

April 25, 2016

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL – Regular Meeting

Chairman Horton, called to order a Regular Meeting of the Erie County Council at 7:00 p.m. at the Erie County Council Chambers, Erie County Courthouse, Erie, Pennsylvania.

**Roll Call**

The County Clerk called the roll:

Members Present: Mr. Breneman  
Mr. DiMattio  
Mrs. Fatica  
Dr. Foust  
Mr. Leone  
Mr. Horton

Members Absent: Mrs. Loll

Also Present: Douglas R. Smith, County Clerk  
Sue Ellen Pasquale, Manager of Accounting  
Joseph Maloney, CPA  
Thomas Talarico, Solicitor  
James Sparber, Director of Finance

**Hearing of  
The Public**

John Zawistowski, Erie, PA; Mr. Zawistowski gave to all of Council a typed synopsis of his issues with OCY. He stated his main concern is why taxpayer money is being used to pay rent for people for no just cause. He asked why there is a policy at OCY to discriminate against men, and that OCY employees are instructed not to follow the PA Custody Act and the Child Abuse Act. He commented that there is an “unwritten” policy at OCY where no father under any condition shall have physical custody of his children, and if the father does have custody, OCY will do everything possible to remove the child and place them somewhere else, even an unfit mother. He stated that this policy needs to be changed, voided, and done away with. He felt that it is wrong that county employees are telling people that they are not allowed to have legal representation in a court of law. They have also told a witness who had witnessed child abuse that they cannot testify. He stated that OCY has tried to discredit a witness by claiming that the witness is the child abuser. He further commented that OCY employees have intentionally withheld information from a court of law to predetermine the outcome of a court case. He claimed that Erie County is responsible for all policies used in the operations of OCY. He is outraged by these actions and stated that any person accused of illicit sexual acts cannot have custody of their children but that this is not followed by Erie County OCY. He commented that this law does not apply in Erie County. He commented that there are a lot of internal policies that have been outlined in his handout that are ridiculous. He was involved in the courthouse for 15 years fighting the abuses by OCY. OCY has also outright refused to accept abuse reports from males, including one by Mr. Zawistowski. He has tried to talk to the Director of OCY but she is never available. He commented that in three months, over \$3,000 in taxpayer money has been spent on one client for rent. He finds it ridiculous that taxes have to be raised to support these types of expenses. He explained that in his handout to Council, there is case information involving himself and his family that is confidential. He would not discuss it publicly but asked that Council review it.

Stewart Nash, Erie PA; Director of the Greater Erie Film Office; Mr. Nash stated this is a non-profit that has been around for about five years and the film office has been around for three years. The Greater Erie Film Office fosters awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the art of film, while providing assistance, support, and education for regional film production. Since 2014, GEFO has been northwestern Pennsylvania’s only state recognized film office with the Association of Film Commissioner International, or AFCI membership and credentials. When production industry decision makers are looking for a location, the AFCI is their first stop and they

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want to rely on a local film commission like GEFO who truly understands their needs and can make filming in the region a success. The AFCEI is the only global association of trained film commissioners with representation on six continents and has over 300 members. They are consistently regarded by the industry as a top notch, trusted resource. The GEFO is devoted to the business of facilitating film and television production activity, which generates billions of dollars annually. They provide invaluable tools for industry decision makers searching for the right location, production resources, and getting the most for every dollar spent. Mr. Nash stated that they have been slowly trying to build up the infrastructure in the region. There was a Pittsburgh Film Industry Report by the Milliken Institute which emphasized a three prong strategy for growing the region's media and entertainment industry, which includes creating and retaining local talent, investing in infrastructure, and generating political support to ensure a long term commitment to the Pennsylvania Film Tax Incentive Program. Mr. Nash has decided to adopt this model as the film commissioner, and since Erie County is in the rust belt film industry, it seems like a good model to follow. GEFO has been in the process of talking to individuals such as Council, along with local universities, and getting the word out and getting the ball rolling on these events. Mr. Nash invited all to the open house at Penn State-Behrend's Greater Erie Arts Rental. This is a new camera and film rental department located at SB-3. The event is from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. with a program beginning at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Nash stated that GEAR rents high end state of the art film making equipment to local, regional, and national film makers and production companies. It is an outreach of Penn-State Behrend. They offer low cost rental rates in the interest of developing the film industry in the area. They are committed to training their student film makers and offer further significant discounts to film makers employing, training, and mentoring the students. They will also be discussing other events and programs available.

Amy Compretore, Erie, PA; Ms. Compretore wanted to discuss the fate of EMTA and the charter. She is aware of the letter that Council sent to the City, and the wish for more representation by Council. She would like Council to put aside the axe between City and County Council and focus on resolving this, not just for the sake of the charter, EMTA, but for the citizens of Erie, both city and county. There are people who transport themselves from the county to the city to work, play, shop, and from the city to the county as well. There are a lot of people in the city that work at the Millcreek Mall. Those businesses would be seriously affected. Without employees, businesses will fail. She felt that businesses would fail in the county as well as the decline in the city. She urged Council to put the words aside for the citizens of Erie County. She asked that it be resolved before September so the citizens can live productive lives.

**Approval of  
Minutes**

Mr. Leone made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 12, 2016 regular meeting. This was seconded by Mr. Breneman and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

**Reports of  
County Officials**

Dr. Foust stated that the Finance Committee met on April 21, 2016, and agreed to place Ordinances 23, 26, 28, and 29, 2016, Resolutions 10, 18, and 19, 2016, on the agenda.

