

November 1, 2007

County Council – Public Hearing on 2008 Budget

Mr. Leone, Chairman, called to order a Public Hearing on the 2008 Budget at 6:00 p.m. in the Erie County Council Chambers, Erie County Courthouse, Erie, Pennsylvania.

Members Present: Mr. Leone, Chairman
Mr. Giles, Vice Chairman
Mr. Augustine
Mr. Cleaver
Mr. Foust

Members Absent: Mrs. Loll
Mr. Mitchell

Adjournment

There being no public testimony, the public hearing was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

Ann M. Bruno, Council Secretary

November 1, 2007

Minutes from Oct. 2, 2007 Public Hrg & Reg. Mtg. and Oct. 16, 2007 Reg Mtg. approved. S.A. for Lake Erie Region Conservancy adopted; S.A. to Fund Balance of Unused Grant Funds from 2006 adopted; Planning S.A. for Agricultural Preservation & Storm Water Grant adopted; Amending Ord. 59, 2004 adopted; Gen. Fund S.A. for Reduction in Transfer to E911 adopted; E911 S.A. for Reclassification of Staff Accountant adopted. First Rdgs. Of 2008 Budget Ordinances and Real Estate Tax Levy. Sale of Parcel from Repository approved.

Mr. Leone, Chairman, 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. After the Pledge of Allegiance, the County Clerk called the roll.

Members Present: Mr. Leone, Chairman
Mr. Giles, Vice Chairman
Mr. Augustine
Mr. Cleaver
Mr. Foust

Members Absent: Mrs. Loll
Mr. Mitchell

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

Citations Presented

Katie Wike
Grape Queen

Mr. Foust stated it was his pleasure to be a judge for the Grape Queen contest with Katie Wike becoming the Grape Queen for 2007. Mr. Foust added she was a very impressive, composed and poised young lady. Both candidates were excellent; however, Ms. Wike had a remarkable knowledge of grapes, what to do with grapes, and possessed the ability to be an ambassador, not only for the grape region, but for Erie County as well. Her presentations were impressive, and Mr. Foust believes

she will do very well as an ambassador for Erie County and the grape region. On behalf of the members of County Council, Mr. Foust presented her with a citation and wished her luck. A round of applause followed.

Gregor Orlando
PIAA Champion

Mr. Leone wished to make a presentation to Gregor Orlando, but first introduced several prestigious people present this evening – an ex-State Senator Quentin Orlando, and his wife, Gregor’s grandparents; his aunt, Jill Beck, who worked for the County of Erie for many years; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Greg Orlando, as well his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Ciacchini. Mr. Leone stated he is very impressed with this young man. Gregor was destined to go on to greatness because at age 14, he won the City Match Play Championship. Everyone is very proud of Gregor, and it is obvious he will move onto greater things as far as golf is concerned. Mr. Leone noted that Gregor’s Uncle Dave was not present this evening, and he may be absent since Gregor can now beat him. Mr. Leone explained that Gregor’s uncle, at one time, was the City Champ and also the Match Play Champ.

Mr. Leone referred to the Citation for Gregor which states “Gregor’s rock solid play included an unlikely par on the par 4 17th hole, which included a well placed deflection off a large rock.” Mr. Leone hoped Gregor brought that rock because it was his lucky rock. Mr. Leone congratulated Gregor on an excellent job, and expressed his belief that Gregor will go onto many great things as far as golf is concerned. A round of applause followed.

Hearing of
The Public

Bob King, Millcreek, stated he has been a lifelong Millcreek resident and was disappointed when Powell Avenue was rerouted. He feels there is no reason this could not have been handled another way. The runway could be expanded without interfering with the golf course. The runway can be reconfigured so the airport authority will get their 7500 feet of runway as planned. This would be a win/win situation for everyone and wouldn’t interfere with the superfund site. Erie County government could save a considerable amount of money.

