

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

Tuesday, February 10, 2026

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

OPTIONAL PRAYER OR REFLECTION

Mrs. Schauerman offered a reading.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Terry Scutella- Chair, Chris Drexel -Vice Chair, Charlie Bayle, Rock Copeland, Ellen Schauerman, Jim Wertz, and Jim Winarski (via phone)

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

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

Margaret Watts

Margaret Watts, Washington Township: Ms. Watts commented on ICE procedures, behaviors, detention centers and conditions therein, and requested Council vote in favor of removing ICE as an authorized user of Erie County Prison.

Others

Art Leopold, Millcreek Township: Mr. Leopold commented on the differences between the past and current Border Patrol and ICE and the termination of the ICE contract with Erie County.

David Dennis, North East Township: Mr. Dennis commented on immigrants past and present, ICE, and the termination of the contract with Erie County.

Freda Tepfer, City of Erie: Ms. Tepfer commented on an America 250 group and its projected events, ICE and humanity, and their removal from Erie County Prison.

Malcolm Pullium, City of Erie: Mr. Pullium commented on the Marchello

Woodard case and lack of support from the community that was present that night.

Deonte Cooley, City of Erie: Mr. Cooley commented on the Marchello Woodard case and criticized the community for caring more about ICE and immigrants than black people. (Mr. Cooley refused to leave the podium and was escorted out.)

Savannah Wilson, City of Erie: Ms. Wilson commented on diversity and the need for immigration in Erie, the actions of the federal administration and ICE, and the termination of Erie's ties to it.

Unnamed Speaker #1: The speaker commented on supporting an end to County cooperation with ICE and historical comparisons to the Holocaust.

Mimi O'Connor, City of Erie: Ms. O'Connor commented on canceling the contract to use the Erie County Prison for ICE detention and historical bigotry and authoritarianism.

Nick Gardenia, North East Township: Mr. Gardenia commented on the virtue of immigrants and against cooperation with ICE.

Connor O'Kane, Millcreek Township: Mr. O'Kane commented on the Marchello Woodard case and against the contract with ICE to use the Erie County Prison.

Juan Llarena, Millcreek Township: Mr. Llarena, representing the Benedictines for Peace, spoke in support of ending the contract with ICE and Council acting in the best interest of the immigrant community and continued support for Justice for Chello movement.

Unnamed Speaker #2: The speaker commented against ICE tactics and the contract with Erie County Prison.

Unnamed Speaker #3: The speaker commented on ending support of ICE operations and any contract with ICE.

Ms. Chillcott asked Chair Scutella that speakers announce their name and municipality for the record.

Valerie Perkins, City of Erie: Ms. Perkins was representing Pastor Collin G. Gavin of Greater Calvary Full Gospel Baptist Church, Social Justice Ministry to support the suspension of participation with and removal of authority of the US Customs and Border Protection department at the Erie County Prison for moral and due process concerns.

Katie Kretz, Fairview Township: Ms. Kretz spoke as the Executive Director of Multicultural Community Resource Center and representative of the refugee community. She requested a tabling of Ordinance 18, 2026 for broader

discussion and concern that rights will be harder to achieve if transferred further away from family and counsel due to Operation PARRIS.

Tyler Titus, City of Erie: The speaker spoke in support of Ordinance 18, 2026, but to also go further with more policy and funding to protect residents without proper documentation.

Cole Shenley, Erie Democratic Socialists of America: Mr. Schenley commented against the contract with ICE and the demonization of both Marchello Woodard and immigrants.

Michael Milk, City of Erie: Mr. Milk gave commentary on the Constitution and its coverage of all people and the current federal government's abuse of people.

Jerry Beemer, Fairview Township: Commented on the state of affairs and said that Council could stay complacent or end the contract.

Dr. Heidi Storer, City of Erie and Fairview Township: Dr. Storer commented on her recent trips to Minneapolis, MN, the statistics of keeping ICE out of the community, and the inhumanity of ICE treatment of immigrants; support for Justice for Chello.

Martha Lachukos, City of Erie: The speaker stated she was there to stand against the ICE contract, but wanted the conversation to center on the people most impacted, new Americans, and tangibles.

Michael Mosconi, Harborcreek Township: Mr. Mosconi referenced Gaza and the liberation of all people along with abolishment of ICE.

Henry, City of Erie: The speaker commented on the obstacles of becoming a citizen and a system that exacerbates illegality, and the fear caused by the agreement with ICE.

Caleb, City of Erie: The speaker commented on a letter from the Immigrant Legal Resource Center and the need for even more to be done than was covered in the current ordinance.

Heidi Shadduck, Millcreek Township: Ms. Shadduck commented on the termination of the ICE contract.

Wuji Ahmad, City of Erie: The speaker referenced her history as a refugee and supported the termination of the ICE contract.

December 9, 2025 - Regular Meeting A motion to accept the minutes was made by Mr. Copeland, seconded by Mrs. Schauerman, and carried 7-0.
January 5, 2026 - Reorganization Meeting Yea: All
 Nay: None
January 13, 2026 - Regular Meeting
January 27, 2026 - Regular Meeting

REPORTS OF COUNTY OFFICIALS

County Executive and/or Designee Mrs. Vogel reported on the progress made on the land in Fairview, tiny homes, Courthouse café, Health Department assistance to community centers, and commented on the ICE contract.

Finance Committee - Mr. Drexel Mr. Drexel reported on the items from the Finance Committee moved to the Council's agenda.

Personnel Committee - Mr. Copeland Mr. Copeland reported on the items from the Personnel Committee moved to the Council's agenda.

