

ALLEGHENY COUNTY COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

- - -

BEFORE:

Patrick Catena	-	Chair, District 9
Robert Macey	-	Vice-President, District 9
Samuel DeMarco, III	-	Council-at-Large
Bethany Hallam	-	Council-at-Large
Tom Baker	-	District 1
Cindy Kirk	-	District 2
Anita Prizio	-	District 3
Tom Duerr	-	District 5
John Palmiere	-	District 6
Nicholas Futules	-	District 7
Paul Zavarella	-	District 8
DeWitt Walton	-	District 10
Paul Klein	-	District 11
Robert Palmosina	-	District 12
Olivia Bennett	-	District 13

Allegheny County Courthouse
436 Grant Street
Fourth Floor Gold Room
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219

Tuesday, January 12, 2020 - 5:01 p.m.

SARGENT'S COURT REPORTING SERVICE, INC.
225 Ross Street Suite 202
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
(412) 232-3882 FAX (412) 471-8733

IN ATTENDANCE:

Jared Barker - Director of Legislative Services
Jack Cambest - Allegheny County Council Solicitor
Ken Varhola - Chief of Staff

PRESIDENT CATENA: I'd like to call this meeting of Allegheny County Council to order. Please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance. Please stand for the pledge of allegiance.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

PRESIDENT CATENA: We will now have a moment for reflection.

(Moment of Silence.)

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you. Jared, please take roll.

JARED BARKER: Mr. Baker.

MR. BAKER: Here.

JARED BARKER: Ms. Bennett.

MS. BENNETT: Here.

JARED BARKER: Mr. DeMarco.

MR. DEMARCO: Here.

JARED BARKER: Mr. Duerr.

MR. DUERR: Here.

JARED BARKER: Mr. Futules.

MR. FUTULES: Here.

JARED BARKER: Ms. Hallam.

MS. HALLAM: Here.

JARED BARKER: Ms. Kirk.

MS. KIRK: Here.

JARED BARKER: Mr. Klein.

MR. KLEIN: Here.

JARED BARKER: Mr. Macey.

MR. MACEY: Present.

JARED BARKER: Mr. Palmiere.

MR. PALMIERE: Here.

JARED BARKER: Mr. Palmosina.

MR. PALMOSINA: Here.

JARED BARKER: Ms. Prizio. Ms. Prizio?

Mr. Walton.

MR. WALTON: Here.

JARED BARKER: Mr. Zavarella.

MR. ZAVARELLA: Here.

JARED BARKER: President Catena.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Here.

JARED BARKER: We have 14 members present at the moment.

PRESIDENT CATENA:

Thank you. We'll now begin with proclamations and certificates. These proclamations and certificates will all be read into the record.

11699-21.

JARED BARKER: A proclamation honoring Mr. Peter, Pete, Seddon Edwards, Jr. upon his 100th birthday sponsored by Council Member Demarco.

PRESIDENT CATENA: 11700-21.

JARED BARKER: A proclamation recognizing January 11, 2021 to be National Human Trafficking Awareness Day in Allegheny County sponsored by Council Member Bennett.

PRESIDENT CATENA: 11701-21.

JARED BARKER: A proclamation declaring December 29, 2020 to be Pittsburgh Lesbian correspondents Day in Allegheny County sponsored by Council Member Bennett.

PRESIDENT CATENA: 11702-21.

JARED BARKER: A proclamation recognizing Peter Roger Lesnett upon receiving the Eagle Scout Award sponsored by Council Member Prizio.

PRESIDENT CATENA: 11703-21.

JARED BARKER: A certificate of achievement presented to Ms. Angela Cale upon her recovery from invasive surgery and continued dedication to McKeesport Area School District sponsored by Council Member Baker and council Member Macey.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Is there any public comment on any agenda items.

JARED BARKER: Not on agenda items. No.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Okay. We'll now have approval of minutes. 11705-21.

JARED BARKER: Before proceeding please let the record reflect that Ms. Prizio is currently present by telephone.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you.

JARED BARKER: 11705-21. Motion to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2020 regular meeting of Council.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Is there a motion to approve?

MR. PALMIERE: So moved.

MR. DEMARCO: Seconded. DeMarco.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you. Motion has been made and seconded.

Is there any discussion? Hearing no discussion all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT CATENA: All those opposed? Motion carries.

11706-21

JARED BARKER: Motion to approve the minutes of the November 24, 2020 regular meeting of Council.

MR. MACEY: Motion to approve. Macey.

MS. BENNETT: Second. Bennett.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion?

Hearing none all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT CATENA: All those opposed? Motion carries.

11707-21.

JARED BARKER: A motion to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2020 regular meeting of Council.

MR. ZAVARELLA: So moved.

MR. PALMIERE: Second.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Motion has been made and seconded. Any discussion?

Hearing none all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT CATENA: All those opposed? Motion carries.

We'll now have presentation of appointments.

JARED BARKER: We have none.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Unfinished business?