Renee Vendetti, Erie, stated that when individuals ask for copies of the agenda in the mail, they should get them. Mr. Leone stated the cost for copying was .25 a page and \$3 for a tape. When Mr. Galena needed a copy of a tape, it was more than \$3. She asked to see a fee chart. On September 4, 2007, Mr. Leone referred to the ombudsman position. Today Bill 1709 was introduced. She explained this is a state ombudsman position that would be enacted. This person would hear complaints and listen to the family. She asked why Erie County couldn’t have created an ombudsman position and set precedence.

Kenneth Przepierski, 640 East 12th Street, Erie, noted there were 54 items on the agenda this evening. He is more puzzled than before about the ECHRC, otherwise known as the “Commission”. In 1993 it was created by Ordinance 80 and Paul Foust was chairman back then. He believes the amendment regarding HUD tonight is a violation of federal law which should be looked into by the U.S. Attorney. Much time has been spent changing the ECHRC over the years; it is no wonder the ombudsman got tabled.

Maria Foster, 2301 Peach Street, Erie, stated there was a report on a Pittsburgh station about Erie and the report claimed there would be a takeover within six months. Erie was listed as having the lowest growth in the state, the most people on public assistance, and a lack of jobs. She also believes OCY is getting money from the state, county, juvenile, and federal agencies, as well as taking money from social security and still goes after parents for child support. She plans to contact anyone who she feels can investigate this issue.

Minutes

Mr. Giles moved to approve the minutes of the Public Hearing held October 2, 2007, the Regular Council Meeting on October 2, 2007 and the Regular Meeting held October 16, 2007. Mr. Foust seconded; and it carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Finance
Committee

Mr. Foust reported the Finance Committee met Thursday, October 25, 2007 and discussed the removal of Ordinance 72 from the table; agreed to placing Ordinances 125, 126, 127, 128 and 129 on the agenda for second readings, as well as putting on the agenda for first readings Ordinances 131, 132,

and 133-150 which are ordinances dealing with the budget. These will be handled at the next council meeting as Council makes decisions over the next couple weeks regarding budget cuts, additions, etc. Also on the agenda is the sale of parcel from repository for unsold properties.

Personnel
Committee

Mr. Cleaver reported the Personnel Committee met on October 25, 2007, and agreed to place on the agenda for a second reading, Ordinance 130 which is the reclassification of a staff accountant.

CCAP
Conference

Mr. Giles submitted the following report regarding the Annual CCAP Conference:

The 121st Annual Conference of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania was held from August 4-7 in York County. County leaders from around the Commonwealth gathered to attend workshops and training sessions, network with their peers, discuss state and federal policies that impact counties and elect association leaders for the next year during the Annual Conference.

“The Association serves to strengthen the ability of Pennsylvania’s counties to govern their own affairs and improve the well-being and quality of life for their constituents,” said Percy Dougherty, president of the CCAP and a Lehigh County Commissioner. “To this end, the Association affects the achievement of favorable state legislation, programs and policies, and provides appropriate programs and services to member counties.”

“I know how these issues impact Erie County. We share many of the same challenges of other counties statewide. As a leader of this Association, we can make a stronger voice for Erie County and all the counties in Harrisburg, Washington and all of Pennsylvania,” Dougherty said following the election.

CCAP, founded in 1886, is a statewide, nonprofit, bipartisan association representing the commissioners, chief clerks, administrators, their equivalents in home rule counties, and solicitors of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties.

The Association promotes the common interests of counties by encouraging both a dialogue among county elected officials and a better understanding of county government by federal, state and local elected officials as well as private citizens. The Association represents county government on issues before the state and federal legislative, executive and judicial branches of government. The Association provides services and educational opportunities for its members to assist them in better administering the affairs of their offices to the benefit of the public they serve.

NW Planning
Commission

Mr. Giles reported that on October 5, 2007, the Northwest Planning Commission met. He explained the Commission is a cooperative consisting of approximately six counties in this area to secure grant funding for economic development, and in particular, to help local businesses expand their job base. This commission advanced a series of loans and grants that will affect many businesses throughout our community.

