



# COUNTY OF ERIE

## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Brenton Davis,  
County Executive

December 7, 2022

Chairman Brian Shank, Erie County Council  
County Courthouse  
140 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street Rm. 114  
Erie, PA 16501

Dear Chairman Shank,

Congratulations to you and your fellow Members for the passage of the 2023 Erie County Budget on November 23, 2022. I recognize the significant amount of work put in by your team and all of Council. Having received the budget ordinances on November 28, 2022, we submit vetoed items within the 10-day period referenced in Article VIII, Section 6 of the Erie County Home Rule Charter. Listed below are the action sheets ***I HEREBY VETO*** and reasons for my action. Attached are copies for your convenience.

### **Gaming Fund Budget**

**#10 - Veto \$30,000 in Gaming Funds for MECA.** This organization is not up-to-date with 990 reporting, and their record of accomplishment in delivering services is poor. Other well-funded agencies, including Erie County Care Management already perform MECA's stated mission with much more efficiency.

### **General Fund Budget:**

**#28- Reduction of County Executive Travel line by \$10,000.** This reduction interferes in my ability to lobby for state and federal funding, to market Erie County around the Country, to learn new and better ways to operate and network with County and Municipal Leaders. Travel is currency for bringing positive change to our region. Requiring the Administration to come back to County Council for additional funding next year is not appropriate, as it places Council in the role of arbiter over my work.

**#30 – Reduction of Travel line in Economic Development by \$35,000.** A majority of Council Members took the crucial step to create the Economic Development Department on May 3, 2022. In order for the Department to function effectively, it must meet with other professionals in the field, attend conferences, and visit potential businesses in an effort to promote commerce or location. Travel is currency for accomplishing our goals and upholding our promise to bring economic change to our community.

**#31- Reduction of Professional Fees Line in Economic Development from \$100,000 to \$26,036.** The County is in dire need of infrastructure; whether one speaks of broadband, sewer, water or transportation. In order for the Department to pursue different opportunities there must be some flexibility and ability to pivot and bring funding to bear. Council has clearly stated that it prefers two readings on all ordinances, which amounts to 30 days. Reduction of this funding

erodes our ability to react to opportunity and once again places Council as the arbiter for all Administration economic development initiatives. Any project referenced above would need a project consultant or professional. The ability to spend up to \$24,000 is reasonable for County business. Amounts exceeding that must align with the requirements of the Purchasing Code. The Department must have resources to operate effectively.

**#32- Reduction of Economic Development Initiatives Line from \$100,000 to \$20,000 Restricted.** This funding is vital to the ability of the Department to react and bring resources to a situation. The Purchasing Code acts as a control for expenses over \$25,000, so this line is not an open checkbook by any means. This action sheet is an overreach into the operations of an Administrative Department that requires agility. This action sheet places Part-time Council Members as defacto Cabinet Members running the Economic Development Operation.

**#37- Elimination of HR Position Number #002200-010.** The HR Department recently received eight applicants interested in this significant recruitment and DEI position. The County as with all large employers is in competition to fill many vacancies. In order to continue the current upward trend we need to keep our team at full complement. County Council created positions last year to improve our recruitment of a more diverse staff. The Department is delivering results in that area and in the improvement of employee culture. The position title change to generalist was done only to most efficiently use staff in all areas of the operation. The Director has aligned the titles consistent with her experience at Erie Insurance.

**#39- Elimination of new Deputy Director Position in Tax Revenue.** Erie County is one of only a few counties in the Commonwealth without a Deputy in Tax Claim. This operation successfully collects and processes hundreds of millions of dollars each year without incident. It is essential in terms of succession and continuation of operations in the case of any adverse circumstance. The Department is utilizing brand new software that will bring new responsibilities and work into the office. There has been a trend of smaller municipalities turning over tax collecting duties due to lack of qualified candidates. To accommodate this trend the Department needs a second managerial position.

**#45-Elimination of IT Position Number #002812-005.** This position will serve the Department of Human Services specifically. The position is 80% funded by State dollars. DHS has the remaining 20%, so they do not need additional County funds. The IT operations in DHS are very significant and this position brings with it a new set of duties important to the operation.

#### **American Rescue Plan Fund Budget**

**#5 - \$750,000 to the Savocchio Park project administered by the Erie County Redevelopment Authority.** This speculative investment of \$750,000 in ARPA funds does not show a significant return on investment. To allocate such a large portion of the County's ARPA dollars into a fish farm that may only yield a dozen jobs is imprudent. I have the utmost confidence in the work of the ECRDA and their partners but in the final analysis, these valuable funds could be more impactful elsewhere.

**#6- \$3,000,000 to ECGRA for Building Better Future Program.** I have been negotiating in good faith all year to reach an ARPA Budget through your committee and the whole of Council. This action removes the County's ability to make its own funding decisions, which was at the heart of my objections to the 2022 ARPA Budget. This was also decided very quickly and without much debate. The Gaming Authority received \$4M 2021 ARPA Funds that is sufficient. I believe real economic impact comes through the expenditure of ARP monies on allowable infrastructure projects. In order to coordinate our efforts most efficiently, the County should make the final spending decisions not a third party. There is no need to rush this money out of the ARPA Fund Balance.

