

January 3, 2008

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL – Reorganization Meeting

Mr. Smith called to order a Reorganization Meeting of the Erie County Council at 3:30 p.m. in the Erie County Council Chambers, Erie County Courthouse. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. Maloney called the roll:

Members Present: Mr. Cleaver  
Mr. Fatica  
Mr. Foust  
Mr. Giles  
Mr. Leone  
Mrs. Loll  
Mr. Mitchell

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

Chairman Elected

Mr. Smith opened the floor for nominations to the office of County Council Chairman. Mr. Foust nominated Mr. Giles. Mr. Leone seconded the nomination.

Mr. Leone moved that the nominations be closed; Mr. Foust seconded the motion. There being no objections, the nominations for the office of County Council Chairman were closed.

Mr. Smith called for the vote on the nomination of Mr. Giles, and Mr. Giles was elected to the office of County Council Chairman in a unanimous roll call vote.

Vice Chairman  
Elected

Mr. Giles opened the floor for nominations for the office of County Council Vice Chairman. Mr. Leone nominated Mr. Cleaver; Mr. Fatica seconded the motion.

Mr. Leone moved that the nominations be closed; Mr. Foust seconded the motion. There being no objections, the nominations for the office of County Council Vice Chairman were closed.

Mr. Giles called for the vote on the nomination of Mr. Cleaver, and he was elected to the office of County Council Vice Chairman in a unanimous roll call vote.

Aprvl of Outside  
Counsel to Represent  
Cnty in Legal Action  
by Summit Twp.

Mr. Giles reported that a Memorandum has been received from the County Solicitor, Wally Knox, regarding the issues that surround his representation in the legal action filed by Summit Township against Erie County. One of the key points in the memo, which Mr. Giles feels is important, involves Mr. Knox's involvement in the Gaming Revenue Committee's Report. Mr. Knox may be called as a witness detailing the work that went into the report. That is a concern on the part of both Mr. Knox and Mr. DiVecchio, the County Executive. Mr. Giles asked for a motion to move forward with the hiring of outside counsel. Mr. Cleaver moved; Mrs. Loll seconded.

Mr. Giles stated that one of Council's concerns, after discussion with Mr. Talarico, is that Mr. Talarico also be included. Mr. Talarico, although he did not serve on the committee, has worked with the Gaming Committee over a two year period as well. Council would like Mr. Talarico to be involved in the selection and discussions regarding this matter as a stipulation of

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this motion. Council would like to make sure this matter is handled in the most expeditious and cost effective manner, and including Mr. Talarico in these discussions is of paramount importance. Mr. Giles called for a vote on the motion, and it carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Plaque Presented  
to Mr. Leone

Mr. Giles stated that he and Mr. Leone have served together for a number of years, having seen three county executives, a variety of president judges, a variety of lawsuits and issues. They have met many challenges together. Mr. Leone is a person who represents a spirit of cooperation of working together, working with the administration, courts, and other elected officials to guarantee that the best results are achieved in the most cost effective manner. Mr. Leone's friendship, dedication and hard work are appreciated by everyone. Mr. Giles noted the past year has been challenging. Mr. Giles stated that at times, one can see ahead of the curve. However, what made 2007 particularly challenging are the issues that came up which no one would have been able to anticipate or predict. With Mr. Leone's leadership, Council was able to handle these situations. Mr. Giles is looking forward to more challenges, and with Mr. Leone's help, a good foundation has been laid to move forward. Mr. Giles thanked Mr. Leone for his leadership this past year. Mr. Giles presented the plaque to Mr. Leone.

Mr. Leone's  
Comments

Mr. Leone stated that 2007 was a difficult year starting off with the funding of MTR, discussions regarding changes in MH/MR, problems with OCY, contract negotiations with the county, and considerations regarding a community college. He believes this year was, without a doubt, the most difficult year he has had on this Council. Mr. Leone noted that Mr. Giles has been elected Second Vice President of CCAP meaning in a couple years, he'll be president of CCAP. He is also on the Courts and Corrections Committee, on the Prison Overcrowding Task Force, and president of UC Trust of CCAP. Mr. Giles is one of the representatives of the state for NACo, as well as the chairman of the Northwest Caucus, and Mr. Leone wonders when Mr. Giles will have time to be the chairman of County Council. Mr. Leone stated it has been a pleasure dealing with all members of this Council, and he has always believed that this body has had the best interest of the community at heart, and in the future, it will remain the same.

Mr. Foust's  
Comments

Mr. Foust congratulated Mr. Leone on his leadership for the last twelve months. The experience he has brought to county government has been helpful to everyone in the community, and Mr. Leone should be congratulated for the manner in which he conducted himself. Mr. Foust wished Mr. Giles the best of luck. His experience will be very helpful, as this may be a very trying year. Mr. Foust also wished luck to the rest of his colleagues, and in particular, Mr. Fatica, who has been a family friend for over thirty years. Mr. Foust looks forward to serving with him along with everyone else.

Mrs. Loll's  
Comments

Mrs. Loll agreed this past year has been difficult and trying; however, Council has had a wonderful leader and Mr. Leone did a wonderful job keeping everyone together and focused. She values the experience Mr. Leone brought to Council, as well as his friendship. Mrs. Loll thanked Mr. Leone for the past year, and stated she is looking forward to next year with a new colleague along with other members of Council.