Fred Williams’
Retirement

Mr. Giles reported that on October 5, 2007, he represented the County at the retirement dinner for Fred Williams at the Martin Luther King Center. Mr. Williams has been at the Center for a number of years and has been a strong advocate for the improvement of the housing in the West Bayfront area. When going through the neighborhood, the improvements that have been made are obvious, and Mr. Williams’ legacy is the large number of homes that have been built, as well as the apartments that were not there before. Mr. Williams has opted to spend time with his family and Mr. Giles is unaware at this time as to who will replace him. The Planning Department has worked cooperatively with the Martin Luther King Center in that affordable housing project historically, and will continue to do so. Anyone in that area can very well see that 90% of the housing has been improved, and has largely been done through the effort of Fred Williams and the Martin Luther King Center.

NW County
Comm. Assoc.

Mr. Giles reported the Northwest County Commissioners Association met in Clearfield on October 9, 2007. As the elected president of that 16 county organization, having spent a year in office, this was Mr. Giles' last opportunity to chair that meeting. Much of the focus of the meeting was in regard to state issues such as election and changing the calendar date for the Presidential Primary, the funding of children's services issues and the issue of transportation and changing Interstate 80 to a toll road. This was a productive meeting, and Mr. Giles expressed his pride at the group of commissioners. As everyone may or may not be aware, Mr. Giles pointed out this year is an election year for county commissioners in general. Erie County is an exception, in that it is a home rule county, and only four members are up for re-election. Mr. Giles explained that throughout Pennsylvania when counties have elections, all three commissioners are elected. Mr. Giles has a data report through CCAP about the changes that have already occurred from the May Primary for anyone who may be interested. Somewhere in the area of 35% of the other commissioners either opted not to run, or were already defeated in the primary. As the November Election draws nearer, it would not be a surprise to see that net effect around 50%. Some of these are commissioners that both Mr. Leone and Mr. Giles have worked with over the years who have decided to retire, and the networking and connections which have developed over the years will change. Mr. Giles explained that next year will be a challenging year due to the large number of newly elected officials because the first year is a learning curve and the complexities of the job are more difficult and involved than one would expect. State and federal policies will be impacted to some degree by the fact that many commissioners throughout Pennsylvania will be new.

Election Brd.

On October 10, 2007, Mr. Giles reported the Election Board met and some enhancements have been implemented to insure the accuracy of the ballot. The chair of each of the respective parties has been invited to review the ballot before it goes to print providing another set of eyes to make sure everything is correct. An additional set of eyes then reviews the ballot through an accounting firm. Mr. Giles observed the ballot going into November is relatively simple, but as the Board goes forward to the Presidential Primary, it is expected that the ballot will be more complex and more crowded combined with the fact that there may be more voters coming out to vote who have not voted on the electronic system in the past. These procedures are being put into place to safeguard and check the election process, especially as it becomes more complex for next year. Mr. Giles wished to assure everyone that the Board is making every effort to prevent any problems.

Economic
Dev. Corp.

Mr. Giles reported the Erie County Economic Development Corporation held its annual retreat and the County Executive Mark DiVecchio was present along with Mayor Sinnott, and Mr. Giles as well as approximately 15 others who serve on each of their boards. This was a priority setting meeting attempting to come up with an agenda that is reasonable and can be advanced and be successful. This is always challenging and Mr. Giles feels the group is well on its way in that direction.

GEIDC

Mr. Giles reported the GEIDC met on October 18, 2007, and an issue at the meeting was the role and relationship with GEIDC to the tire burning initiative on the Hammertmill site. This was a very detailed set of debates regarding that issue, and Mr. Giles noted it will be interesting to see how this develops.

Erie County
Library

Mr. Giles reported that the Strategic Team of the Erie County Library System met on October 25, 2007 with Mr. Pasquale and the architects to discuss the final plans for what is now referred to as the West County Branch. This branch is located on the border between Millcreek and Fairview by design so that two large townships adjoining each other feel that it is close enough to their neighborhoods to actually participate in the programs and services. Another meeting will be held on November 8, 2007 to review those final plans and Mr. Giles believes it is ready to go forward. The branch is located on a corner of a busy intersection, and Mr. Giles believes it will be a big asset providing many services.

