

MINUTES

Erie County Council

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Fiore Leone, Chairman
André R. Horton, Vice Chairman
Carl Anderson, III
Kathleen Fatica
Dr. Kyle Foust
Carol Loll
Scott R. Rastetter

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 22, 2019

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Leone called to order a Regular Meeting of the Erie County Council at 7:00 p.m. at the Erie County Council Chambers, 140 West 6th Street, Room 117, Erie, PA. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Mrs. Loll read the following prayer:

OPTIONAL PRAYER OR INVOCATION

"Let us pray. Dear Lord, let us be the light that shines for good works. Our thoughts and deeds should be genuine and hold fast to what is right. Be our guide that we should not become against one another, but work for all. We are the ones chosen to speak for all and let us do it with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. We ask this in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen."

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mr. Anderson; Mrs. Fatica; Dr. Foust; Mr. Horton; Mrs. Loll; Mr. Rastetter; Chairman Leone.

Also Present: James Czerpak, Acting Clerk; James Sparber, Tracey Fugagli, Thomas Talarico, Sam Lynch

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

John Williams, Erie, PA; Mr. Williams spoke to Council regarding the World War I Erie County Centennial. There is a project regarding the creation of a plaque which will hold the names of all those killed in action during World War I from Erie County. The hope is to put the plaque in the park at the "Triangle" by Vets Stadium, where other war monuments are housed. He stated that this plaque will complete the circle of modern history. There are a number of people involved in this effort from around the county. Along with the plaque, they hope to publish a book that involves the personal history of the families. The idea is to have the book in the hands of every child in the educational system. He noted that the School District wants to turn that park over to veterans groups and he feels it is an interesting and challenging idea. He thanked Council for allowing

him to discuss this effort.

Mary Jane Phillips-Koenig, Erie, PA; Ms. Phillips-Koenig addressed Council. She is the Chair of the Erie County World War I Centennial Committee. She wanted to echo what Mr. Williams stated and also thanked Council for supporting and creating the proclamation for the Bells of Peace that took place on November 11, 2018, where there were churches and other entities all over the county ringing their bells in memory of the armistice of 1918. She stated that they appreciate Council's support in their efforts.

**MINUTES FROM
PREVIOUS MEETING**

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

January 8, 2019 - Regular Meeting

**REPORTS OF COUNTY
OFFICIALS**

County Executive and/or her Designee

None.

Finance Committee - Mr. Anderson

Mr. Anderson stated that the Finance Committee met on Thursday, January 17, 2019, and agreed to place Ordinance 2, and Resolutions 2 and 3 on the agenda.

Personnel Committee - Mr. Rastetter

Mr. Rastetter stated that the Personnel Committee met immediately after the Finance Committee and agreed to place 11 board/authority appointments on the agenda.

Other

Mrs. Fatica stated that she attended the Public Safety Advisory Committee meeting on January 9, 2019, where Public Safety Director Grappy stated that all of the cell towers are completed and they are waiting for Penelec for their service. Testing, training, and transition are the steps for the Next Generation Radio Project. With the testing and training done, the next step is that transition and Director Grappy will be announcing the date for that completion.

Mr. Horton stated he attended several of the Martin Luther King, Jr. events over the past week, including the School to Prison Pipeline panel discussion which was conducted at East High. Mr. Horton stated he was prepared to comment on that but as he stood to do the Pledge of Allegiance, it reminded him of his service in the US Air Force and he really loves saying the Pledge of Allegiance,