Other

OLD BUSINESS

Ordinance Number 12, 2026, "2026 General Fund Budget Revised Revenue and Expenditures of \$15,513 for Change in the Public Defender Position" (First Read 1/27/26)(Personnel Committee) A motion to adopt Ordinance Number 12, 2026 was made by Mr. Copeland, seconded by Mrs. Schauerman, and carried 7-0.
 Aye: All
 Nay: None

Ordinance Number 13, 2026, "2026 General Fund Budget Revised Revenue and Expenditures of \$31,888 for 2026 Appointed Official Salary Ordinance - First Assistant Public Defender" (First Read 1/27/26)(Personnel Committee) A motion to adopt Ordinance Number 13, 2026 was made by Mrs. Schauerman, seconded by Mr. Copeland, and carried 7-0.
 Aye: All
 Nay: None

Ordinance Number 14, 2026, "Third 2026 General Fund Budget Supplemental A motion to adopt Ordinance Number 14, 2026 was made by Mrs. Schauerman, seconded by Mr. Copeland, and carried 7-0.

Appropriation of \$41,618 to Eliminate the Position of Assistant Public Defender and Create the Position of Trial Chief Deputy" (First Read 1/27/26)(Personnel Committee)

Aye: All
Nay: None

Ordinance Number 15, 2026, "2026 General Fund Budget Revised Revenue and Expenditures of \$17,768 and Waiver of the Human Resources Code For Change of Position From Full Time to Part Time in the County Executive Department" (First Read 1/27/26)(Personnel Committee)

A motion to adopt Ordinance Number 15, 2026 was made by Mr. Copeland, seconded by Mrs. Schauerma, and carried 5-2.

Mr. Bayle commented that this was twice the pay for the same position and was concerned that person in the position was paid through campaigns in the last election cycle.

Mr. Wertz stated it was common practice that people work on a campaign and then for the administration once elected.

Mrs. Schauerma stated she was not concerned with the position change from full time to part time but was concerned that other long-time workers did not make this much hourly and it was a huge increase.

Mr. Copeland commented this ordinance was creative; it employed a highly qualified staff member and saved money, and he was okay with it.

Yea: Copeland, Drexel, Scutella, Wertz, Winarski
Nay: Bayle, Schauerma

NEW BUSINESS

First Read Ordinance Number 16, 2026, "Ordinance to Amend Article II, Section 7 of the Administrative Code of Erie County, the Erie County Public Library"(Finance Committee)

Ordinance Number 16, 2026 received a first read.

First Read Ordinance Number 17, 2026, "First 2026 Gaming Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation of \$249,990 for Participation in the Erie 250 Community Grant Program" (Finance Committee)

Ordinance Number 17, 2026 received a first read.

Ordinance Number 18, 2026, "Termination of the Services of the U.S.

Ordinance Number 18, 2026 received a first read.

**Immigration and Customs
Enforcement and Border
Patrol (ICE) Under the
Intergovernmental Service
Agreement with the United
States Marshals Service,
Office of Detention
Services" (Finance
Committee)**

**First Read Ordinance
Number 19, 2026, "Fourth
2026 General Fund Budget
Supplemental
Appropriation of \$47,141
for Elimination of Internet
and Social Media Position
(002810-008) and Creation
of the Community
Engagement Officer
Position (002410-003) in the
Department of
Administration; and
Waiver of Section 9 of the
Human Resources Code
Relating to Salary of the
New Hire" (Personnel
Committee)**

Ordinance Number 19, 2026 received a first read.

**Resolution Number 9, 2026,
"Approval of the
Redevelopment Assistance
Capital Grant Application
and the Cooperation
Agreement Among the
Redevelopment Authority
of the County of Erie, 1001
State OZ Operator, LLC,
and the County of Erie"
(Finance Committee)**

A motion to adopt Resolution Number 9, 2026 was made by Mrs. Schauerma, seconded by Mr. Wertz, and carried 7-0.
Aye: All
Nay: None

**Resolution Number 10,
2026, "Approval of the
Redevelopment Assistance
Capital Grant Application
and the Cooperation
Agreement Among the Erie
County General Authority,
Julia House, and the**

A motion to adopt Resolution Number 10, 2026 was made by Mrs. Schauerma, seconded by Mr. Wertz, and carried 6-1.
Aye: Bayle, Copeland, Schauerma, Scutella, Wertz, Winarski
Nay: Drexel

County of Erie" (Finance Committee)

Resolution Number 11, 2026, "Approving the Annual Budget of the Erie Area Council of Governments for the Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2026" (Finance Committee)

A motion to adopt Resolution Number 12, 2026 was made by Mr. Copeland, seconded by Mr. Bayle, and carried 7-0.

Mr. Copeland commented that he would like the Executive Director of the COG to talk to Council on how the organization could be more effective. Mr. Bayle agreed with Mr. Copeland.

Aye: All
Nay: None

Resolution Number 12, 2026, "Approving the Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report of the Erie Area Council of Governments for the Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2024 and 2023" (Finance Committee)

A motion to adopt Resolution Number 12, 2026 was made by Mr. Copeland, seconded by Mrs. Schauerman, and carried 7-0.

Aye: All
Nay: None

Resolution Number 13, 2026, "Approving the 2026 Solicitor Contract for the Office of Erie County Sheriff" (Finance Committee)

A motion to adopt Resolution Number 13, 2026 was made by Mr. Copeland, seconded by Mrs. Schauerman, and carried 7-0.

Aye: All
Nay: None

ADJOURNMENT

The next Finance/Personnel Committee Meetings are Thursday, February 19, 2026. The next Regular Meeting of County Council is Thursday, February 26, 2026.

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 P.M.