Sheriff's Ofc.

Mr. Giles noted that typically there have been arguments pertaining to the Sheriff's Office over issues relative to overtime and now, school resource officers. It seems there is never a shortage of things to argue about. He referred to an email he received from the District Attorney's Office:

The Erie County District Attorney's Office congratulates Lt. Paul Greiner and Deputy Scott Steva of the Erie County Sheriff's Department on a job well done in the water rescue of a vehicle crash victim on Interstate 79. "These officers are true heroes, who, took swift action that saved the life of one of our citizens and prevented a certain tragedy", says Erie County District Attorney Bradley H. Foulk.

On September 29, 2007, Lt. Paul Greiner and Deputy Scott Steva, both Erie County Sheriff Deputies were en route to the Erie County Prison via interstate 79 after picking up a prisoner from the Crawford County Jail. Just before entering Erie County the deputies saw a small group of people standing in a heavy rain on the side of the highway looking over the embankment. The deputies stopped to see if they could be of assistance and were surprised to see a overturned vehicle resting on its roof in a deep ditch with rushing water. Upon hearing there was a driver trapped in the vehicle the deputies immediately jumped into the water and attempted to pull the victim from the vehicle. The driver was still in the driver's seat restrained by his seatbelt. The water level was reaching the victim's head and time was of the essence. The deputies crawled into the passenger compartment, cut the seatbelt from the victim, broke the steering wheel to free the man's leg and pulled the victim onto the bank for safety. Lt. Paul Greiner received a rotator cuff injury during the rescue."

Mr. Giles stated these deputies did an outstanding job and noted there were photos attached as well. Mr. Giles wished to extend compliments to those two deputies for doing something way above the call of duty, and performing a lifesaving task. On behalf of County Council, Mr. Giles extended congratulations to those officers and to Sheriff Merski. Council is proud when good news happens.

Mr. Foust's
Report

Mr. Foust submitted the following report:

On October 17, 2007, Mr. Foust attended the Harborcreek Township Supervisors Meeting.

On October 19, 2007, Mr. Foust attended the ribbon cutting ceremony for Shades Beach Safe Harbor in Harborcreek.

On October 20, 2007, Mr. Foust attended the Carpenters Local 81 Pin Ceremony at the Bayfront Convention Center. More than 100 carpenters were honored for reaching various years of service.

On October 23, 2007, Mr. Foust attended the United Way's kickoff for their fundraising campaign with labor organizations.

On October 24, 2007, Mr. Foust attended the Stairways annual meeting/luncheon at the Bel-Aire Clarion Hotel and Conference Center.

On October 28, 2007, Mr. Foust attended the Iroquois Elementary dedication and delivered a Proclamation from County Council congratulating the Iroquois School District.

Ordinance 72
Remains tabled

Mr. Leone asked for a motion to remove Ordinance Number 72, 2007, "Comprehensive Revision and Re-enactment of the Administrative Code" from the table. There being no motion to remove, the ordinance remained tabled.

Lake Erie Region
Cons. Grant

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 125, 2007, "Forty-First 2007 General Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation for a Grant to the Lake Erie Region Conservancy and the Creation of a New Line Item." Mr. Foust moved to adopt; Mr. Cleaver seconded, and it carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Unused Grants
From 2006

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 126, 2007, "Forty-Second 2007 General Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation to Fund Balance of Unused Grant Funds from 2006 and the Creation of a New Line Item." Mr. Foust moved to adopt; Mr. Cleaver seconded, and it carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Agricultural Pres.
& Storm Water
Grant Prgrms.

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 127, 2007, "Third 2007 Planning Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation for Additional Funds for Agricultural Preservation &

Storm Water Grant Programs and the Creation of a New Line Item.” Mr. Giles moved to adopt; Mr. Augustine seconded, and it carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Leone indicated to Mr. Smith that he believed he had read Ordinance 125, 2007 twice instead of Ordinance Number 126, 2007. It was ultimately decided that Ordinance Number 125 was read once followed by Ordinance 126.