even though it's a broken promise to African-Americans in that we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal and he feels that just simply is not the case, not just in the city of Erie, Erie County. He believes that if Dr. King was around today, we wouldn't get the sanitized version that is given so often with the "I Have a Dream". Mr. Horton knows he would be concerned about the immigrant situation as he was with the migrant workers 50 years ago. He would have cared about the unions and organized labor, particularly those that are federal workers who are working and going without pay. We know that nearly 100% of the children in the Erie School District received free or reduced lunches. We know that thousands of children right here in Erie County live in poverty, not just in the urban core but in places like Corry, Wattsburg, and Waterford. Mr. Horton knows that Dr. King would have been concerned about the core. In the 16501 zip code, the poorest zip code in the Commonwealth, it saddens Mr. Horton that kids are going to school with inferior resources or lack of resources in the technology age, and these kids don't have books. They say it is going great but combining three schools into one gives Mr. Horton pause and he rejects the idea that it is going great. While we wait for the Board of Education, which met on January 9th and 10th, as we talk about the King holiday and move into 2019, Mr. Horton understands that education is truly the civil rights issue of the day. There is a gentleman who comes to the Council meetings railing about the Erie Regional College, which Mr. Horton supports. He feels that it pales in comparison to what is needed, but any opportunity that Erie County children get is a plus, so he applauds the Erie Regional College and their method of delivery, but the scale of the problem here is such that we need a standalone Erie Community College, which would be a vehicle to move our children. Right now, Erie County is paying for 14 other community colleges around the state and getting zero return on the investment while there is a powerful legislator on the other side of the state who wants to run for statewide office tell us why this works better and Mr. Horton applauds Senator Wiley for including Erie County in the 9 counties at that time. It was a great idea but Erie is undergoing a revitalization and expanding and Mr. Horton doesn't feel that any community can truly call itself a thriving community without a community college and Erie County is the only county in the Commonwealth without one. Poverty rates are abysmal and he feels it is a reason why Pennsylvania remains #47 out of 50 states in job creation. Mr. Horton stated that he doesn't hear the Times News talking about the abject poverty going on in Erie. Children are suffering and people are suffering so while talking about the federal worker missing paycheck or living paycheck to paycheck, there are people in this community who experience that day in and day out. Poverty is real. He feels that the community college is essential in helping Erie become what it needs to become. Mr. Horton's district is within the city proper limits and there is gentrification. The non-profit footprint is getting bigger and 45% of the 2nd legislative district is tax exempt, yet they want to do LERTA on the Bayfront. Give it to the haves. He would like to support the Mayor and LERTA. Mr. Horton believes in LERTA and believes in development, but he does not believe

in LERTA on the waterfront or in areas that are prospering. He believes in LERTA in blighted areas and to benefit the residents, not corporations. He asks Council to support and push up the state legislative chain and ask for an amusement tax. Erie Events has over \$1 billion in assets and pays no taxes on any of it but they also need a LERTA. Mr. Horton feels that is immoral and a “wall”. While three out of every four Black males are incarcerated and those numbers are no different in Erie County, whether it’s prison, probation, or parole. He feels it would be appropriate during this King celebration week to take the opportunity to speak about these things because it took 200 years for someone like him to be here. Mr. Horton loves this county and was sworn to defend it against all enemies foreign and domestic. He hasn’t been treated fairly in this county on many occasions, his children haven’t, his neighbors haven’t, but it felt really good to stand close to the flag today and it did something for him. This is America and we are great. It doesn’t need to be made great again, it was great the moment we said we could pray to who we wanted to pray to and we can love who we wanted to love and we can work where we wanted to work.

Chairman Leone commented that for the past few years there has been continued discussion over Pleasant Ridge Manor –East. Council continues to try to determine what is best in that particular area and he believes by the consensus of Council that Council does not want to sell the property, but if that’s wrong he asked that members let him know. Chairman Leone stated Council does want to review the issue one more time and he feels that hopefully, within a month, try to determine what will be done at Pleasant Ridge Manor-East. The County is spending approximately \$60,000 a year just to maintain the facility. Chairman Leone appointed Mr. Anderson as Chair, and Mr. Horton and Mrs. Loll as the committee. Chairman Leone stated he doesn’t expect the committee to do any more than come back with the statistics and not make too much of a recommendation because he feels that all members of Council should be involved in making the final decision. Chairman Leone stated that each member has a different opinion and when you create a committee and ask them to come back with a recommendation, everyone feels that should be the final answer, but it isn’t. He believes that all seven members of Council have to be involved in whatever decision is made. He asked the committee to do this as soon as possible.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Kyle Foust moved to amend the agenda to make Ordinance Number 2, 2019 a second reading, and add the appointment of Michelle Griffith-Aresco to the Agricultural Land Preservation Board. This was seconded by Mr. Horton and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Ord. 2, 2019 – GF SA of \$157,206 for Computer & Software Updates