Mr. Fatica's  
Comments

Mr. Fatica stated that he is honored and proud to join members of Council.

Mr. Cleaver's  
Comments

Mr. Cleaver stated this has been a learning experience for him. He takes his hat off to those who have been around for years, and to Mr. Fatica. He advised Mr. Fatica that there is a great deal of knowledge on Council, and he suggested Mr. Fatica take it all in. Mr. Cleaver stated he hopes that 2008 brings what 2007 didn't. He thanked everyone.

Mr. Mitchell's  
Comments

Mr. Mitchell wished to echo many comments made earlier. He is looking forward to working with Mr. Fatica. Council has been through some rough times together, and that should help Mr. Fatica. Mr. Mitchell acknowledged the Council staff, Mr. Maloney, Mrs. Bruno, Mr. Smith and Mrs. Wright, who do a great job for the members of Council as this is a collective effort. Mr. Mitchell also thanked

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Mr. Mitchell's  
Comments

the administration, in particular, Ms. Pasquale, Mr. Wiley and Mr. Sparber, who are present at every meeting. Council appreciates their tenacity to sit through all of these meetings. County government has changed over the years with the complexities growing tremendously with the human services growth, the prison, and the courts. Congress provides new challenges every day, and Council meets those challenges with the help of a highly skilled staff and also the administration to help deal with all the problems. From the CCAP end, Mr. Mitchell stated that Erie County has been a real leader in the County Commissioner's Association of Pennsylvania. He believes this is good for the county because the connections he found through his leadership role in CCAP has provided opportunities to meet with officials in Harrisburg that one would not be able to have an audience with otherwise; that is the strength of CCAP. Mr. Mitchell has been privileged to have held leadership in that organization, and is looking forward to Mr. Giles carrying that banner in the future. It is always good for Erie County. As an example, Mr. Mitchell pointed out that because of these connections, when meeting with Emergency Management people in Harrisburg, instead of meeting with the deputy secretary, he met with the secretary and both deputies. Mr. Mitchell took 35 trips to Harrisburg in 18 months because it does bring back programs for Erie County. He has had the opportunity to solve several issues that the County has had. The work Mr. Giles has done on the state and national level has brought back millions of dollars, especially in the corrections and mental health areas, with his outreach through NACo. Mr. Mitchell commends Mr. Giles for taking on this responsibility. When something needs to be done, you look to someone willing to take on challenges. Mr. Giles will be here for support and to work with everyone. Mr. Mitchell looks forward to a good year.

Comments by  
New Chairman

Mr. Giles commented that Council has had the opportunity over the years to build a true spirit and true partnership, both among members of Council with each other, and with the administration and the courts. Mr. Giles hopes to continue to grow those partnerships so that Council can become even more effective. He expressed his appreciation for all the comments that have been made. As Council looks forward in 2008, new library branches will be built. It will be a challenge involving both fundraising and staffing. Also, the new work release will be opening, and he expressed his hope that this will bring new and innovative programming issues. He pointed out the grant received from NACo regarding the mentally ill offenders and the aversion program to take people out of the correctional system, where often they linger, staying too long, and costing more than putting these individuals into effective programs that deal with the mental illness issues that brought them into the system. There is also the emergency dispatch center that will be opening on Oliver Road. As everyone is aware, this is a large project involving Corry, Millcreek and the City of Erie over the coming year. There is a great deal of training and staffing issues still facing Council. Mr. Giles also advised that a grant was also received from NACo regarding interoperability to compare the technologies that Erie County is implementing with the technologies in the best practice arena at a national level. A team will be working with the NACo staff in regard to interoperability making certain that this investment is the best practice for emergency facilities. In that spirit of cooperation, Mr. Giles looks forward to 2008.

Mr. Giles referred to those individuals that have worked very intensely over two years on the gaming issue. He is optimistic that the work product endorsed in December will provide a strong foundation in moving forward with the legal challenges and with the policy challenges regarding the gaming revenue money. Everyone on the panel took the widest view possible and provided much depth, and this document is well articulated from a legal point of view. Council has already endorsed extra legal staff working through Mr. Knox's office with the help of Mr. Talarico. An important note is that Judge Dunlavey indicated in the stipulations he would expedite this case. Erie County can still go forward with the filing to create the authority, as well as move forward with the creation of the Regional Assets Advisory Panel. Mr. Giles reminded everyone present that the appointments need to be turned in within the next two

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Comments by  
New Chairman

weeks. An individual concerned about or having some familiarity with regional assets would be appropriate. There should be one appointment from every council district and two from the administration, Council will vote on those appointments at a future council meeting

As Mr. Mitchell has indicated, Council is only as good as the staff that supports them, helping to make certain their job is done successfully; and Mr. Giles thanked Mrs. Bruno, Mr. Maloney, Mr. Smith and Mrs. Wright for their hard work so at the end of the day, Council looks good and the County of Erie successful.

Finance  
Committee

Mr. Giles announced that Mr. Mitchell will serve as Chairman of the Finance Committee.

Personnel  
Committee

Mr. Giles announced that Mr. Cleaver will serve as Chairman of the Personnel Committee.

Mr. Giles thanked everyone for their friendship, support and hard work as Council moves forward in 2008.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

Ann M. Bruno, Council Secretary

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