Amending Ord.
59, 2004

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 128, 2007, “Amending Ordinance 59, 2004, ‘Erie County Human Relations Commission’ to Comport with HUD Requirements.” Mr. Giles moved to adopt; Mr. Foust seconded.

Mr. Giles wished to clarify this particular ordinance explaining that one of the areas of the Human Relations Commission was to secure federal funding from the government through HUD to deal with the issue of housing discrimination. Typically in Pennsylvania, HUD has contracted agents, one in Allegheny County, or Pittsburgh, and the other in Philadelphia. In Pennsylvania, there is no other agency with regard to the housing discrimination issue, so the challenge was to secure financial support and validation by changing the Commission’s rules, regulations and procedures based on HUD’s recommendations. Mr. Giles further explained that the HUD office in Washington, DC performed a review and notified Erie County what changes needed to be made. Therefore, the changes in the ordinance before Council this evening are the changes HUD wanted. This will guarantee a contract relationship with HUD to deal very formally and very seriously with housing discrimination issues and provide resources of \$150,000 for the next three years as a contracted agent. Mr. Giles cautioned this means that in this three year period of time, HUD will review how these cases are handled and the results of the cases. There is a certain quality point that must be in place in order to guarantee continued funding. After the three year period is complete, then the contractual relationship with HUD is on a fee for service basis, the idea being that by that point there is a trained staff with a knowledge level in place, and the agency should be able to handle these matters on its own. This introduces to the County a potential for just under \$500,000 over three years to deal with the issues, legal and judicial, relative to housing discrimination.

Mr. Giles expressed his gratitude to the Commission and for the support of Council and the administration in moving this issue forward. He is optimistic that the Commission will perform an outstanding job over the next three years and will provide an enhanced and improved quality of life for all the citizens of Erie County. This has been most challenging in dealing with a variety of different levels of government.

Mr. Leone called for a vote on Ordinance Number 128, 2007, and it carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Reduction in
Transfer to E 911

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 129, 2007, “Forty-Third 2007 General Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation for a Reduction in the Transfer to the E911 Fund Budget.” Mr. Giles moved to adopt; Mr. Cleaver seconded, and it carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Reclass. Of Staff
Accountant

Mr. Smith gave a second reading of Ordinance Number 130, 2007, “Seventh 2007 E911 Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation for the Reclassification of Staff Accountant to Secretary/Bookkeeper.” Mr. Cleaver moved to adopt; Mr. Augustine seconded, and it carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

First Readings

Mr. Smith gave first readings of the following ordinances:

First Readings

Ordinance Number 131, 2007, “2007 General Fund Budget Release of Restricted Funds for Operation of New Pre-Release Center and Creation of New Line Items”

Ordinance Number 132, 2007, "Thirteenth 2007 Public Health Fund Budget Supplemental Appropriation for an Additional Beach Grant, a Waiver of the Purchasing Code, and Creation of a New Line Item"

Ordinance Number 133, 2007, "2008 Domestic Relations Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 134, 2007, "2008 Planning Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 135, 2007, "2008 Library Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 136, 2007, "2008 Public Health Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 137, 2007, "2008 Emergency Management Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 138, 2007, "2008 E-911 Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 139, 2007, "2008 Pleasant Ridge Manor Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 140, 2007, "2008 Pleasant Ridge Manor Depreciation Reserve Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 141, 2007, "2008 Health Choices Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 142, 2007, "2008 Drug and Alcohol Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 143, 2007, "2008 Children and Youth Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 144 2007, "2008 Mental Health/Mental Retardation Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 145, 2007, "2008 Liquid Fuels Budget"

Ordinance Number 146, 2007, "2008 Gaming Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 147, 2007, "2008 Debt Service Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 148, 2007, "2008 Employee Fringe Benefit Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 149, 2007, "2008 General Fund Budget"

Ordinance Number 150, 2007, "2008 Real Estate Tax Levy"

Sale of Parcel Mr. Leone asked for a motion for the sale of parcel from Repository for Unsold Properties at Index Number 24-012-036.3-074.79 Mr. Giles moved; Mr. Foust seconded, and it carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Adjournment There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Ann M. Bruno, Council Secretary
