

January 3, 2013

ERIE COUNTY COUNCIL – Reorganization Meeting

Mr. Smith, County Clerk, called to order a Reorganization Meeting of the Erie County Council at 3:15 p.m. in the Erie County Council Chambers, Erie County Courthouse, Erie, Pennsylvania. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. Smith asked for a moment of silence for all those who passed during 2012.

Mr. Smith called the roll:

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

Members Absent: None

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

Prayer

Mrs. Loll recited a prayer:

Let us pray. We give you thanks almighty God for all your blessings during the past year, and your guidance to help us govern well. Lord, you have brought us safely to the beginning of this year. Look down upon us while we move into a new year, and help us to make wise and just decisions. Amen.

Chairman Elected

Mr. Smith opened the floor for nominations to the office of County Council Chairman. Mr. Leone nominated Mr. Giles; Dr. Foust seconded. Mr. Leone moved to close the nominations; Dr. 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 nomination for the office of County Council Vice Chairman. Dr. Foust nominated Mr. Cleaver; Mr. Leone seconded. Mr. Leone moved to close the nominations; Dr. Foust seconded. There being no objections, the nominations for the office of County Council Vice Chairman were closed.

Mr. Giles called for a vote on the nomination of Mr. Cleaver as Vice Chairman of Council and it carried in a unanimous vote.

Presentation to Mr. Fatica

Mr. Fatica, 2012 Chairman of Council, was presented with a Liberty Eagle on a base. Mr. Fatica thanked everyone for his gift stating he will cherish it always.

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Mr. Fatica's
Comments

Mr. Fatica noted that anyone who has held a County Council position knows that it is a seven day a week job because there are so many issues involved. This last year, the first reassessment in ten years was held causing some controversy. A large footprint profile in the tourism industry was made by moving forward with a motion that also stirred controversy. Council held the line on the taxes for the third year in a row which is important because of the size of the local government consisting of \$380 million. He also noted that the airport runway extension is coming to a conclusion; he drives by every day and the runway is a tangible result of this Council's wisdom and advice from others as to how to best use this money to create jobs and promote the economy. The Erie Insurance Arena is coming along as well and will help to improve the area. Another positive note is that the County's bond rating went up. Mr. Fatica thanked everyone for their advice and the friendships he has made and will have forever.

Mr. Fatica pointed out that the legal process has prevailed in the long extended battle over a councilman's position. He thanked those that provide legal advice to Council. He expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve as chairman and stated he looks forward to serving in that capacity again. He welcomed Mr. DiMattio to Council.

Mr. Giles'
Comments

Mr. Giles thanked everyone for their hard work and dedication over the past year. There were some challenging issues and there will be challenging issues going forward. He welcomed Mr. DiMattio to Council. He advised Mr. DiMattio that each member is available to assist him in his efforts to work for his district and the county at large.

Mr. Giles pointed out that there have been difficulties with the county jail system and Mrs. Loll serves on a committee that will be making recommendations. The plans for Pleasant Ridge Manor need to be completed as well within the next year. Everyone has seen the anxiety surrounding the federal government and the budgeting process. While the taxing side may be put to rest, the resourcing and the expenditure side is still at play and will be at play for at least the next two months when it will be addressed. All available resources must be used at both the NACo and CCAP level so that counties are held, to some degree, harmless as the issue moves forward. There is concern that counties will be left holding the bag of mandated services without the resources to support those services.

Mr. Giles explained that historically, there has been some difficulty handling the issue of juvenile delinquency transportation. Council assured the President Judge that issue will be reviewed in an attempt to find a remedy consistent with other third class counties as to how to transport the juveniles. Mr. Giles explained that currently juvenile probation officers are responsible with some support provided for insurance, but this may not necessarily be the ideal model. This matter will be a priority for this year.

Mr. Giles reported that the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania will be coming to Erie. This is the first time they will hold their annual meeting in this area since 1984 and it will be held at the Convention Center. He noted that none of the amenities now being offered were available at that time. A good conference with an opportunity to showcase local assets is anticipated.

Mr. Giles noted that on January 8, 2013 the Regional District Northwest Caucus of Counties will meet at the Tom Ridge Center. Sixteen counties participate and take turns hosting. Presentations regarding the Inland Port Project by John Elliott and individuals from the Perry Celebration will be held. A gift package from the Perry Celebration has been prepared for each of the commissioners.

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Mr. Giles'
Comments

Mr. Giles also noted that the Home Rule study will take place this year. He believes this is an excellent opportunity to review Erie County's Home Rule Charter. Cuyahoga County Ohio is in its second year as a home rule county and has already set up a study commission to review its charter. Erie County has not reviewed its charter since its inception in 1978. Other counties in Pennsylvania have that become home rule will provide models for comparison.

Finance/Pers.
Chairs

Mr. Giles stated that Mr. Leone will chair the Finance Committee and Dr. Foust will chair the Personnel Committee.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:28 p.m.

Ann M. Bruno, Council Secretary