**#13- \$737,500 for ECGRA to fund the Beehive Network.** I agree 100% that the Beehive Network should receive these funds, but see no need for ECGRA to administer them. I favor giving the funds to the Beehive directly. The four universities have worked cooperatively to grow the Beehive. The County can negotiate an agreement with Beehive members and administer these funds without issue. I brought this idea to Council with my ARPA budget proposal. Let us work directly with the Beehive.

**Summary**

The restoration of these vital funds to General Fund will require the transfer of \$436,166 in Unassigned Fund Balance as required by the Home Rule Charter. The County General Fund is on pace to have another positive year. There has been a steady cash increase since January and more cash in bank this year than this time last year. Erie County's Audited Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports show a yearly increase in the Unassigned General Fund Balance.

These facts stand against suggestions that County expenditures are outpacing revenues. Erie County is financially healthy and any interpretation to the contrary is simply not factual. I therefore respectfully request your support in allowing these vetoes to stand unchallenged.

Regards,



Brenton Davis  
Erie County Executive

Cc: Members of Erie County Council; Douglas Smith- DOA; Solicitor William Speros; Paul Lichtenwalter-Finance Director; Amy Swartzfager-CPA; Solicitor Tom Talarico; Solicitor Jay Stranahan

2023

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL  
BUDGET ACTION

#	10
Gaming Fund Unrestricted Gaming Administration	

PROPOSED BY Finance Committee  
DESCRIPTION OF ACTION :

To increase grant to MECA to \$30,000.

BUDGET PG.# 590

FINANCIAL INFORMATION				COUNCIL ACTION		11/23/22 VOTE TO	
				REVENUES		EXPENDITURES	
ACCOUNT #				INCREASE	DECREASE	INCREASE	DECREASE
067	021010	008010	General Fund			30,000	
067	021010	099500	Fund Balance Appropriated	30,000			
TOTAL				30,000	0	30,000	0

2023

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL

BUDGET ACTION

PROPOSED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION :

To reduce Travel to \$15,000.

#	28
GENERAL FUND County Executive	

BUDGET PG.# 27

COUNCIL ACTION

11/23/22 VOTE TO

FUND #001 BUREAU #002000

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

ACCOUNT #				REVENUES		EXPENDITURES	
				INCREASE	DECREASE	INCREASE	DECREASE
001	002000	002010	Travel Work Required				10,000
			TOTAL	-	-	-	10,000

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL  
BUDGET ACTION

#	30
GENERAL FUND Community Relations & Economic Development Bureau	

PROPOSED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE  
DESCRIPTION OF ACTION :

To reduce Travel to \$15,000.

BUDGET PG.# 30

COUNCIL ACTION 11/23/22 VOTE TO

FUND #001 BUREAU #002010

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

ACCOUNT #				REVENUES		EXPENDITURES	
				INCREASE	DECREASE	INCREASE	DECREASE
001	002010	002010	Travel Work Required				35,000
			TOTAL	-	-	-	35,000

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL  
BUDGET ACTION

<b>#</b>	<b>31</b>
GENERAL FUND	
Community Relations & Economic Development Bureau	

PROPOSED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE  
DESCRIPTION OF ACTION :

To reduce Professional Fees by \$100,000 to \$26,036.

BUDGET PG.# 30

COUNCIL ACTION 11/23/22 VOTE TO

FUND #001 BUREAU #002010

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

ACCOUNT #			REVENUES		EXPENDITURES		
			INCREASE	DECREASE	INCREASE	DECREASE	
001	002010	002520	Professional Fees				100,000
TOTAL				-	-	-	100,000

2023

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL  
BUDGET ACTION

#	32
GENERAL FUND Community Relations & Economic Development Bureau	

PROPOSED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE  
DESCRIPTION OF ACTION :

To reduce Economic Development Initiatives by \$80,000  
and restrict \$20,000.

BUDGET PG.# 30

COUNCIL ACTION 11/23/22 VOTE TO

FUND #001 BUREAU #002010

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

ACCOUNT #				REVENUES		EXPENDITURES	
				INCREASE	DECREASE	INCREASE	DECREASE
001	002010	002534	Economic Development Initiatives				100,000
001	002010	003700	Restricted Account			20,000	
TOTAL				-	-	20,000	100,000



ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL  
BUDGET ACTION

#	37
GENERAL FUND Human Resources	

PROPOSED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE  
DESCRIPTION OF ACTION :

To eliminate position #002200-010 that was created as a DEI Specialist Position but shifted to HR Generalist.

