Executive's Veto of Ordinance Number 11, 2025" (Finance Committee)

A motion for Ordinance 14, 2025 was made by Mr. Copeland, seconded by Mr. Horton, and carried 7-0.

Yea: 7

Nay: 0

Ordinance Number 15, 2025, "County Council Action to Override the Executive's Veto of Ordinance Number 12, 2025"(Finance Committee)

A motion was made for Ordinance 15, 2025 by Mr. Copeland, seconded by Mrs. Horton, and carried 5-2.

Chair Scutella commented first and stated that for the past year and during elections there had been problems with IT and their supervision to get information out to the public. He commented this was checked out and this was about a move under Court's supervision to have a more direct cause. He noted this was due to the Administration, not employees.

Mr. Copeland stated he was voting in the affirmative to reaffirm the Clerk and the cooperation of Court IT. He stated it was the Council's purview where their resources came from, and it made sense to be where other row offices reside.

Yea: 5 (Copeland, Drexel, Horton, Scutella, Winarski)

Nay: 2 (Bayle, Schauerma)

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" (Finance Committee)

The ordinance received a first reading from Ms. Chillcott.

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" (Finance Committee)

The ordinance received a first reading from Ms. Chillcott.

Resolution Number 5, 2025, "To Approve the Amendment to the IGT Agreement between the PA Department of Human Services and the County of Erie" (Finance Committee) Resolution 5, 2025 was read into the record. A motion to adopt was made by Mrs. Schauerman, seconded by Mr. Copeland, and carried 7-0.
Yea: 7
Nay: 0

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) (Personnel Committee) The possible appointment of Carl J Anderson, III to the Erie County Community College Board of Trustees was heard. Mr. Copeland commented that a discussion had ensued in the caucus on eligibility requirements for appointments. He stated that with no objection to the appointment, the Council wanted to explore that they were in compliance with their own rules. A motion to table the appointment was made by Mr. Copeland, seconded by Mr. Horton, and carried 7-0.
Yea: 7
Nay: 0

Possible reappointment of Jack Hewitt to the NWPA Job Connect - Workforce Development Board. Term to expire June 30, 2029. (County Executive) (Personnel Committee) A motion to approve the appointment of Jack Hewitt to the NWPA Job Connect-Workforce Development Board was brought forth by Mrs. Schauerman, seconded by Mr. Winarski, and carried 7-0.
Yea: 7
Nay: 0

Possible appointment of Sara Shinsky to the Erie County Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission. Ms. Shinsky will replace Paul Kokhanovich who resigned. Term to expire December 31, 2025. (County Executive) (Personnel Committee) The possible appointment of Sara Shinsky to the Erie County Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission was brought forth by Mrs. Schauerman, seconded by Mr. Winarski, and carried 7-0.
Yea: 7
Nay: 0

ADJOURNMENT A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Copeland. The meeting adjourned at 6:29pm.