Mr. Breneman stated that the Personnel Committee met immediately following the Finance Committee meeting and agreed to place Ordinance Number 25, 2016, on the agenda.

Mrs. Fatica gave the following report:

“On April 21<sup>st</sup>, I attended the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Volunteer Banquet for Pleasant Ridge Manor Friends Forever to celebrate volunteerism in their community. The volunteers give so much to the residents of Pleasant Ridge Manor, but they expressed to me how rewarding this work is and they invite anyone who is interested in becoming a volunteer to contact Pleasant Ridge Manor Director of Volunteers.

Earlier today, I presented a citation in honor of Public Health Week on behalf of Erie County Council and the community, expressing appreciation for their commitment to the quality of life in

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Erie County. At the Board meeting that was held today, it was discussed that the WIC Program will not be up for bids again by the State until 2017. Also, Community Health Services is working with Community Partners to assure the availability of childhood vaccines for the Erie School District Children who will likely be excluded from school on May 2<sup>nd</sup> due to missing vaccines. A more complete Erie County Department of Health report will be provided at the next County Council meeting.”.

Mr. DiMattio gave the following report:

“I did visit with the seniors at the HANDS apartment in Edinboro about a week ago. This visit was to discuss possible changes that they perceived to have read either in the newspaper or in the news media about changes to EMTA going forward. I assured them, as I tried to do at our last meeting, that our intention is not to change anything operationally with EMTA. It is an issue of funding and board representation and that’s it. Going forward, if we can make EMTA better for all involved, that would be the goal. It has nothing to do with changing routes, losing routes, or otherwise. They were happy that I was able to meet with them. They were going to possibly meet with Mr. Tann. There is a loop service in the Edinboro area that unfortunately tends to fill up with college students and whether it’s other residents of Edinboro and especially those in senior housing there, many times many of them can’t get to the mall to do any shopping. I would also add that in the past week, we found out that GEIDC has declared Chapter 7 bankruptcy. I would quickly say that I’m disappointed that we didn’t hear from the Administration before that this was going to happen, and that we had to find out in the local news media as everyone else did.”.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Ord. 23, 2016 – Cap. Proj. SA of \$4,032,681 For Renovations**

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 23, 2016, “Second 2016 Capital Projects Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation of \$4,032,681, Creation of Line Items for Renovations to Blasco Library, Prison, and Public Defender Office”. This was moved by Dr. Foust and seconded by Mr. Breneman.

Mr. DiMattio moved to amend the face sheet amount to \$2,249,892. This was seconded by Dr. Foust and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Leone then asked to separate the vote on the projects in the ordinance. This vote tally follows:

Council Member	Idea Lab 1A, Prison HVAC, and Public Defender Office	Library – 1B
Mr. Breneman	Yes	Yes
Mr. DiMattio	Yes	Yes
Mrs. Fatica	No	Yes
Dr. Foust	Yes	Yes
Mr. Leone	Yes	No
Mrs. Loll	Absent	Absent
Mr. Horton	Yes	Yes

Ordinance 23, 2016, as amended, passed.

### **Ord. 25, 2016 – GF SA Of \$33,988 for Hiring of Court Reporter**

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 25, 2016, “Eleventh 2016 General Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation of \$33,988 for Hiring of Court Reporter”. This was moved by Mr. Leone, seconded by Mr. Breneman, and carried in a 5-1 vote, with Mr. DiMattio voting no.

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**Ord. 26, 2016 – GF SA  
Of \$4,289,910 for  
IGT to Benefit PRM**

Dr. Foust moved to table Ordinance 26, 2016. This was seconded by Mr. Leone and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

**Res. 10, 2016 –  
In Support of IGT  
Agreement**

This Resolution remained tabled.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Motion to Amend  
Agenda**

Dr. Foust moved to amend the agenda and make Ordinances 28 and 29, 2016, second readings. This was seconded by Mr. Leone and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

**Ord. 28, 2016 – GF  
SA from Prothonotary  
Automation Fees**

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 28, 2016, “Thirteenth 2016 General Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation of \$46,296 from Prothonotary Automation Fees Restricted Fund Balance”. This was moved by Mr. Leone, seconded by Dr. Foust, and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

**Ord. 29, 2016 – GF  
Rev. Revenue &  
Creation of Line Item  
For Taxes Pd Under  
Protest**

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 29, 2016, “2016 General Fund Budget Revised Revenue of \$10,000 and Creation of Line Item for Taxes Paid Under Protest”. This was moved by Mr. Leone, seconded by Dr. Foust, and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

**Res. 18, 2016 –  
Naming Designated  
Agent for Pre-Disaster  
Mitigation Grant**

Mr. Smith gave a reading of Resolution Number 18, 2016, “Naming a Designated Agent for Erie County’s Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant”. This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mr. Leone, and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

**Res. 19, 2016 – App.  
Sole Vendor b/w  
County & MBA  
Energy Advisors**

Mr. Smith gave a reading of Resolution Number 19, 2016, “Approving a Sole Vendor Contract Between the County of Erie and the Manufacturers & Business Association Energy Advisors”. This was moved by Dr. Foust, seconded by Mrs. Fatica, and carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Deneé M. Breter, Council Secretary

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