BUDGET PG.# 35

COUNCIL ACTION 11/23/22 VOTE TO

FUND #001 BUREAU #002200

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

ACCOUNT #				REVENUES		EXPENDITURES	
				INCREASE	DECREASE	INCREASE	DECREASE
001	002200	001010	Non-Bargaining Wages				39,849
001	002200	001200	FICA				3,048
001	002200	001210	Life Insurance				87
001	002200	001220	Hospitalization				16,109
001	002200	001221	Prescription				4,027
001	002200	001230	Workers Compensation				38
001	002200	001240	Retirement				5,252
001	002200	001250	Other Health and Welfare				788
001	002200	001260	Unemployment Compensaion				229
			TOTAL	-	-	-	69,427

2023

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL  
BUDGET ACTION

#	39
GENERAL FUND Revenue/Tax Claim	

PROPOSED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE  
DESCRIPTION OF ACTION :

To eliminate new Deputy Director position (#002340-010)  
requested in the budget.

BUDGET PG.# 44

COUNCIL ACTION 11/23/22 VOTE TO

FUND #001 BUREAU #002340

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

ACCOUNT #				REVENUES		EXPENDITURES	
				INCREASE	DECREASE	INCREASE	DECREASE
001	002340	001010	Non-Bargaining Wages				50,252
001	002340	001200	FICA				3,844
001	002340	001210	Life Insurance				87
001	002340	001220	Hospitalization				16,109
001	002340	001221	Prescription				4,027
001	002340	001230	Workers Compensation				48
001	002340	001240	Retirement				6,623
001	002340	001250	Other Health and Welfare				822
001	002340	001260	Unemployment Compensaion				229
			TOTAL	-	-	-	82,041

2023

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL  
BUDGET ACTION

#	45
GENERAL FUND Information Technology	

PROPOSED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE  
DESCRIPTION OF ACTION :

To eliminate new IT Specialist II position (#002812-005)  
requested in the budget.

BUDGET PG.# 83

COUNCIL ACTION 11/23/22 VOTE TO

FUND #001 BUREAU #002810

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

ACCOUNT #			REVENUES		EXPENDITURES		
			INCREASE	DECREASE	INCREASE	DECREASE	
001	002810	001010	Non-Bargaining Wages				35,432
001	002810	001200	FICA				2,711
001	002810	001210	Life Insurance				87
001	002810	001220	Hospitalization				16,109
001	002810	001221	Prescription				4,027
001	002810	001230	Workers Compensation				34
001	002810	001240	Retirement				4,670
001	002810	001250	Other Health and Welfare				802
001	002810	001260	Unemployment Compensaion				229
			TOTAL	-	-	-	64,101

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL  
BUDGET ACTION

<b>#</b>	<b>5</b>
American Rescue Plan Act Fund ALL	

PROPOSED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE  
DESCRIPTION OF ACTION :

To appropriate \$750,000 to the Savocchio Park project with the Erie County Redevelopment Authority acting as the fiscal agent.

Per ECRDA: "We requested and council approved a \$1 million investment which matches the City of Erie investment for this project. We seek the remaining \$500,000 plus an additional \$250,000 to expand the original plan. This social enterprise project has come a long way since its inception and today stands to be a fully integrated aquaponics and aquaculture facility that will employ at least a dozen individuals. It also has secured a contract with Curtze Foods. The demand from Curtze is so great that unlike the original plan where some of the facility would be shared with the local community, now a smaller, separate greenhouse will be built for the neighborhood, primarily New Americans to build their own small businesses."

BUDGET PG.# 596

ACCOUNT #	FINANCIAL INFORMATION		COUNCIL ACTION		11/23/22		VOTE TO	
			REVENUES		EXPENDITURES			
			INCREASE	DECREASE	INCREASE	DECREASE		
068		Savocchio Park Project			750,000			
		TOTAL						

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL  
BUDGET ACTION

#	6
American Rescue Plan Act Fund	
All	

PROPOSED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE  
DESCRIPTION OF ACTION :

To appropriate \$3,000,000 to the Building a Better Future initiative fund which is developed, managed and administered through the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority.

BUDGET PG.# 596

ACCOUNT #	FINANCIAL INFORMATION	COUNCIL ACTION		11/23/22		VOTE TO	
		REVENUES		EXPENDITURES			
		INCREASE	DECREASE	INCREASE	DECREASE		
068	ECGRA Building a Better Future Initiative Fund					3,000,000	
	TOTAL					3,000,000	

2023

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL  
BUDGET ACTION

#	13
American Rescue Plan Act Fund	
All	

PROPOSED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE  
DESCRIPTION OF ACTION :

To grant \$737,500 to the Beehive Network. Funds to administered by the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority.

BUDGET PG.# 596

ACCOUNT #	FINANCIAL INFORMATION			COUNCIL ACTION		11/23/22 VOTE TO	
				REVENUES		EXPENDITURES	
				INCREASE	DECREASE	INCREASE	DECREASE
068	025116	006232	Beehive Network			737,500	
TOTAL				-	-	737,500	-