JARED BARKER: Also none.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Liaison reports. Liaison reports - I'd actually like to thank Councilman Walton for helping to arrange a discussion with Senator Casey yesterday concerning the stimulus package and what needs to - what's working well and what's not working and what possibly the future might entail.

So I'm going to call on Councilman Walton actually to maybe he'd like to say a few words about that.

MR. WALTON: Thank you, President Catena.

We've had a long-term relationship with the senator and his office, and he just reorganized his office, his western regional office. And his regional director and I have had a relationship of over a dozen years. And when the opportunity came he called and said the senator wanted to have a conversation with council about issues that we believe to be important in upcoming funding packages. I thought it was an opportune time for

us to have real meaningful dialogue about what issues that are critical across the political spectrum. And the senator has always been responsive when called upon and I believe that he understands the importance of addressing those true funding gaps and policy issues that is confronting our country and our state and our community.

And so I think it's an opportunity to build upon regular communication and a stronger relationship with the office of the senator.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you, councilman, and I'm sorry. I didn't meant to put you on the spot, but I wanted to give you credit for that. Obviously give you a few moments to talk about it so.

MR. WALTON: Thank you.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Is there anyone else with a liaison report this evening?

Hearing none we'll move on to new business ordinances and resolutions. 11708-21.

JARED BARKER: A resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grants and Special Accounts Budget for 2021 submission number 01-21 sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: That will go to budget and finance. Any new business?

JARED BARKER: No motions. Correct.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Notification of contracts 11709-21.

JARED BARKER: A communication summarizing approved executive actions for the month of December 2020.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Is there a motion?

MR. ZAVARELLA: So moved.

MR. MACEY: Second.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion?

Hearing none all those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT CATENA: All those opposed? Motion carries.

We'll now have public comment on any general items.

KEN VARHOLA: Yes we do.

First one submitted by Brian Lengyel of West Mifflin, PA. Hello, I'd like to see what the county is doing about an ongoing problem for the last 16 years at

the intersection of Homestead Duquesne Road and Worton Boulevard in West Mifflin. My neighbor has had three parked cars hit and totaled by motorists. I've had my house hit once and my cars on three separate occasions with over \$25,000 in damages for these four incidents. Council members have come to survey the scene but the County doesn't seem interested in remedying the problem. They don't put any guardrails. They don't seem to want to put any guide rails either even though evidence has sent showing tire marks in the sidewalk where pedestrians walk frequently.

The latest incident took place on September 20 where a driver hit my car and force of the collision pushed my car into my wife's for \$9,500 in damages. There was an accident at the same intersection earlier in the same day. There was also a worse crash on November 25. Video footage of these wrecks has been provided to the council member. A common problem in the intersection is speed, distracted driving and the fact that police never enforce any traffic laws at this dangerous, five-point intersection. Rescue crews and police chuckle and say another incident when they respond to these incidents. What is the county going to do to improve the situation?

Bryan Englert West Mifflin, Pennsylvania.

Hazard pay for corrections officers and sergeants. I'm one of the few groups of professionals able to maintain a paycheck during this pandemic. Within my group however, some of my peers have gone through two or three quarantines unpaid. We were given incorrect information when quarantined. We were advised to file for FMLA to protect our job even though the county sent us home to quarantine. The FMLA wasn't needed. We received no direction on getting additional compensation such as unemployment or workers' comp until recently.

When this began the jail reacted poorly to the challenge. This is no secret as multiple news organizations have reported. We suffered shortages in medical as well as correctional staff. We are the forgotten law enforcement officers. Many don't know what we do every day unless it's something bad reported in the news. We are often the most popular people at parties given the fact that unless you've had a trip down to the jail you don't know what we deal with. Corrections officers in the jail believe we should receive a hazard pay bonus. Other correctional facilities across over a

dozen states gave their officers hazard pay raises during the pandemic from \$100 a week to \$750 every pay. We are on the front line dealing with people in close quarters daily. Our profession changed certain CDC recommendations on exposure given our multiple short-term interactions daily. Our risk goes up based on the environment, people and work required. The jail flaunts their one percent infection rate. We all know that when you test less people you have less positive cases. On the other hand look at the positive officer cases. At one point we had 61 officers quarantined. The age group hit hardest by COVID in Allegheny County is ages 25-49. The average correction officer age at the jail is 43 with 12 years' service. We check that box unfortunately.

One hundred sixty two (162) corrections officers this year have died from COVID which is why the quarantines and shortages since March created 113,576 hours of overtime in our facility across 416 officers. Our worst month was August with 16,873 overtime hours. The monthly average was 13,362 hours. Those are hours not slept, away from our spouses and our children, hours away from our parents. These hours are spent in a facility where our incarcerated citizens are frustrated getting out an hour per day. Hours spent in a facility run on overtime. Hours we can't get back. Some of us have spouses who have been laid off and received reduced work schedules. Allegheny County corrections officers deserve a one-time hazard pay bonus for the service they provided since the beginning of the pandemic.

