

MINUTES

Erie County Council

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

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

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 5, 2026

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order at 12:01pm.

OPTIONAL PRAYER OR REFLECTION

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Charlie Bayle, Rock Copeland, Chris Drexel, Ellen Schauerman, Terry Scutella, Jim Wertz, and Jim Winarski

Others Present: Karen Chillcott, Megan Moore, Tom Talarico (via phone), Jay Stranahan (entered at 12:10pm)

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

Freda Tepfer, City of Erie: Ms. Tepfer congratulated Mr. Wertz. She commented on the past precedent of Council Chair as a one-year term and stated change each year was good practice.

Mary Rennie, District 3, City of Erie: Ms. Rennie offered thanks to the Council for their service. She commented on the important meaning of each part of the agenda, and that new leadership set the map for the year for the co-equal branch of government.

Anna McCartney, District 5: Ms. McCarney offered thanks to the Council and commented on her hope for fairness for all, not just for personal districts.

NEW BUSINESS

Nomination of Council Officers; Chair and Vice Chair

Mr. Winarski nominated Mr. Scutella. Mr. Bayle seconded the nomination. Ms. Chillcott asked for discussion. Mr. Copeland nominated Mr. Drexel. Ms. Chillcott stated there was a motion on the floor that was seconded and repeated the call for discussion.

Mr. Copeland stated discussion should be held until nominations were closed. Ms. Chillcott asked if there was a motion to open the floor as there was already a motion to nominate. Mr. Drexel nominated Mr. Copeland. Ms. Chillcott conferred with the Council Solicitor, who was advising via phone on this procedural matter. Ms. Chillcott then stated that per the Solicitor, if there was a motion and a second, and no discussion, there should be a vote, and a roll call vote would be taken. The nomination of Terry Scutella as Chair passed 4-3. Yea: Bayle, Schauerman, Scutella, Winarski Nay: Copeland, Drexel, Wertz Mr. Scutella called for a motion for Vice Chair. Mr. Copeland nominated Mr. Drexel. Mr. Wertz seconded the nomination. Ms. Chillcott asked for discussion. The vote was 7-0. Yea: All Nay: None

**Comments from the Chair
and Members of County
Council**

Mr. Wertz thanked his colleagues for welcoming him and stated he looked forward to good work with transparency, equity, and communication.

Mr. Copeland congratulated Mr. Scutella and commented that there should be rotation in leadership roles. He noted that he would not accept any appointment as the Chair of the Finance Committee for that reason.

Chairman Scutella commented on correspondence from a former Council member who emailed him about rotating the leadership positions. Chairman Scutella stated that although the leadership positions had rotated in the past, neither the Home Rule Charter nor the Administrative Code prohibit the Chair from serving multiple terms, and long-standing practices can be reconsidered. He expressed disappointment that Mr. Copeland would decline the nomination as Finance Chair. Chairman Scutella further stated that Council followed the rules, but he would reconsider his position as Chair if applicable federal, state, or county law could be cited. He concluded by urging the Council to work together, avoid rubber-stamping, and act in the best interest of the County.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:18pm.