Mr. Czerpak gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 2, 2019, "Third 2019 General Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation of \$157,206 for Computer Bureau Computer Update to Windows 10/2019 Office Software". This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mrs. Fatica and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Res. 2, 2019 – Appr. Easement Agmt. b/w County, Waterford Twp, and Penelec

Mr. Czerpak gave a reading of Resolution 2, 2019, "Approving Permanent Easement Agreement between the County of Erie, Waterford Township, and Pennsylvania Electric Company". This was moved by Mrs. Fatica, seconded by Dr. Foust and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Res. 3, 2019 – Amend. To Art. Of Inc. of Erie Regional Airport Authority

Mr. Czerpak gave a reading of Resolution Number 3, 2019, "Setting Forth A Proposed Amendment to The Articles of Incorporation of the Erie Regional Airport Authority". This was moved by Dr. Foust and seconded by Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Anderson commented that this is technically an authority under the city of Erie, but it is a regional asset that the County has invested nearly \$20 million to fix, renovate, and maintain.

Mr. Horton stated that Council will amend the current charter for another 50 years, which he is opposed to for the sake of austerity. Mr. Martin came in and explained what this was for, but as with the EMTA, Mr. Horton felt it was bad public policy to tie public resources for that amount of time. Council is aware of the length of the charter having a relationship to the ability to obtain bonds or to do any additional capital improvements, but Mr. Horton feels that a 25 or 30 year charter would suffice. Mr. Martin stated that every grant received, the Charter automatically goes another 20 years anyway. Mr. Horton's vote is more or less a protest vote. He does believe that this is a first rate airport and there are first rate employees at the airport and first rate leadership under Mr. Martin, but Mr. Horton will not be supporting a 50 year charter and will be serving a protest vote tonight for austerity reasons. He feels it is unwise to tie public resources for such a long time. He felt that way with the EMTA charter and feels that there is a new paradigm in the way things will be done.

Resolution Number 3, 2019, then carried in a 6-1 roll call vote, with Mr. Horton voting no.

Possible appointment of Mathew Pundt to the Children & Youth Advisory Board

This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mrs Loll and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Possible appointment of Mr. Kyree Chapin to the Children & Youth Advisory Board This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mrs Loll and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Possible appointment of Mr. Chuck Kanarr to the Public Safety Advisory Committee This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mrs Loll and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Possible appointment of Ms. Marie Hackshaw to the MH/ID Board This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mrs Loll and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Possible reappointment of Mr. Jack Pfadt to the Erie County Agricultural Land Preservation Board This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mrs Loll and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Possible reappointment of Terri Pomorski to the MH/ID Board This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mrs Loll and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Possible reappointment of Ms. Stephanie Smith to the MH/ID Board This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mrs Loll and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Possible reappointment of Mr. Jeffrey Shaw to the MH/ID Board This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mrs Loll and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Possible reappointment of Mr. Denzel Keith to the ECGA/ECCFSA This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mrs Loll and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Possible reappointment of David Mitchell to the Erie County Land Bank This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mrs Loll and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

Possible reappointment of Michelle Griffith-Aresco to the Agricultural Land Preservation Board This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mrs Loll and carried in a 7 - 0 vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Foust moved to adjourn at 7:27 p.m.