

May 13, 2010

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL – Special Meeting

Dr. Foust called to order a Special Meeting of the Erie County Council at 3:45 p.m. in the Council Caucus Room, Erie County Courthouse. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the County Clerk called the roll:

Members Present: Dr. Foust, Chairman
Mr. Leone, Vice Chairman (arrived after recess)
Mr. Beeman
Mr. Cleaver
Mr. Fatica
Mr. Giles
Mrs. Loll

Members Absent: None

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

Recess

Dr. Foust recessed the meeting at 3:47 p.m. to allow additional time for Mr. Leone's arrival, and reconvened the meeting at 3:52 p.m. upon his arrival.

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Mr. Smith gave a reading of Resolution Number 25, 2010, "Approving the Erie County E-911 Three Year Plan." Mr. Giles moved to adopt; Mr. Fatica seconded.

Dr. Foust asked Mr. Grappy of Public Safety about proposed upgrades in the Executive Summary of the Plan referring to the budgetary figures for 2010, 2011, and 2012. He stated that 2010 shows approximately \$2.8 million, and asked whether that figure is for this year's budget or 2011. Mr. Grappy asked whether Dr. Foust was referring to personnel costs. Dr. Foust replied this involved proposed upgrades and future plans and needs, hardware upgrades. Mr. Grappy explained that it is not just for 2010, but actually for the length of the plan. Some of the hardware upgrades are for the computer and dispatch system, workstations and servers. He noted there are some upgrades, but added that these are budgetary estimates and in no way holds Erie County to any capital expenditures or upgrades outlined in that plan. This is what the IT Department perceives as far as expenses for 2010, 2011, and 2012 along with the justifying the surcharge of \$1.25 per active line. He emphasized that Erie County is not held to any future capital expenditures or upgrades in this document.

Dr. Foust referred to an asterisk next to "Wireless Communication Network" and asked the meaning of the asterisk since he could find no reference point for it in the document. Mr. Grappy explained that the wireless communications network is part of a 900 megahertz which will be used to transmit mobile data for law enforcement officers throughout the county. He explained that when a dispatcher enters the information in the computer system, all that information is transmitted through this wireless network to computers in the patrol cards. Dr. Foust again asked what the asterisk is calling attention to in the document, and requested Mr. Grappy provide that information at a later time.

Mr. Fatica inquired about the prospects of the state assuming more funding responsibilities for the 911 Call Center. Mr. Grappy responded that there is an Act 78 rewrite underway. As everyone is aware, the landline revenue, or Act 78, continues to decrease. The wireless, or Act 56, is a grant program for which application is made for expenditures such as outlined in the Tri-Annual Plan to help offset costs. However, PEMA has decided to base this on three priority

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levels – Tier 1, 2, and 3 of essentials to plan future upgrades based on must have compared to would like to have. PEMA makes the final determination of how much is awarded to all 67 counties in the Commonwealth. The Voice Over IP legislation, or Act 72, continues to increase, but again, where landline revenue is \$1.25 per active line, the Voice Over IP revenue is \$1 per provider. Mr. Grappy explained that revenue is sent directly to the state. The state takes 2% and remits the remainder back to the counties. Landline revenue is decreasing faster than Voice Over IP is being remitted to the state.

Mr. Fatica believes a bright spot might be that legislation appears to be moving to fix this problem and increase some of these monies. Mr. Love, Director of Public Safety, added that prepaid cell phones are now included. Mr. Grappy stated that the prepaid cell phones alone are estimated to bring in another \$20 million across the Commonwealth. Cellular contracts, as far one the one and two year contracts which were very popular at one time, have actually decreased and prepaid wireless is on the rise.

Mr. Leone stated that the rewrite of Act 78 is no more than a possible increase in the fees for the landlines. He agreed that landline revenues are continuing to decrease. Mr. Leone believes the biggest problem is how this funding is distributed on the cell phone revenue, not only those purchased through AT & T or Verizon, but also independent phones purchased at Walmart, etc. He noted the bigger problem is that the total amount of those funds should be distributed differently that they have been. The funds do not come to Erie County, they go to the state and the state distributes the funds based on, in Mr. Leone’s estimation, whoever has the most clout, which in his opinion will always be Philadelphia and Allegheny. He believes they are trying to get some type of fairness as far as 911 and revenues are concerned. Hopefully, at some point, the state would be able to fund 911 services throughout Pennsylvania.

Dr. Foust called for a vote on Resolution Number 25, 2010, and it carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

Ann M. Bruno, Council Secretary
