

January 4, 2010

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL – Reorganization Meeting

Mr. Smith called to order a Reorganization Meeting of the Erie County Council at 12:00 p.m. in the Erie County Council Caucus Room, Erie County Courthouse. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. Maloney called the roll:

Members Present: Mr. Beeman
Mr. Fatica
Dr. Foust
Mr. Giles
Mr. Leone
Mrs. Loll

Members Absent: Mr. Cleaver

Also Present: Douglas R. Smith, County Clerk
Joseph P. Maloney, Council CPA
Thomas Talarico, Council Solicitor

Chairman Elected

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

Mr. Leone moved that the nominations be closed; Mr. Giles 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 Dr. Foust, and Dr. Foust was elected to the office of County Council Chairman in a unanimous roll call vote.

Dr. Foust opened the floor for public comment. There being no member of the public wishing to speak, Dr. Foust opened the floor for nominations for the office of County Council Vice Chairman.

Vice Chairman
Elected

Mr. Fatica nominated Mr. Leone; Mr. Giles seconded the motion.

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

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

Comments by
New Chairman

Dr. Foust thanked his colleagues for their confidence in choosing him to serve as Chairman for 2010. He wished to address a few housekeeping issues. Dr. Foust has asked Mr. Fatica to serve as Chairman of the Finance Committee which Mr. Fatica has accepted. Mr. Giles will be the Vice Chairman of that particular committee. Mrs. Loll will serve as Chairperson of the Personnel Committee, and Mr. Leone will serve as Vice Chairman. The members of the Retirement Board will remain the same.

Dr. Foust referred to the list of liaison appointments for Members of Council which is before them. Some changes will be made and suggestions have also been made to Dr. Foust. Certain Members of Council have stated that they would like to take over some of the liaison appointments Mr. Mitchell held. Dr. Foust acknowledged Mr. Mitchell's presence and thanked him for attending. If any member of Council has any particular area of interest or expertise that

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Comments by
New Chairman

they would be interested in serving on, Dr. Foust asked that he be notified by the next finance meeting, and he will address those changes.

As Council looks forward to the coming year, there are many transitions to be made and some very important issues that need to be dealt with. A new administration is in place that Council will need to help get up and running relatively quickly. The county is a very complex organization and there cannot be a long process of allowing Mr. Grossman to get his team into place. Dr. Foust asked that Council look at Mr. Grossman's requests with the same fairness and flexibility offered the DiVecchio administration four years ago. Dr. Foust expressed his hope that this year will be off to a cooperative and quick start, and a good tone will be set, not only for 2010, but for the next four years in dealing with the Grossman administration.

Dr. Foust then addressed the issue of public safety which has been on everybody's mind. The report is due by the end of March, and he hopes that everyone will keep an open mind as to the recommendations made by that particular study. This will be a very difficult budget, as was the previous budget. There are costs of doing business, and public safety is certainly a high priority, if not the highest priority. Dr. Foust believes that Council will do all that is necessary to ensure that facility runs properly and to its fullest capacity.

Central Court is another issue Dr. Foust hopes to address this year. The main floor of the Courthouse is the business floor. The combustibility of Central Court and the issues dealt with are quite intimidating to the visiting public. There are nine courtrooms on the second floor, and Dr. Foust believes a reasonable solution to remove what he feels is a ticking time bomb can be reached. He explained that Council offered its chambers as a temporary solution approximately 20 years ago. Dr. Foust believes it is time, more for the safety of the visitors coming to the Courthouse to do business, to remove Central Court from the first floor.

Dr. Foust then welcomed the newest member of Council, Mr. Beeman, and congratulated him on being elected and sworn into Council. Mr. Beeman will find that this group is a very cooperative group. There are issues that everyone agrees on, and also areas of disagreement which are resolved peacefully and diplomatically. Dr. Foust believes that Mr. Beeman will find this to be a good group to work with and Members of Council look forward to working with Mr. Beeman.

Dr. Foust noted that the biggest priority over the next 12 months will be the budget. Last year, the County received \$31 million less in federal and state grants which amounted to approximately 15% of the budget. This year the news will probably not be much better. Although no members of the administration are present at this meeting, Dr. Foust expressed his hope that the administration will be frugal in their requests as Council manages the budget. Dr. Foust looks forward to the coming year.

Dr. Foust then asked for any comments from other Members of Council.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

Ann M. Bruno, Council Secretary