Zachary Oravetz Pittsburgh 15227. Hazard pay for correctional officers. Twice during this pandemic I was denied medical treatment due to the fact that I work at the Allegheny County Jail. The first time was at the MedExpress and the second time was for an eye exam to refill my contacts prescription when I was on my last pair of contacts. Both agencies would not allow me into their respective facilities due to the fact I work in the jail and those agencies were fearful due to the possible COVID-19 exposures with jails and prisons cited in the COVID-19 protocol questionnaire.

Brett Amrhein Coraopolis 15108. Hazard pay for correctional officers. We deserve the hazard pay bonus and have not been compensated for being in close contact with a positive COVID-19 inmates and also putting our families at risk.

Michael Barrone West Mifflin PA. Hello, I'm writing on behalf of the employees in the Allegheny County Jail today. I understand we have a behind-the-scenes often thankless job. We have had some sudden changes in our facility throughout the past eight years. Operations and management style has changed dramatically since the beginning of my now 14 year career. I can say at the beginning I was excited to be here. I longed to be in a law enforcement agency and was inspired to make a difference. As time went on opinions changed I now feel like a number than a person. Many of us come to work every day and stress about what may happen, will I lose my job, my position, be suspended, be quarantined with no pay, become infected, et cetera. We have all had to cope with these circumstances. When you feel beat down and realize everyone around you is getting a boost but you, you feel you're not viewed highly regarding the difficult task you undergo.

I have stressed morale to our union county management and executives in my history of employment. It looks like it's starting to show how important morale is. The fact that we must request receiving some benefit to help cover our losses is astounding, but here we are. Can you please take a look into consideration granting us a hazard pay? Many people county-wide - country-wide have been getting some form of compensation all year round. We deserve to be remembered. We do a job not many can do. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Tonya Caldwell Pittsburgh 15230. Correctional officers have not received hazard pay throughout this whole pandemic and forced to work 12-hour shifts and only given discounted parking fees back. Agency nurses were recently paid double time-and-a-half and they do not pay anything into the pension.

Tobias Coleman Pittsburgh 15207. Correctional officers have not received any type of consistent hazard pay during the entire pandemic. Personally I have dealt with COVID positive inmates. Recently agency nurses have been paid double time-and-a-half and they do not contribute one penny to the county pension. Please take care of the forgotten officers of law enforcement.

Shyra Taylor of Pittsburgh 15227. Officers at the Allegheny County prison have worked tirelessly and effortlessly in an attempt to slow the spread of COVID-19 during this pandemic. It hit us hard and some of us even

closer to hard. We are at the forefront putting our lives and health at risk. We deserve hazard pay as we are essential workers and first responders. Not one day passes where we ever feel safe within our surroundings because anything can happen. I hope that this request may be considered and not brushed under the rug or ignored. We must stick together to continue to make a difference, and we must do what's right to those that are ensuring the safety of others.

Shawn Nalley McKeesport 15133. No reason why officers at the ACJ with the numbers we have inmate and staff-wise that has tested positive that for us having to work every day and possibly catching this or already have are taking it home to our families. Hazard pay should be a no-brainer. Are we on the front lines or are we not?

Eric Gumkowski Pittsburgh 15235. Petition presented for hazard pay from employees of the Allegheny County Jail. Officers have been working in a dangerous and highly infectious environment for the duration of the pandemic. We have not been paid a hazard bonus that is provided by the CARES Act which Allegheny County has received and only sporadically disbursed to various agencies. Our role is considered essential and officers have worked hard working considerable overtime due to staffing deficiencies caused in part by the pandemic. Going to work you're never guaranteed to be allowed to leave after eight hours including every major holiday. Is it too much to ask that we be compensated in accordance with the CARES act appropriately? Please consider the petition as filed and hold the county to what it claims on two giant vinyl banners. We're essential and they appreciate us.

Eric Gamboa Pittsburgh 15239. Correctional officers at the Allegheny County Jail are in direct contact with inmates who are confirmed COVID-19 positive. Officers are exposed to the COVID-19 virus that can and will bring home to loved ones that may be vulnerable to the virus such as infants and elderly. The positive inmates here are in housing units with correctional officers not in the infirmary or medical housing unit or medical care. Officers are in direct contact with them just as much as a medical professional in the hospital. I strongly think that hazard pay is absolutely necessary for correctional officers due to them being on the front line of this pandemic.

That is it, President Catena.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you.

Is there a motion to adjourn?

MR. MACEY: So moved.

MR. PALMIERE: Motion to adjourn.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Motion has been made and
seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT CATENA: All those opposed? Motion
carries.

Stay safe everyone. Thank you.

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify, as the stenographic reporter, that the foregoing proceedings were taken stenographically by me, and thereafter reduced to typewriting by me or under my direction; and that this transcript is a true and accurate record to the best of my ability.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jeremy Harris", is written over a horizontal line.

Jeremy Harris,

Court Reporter