

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 26, 2020 - 5:00 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:

Jack Cambest - Allegheny County Council Solicitor  
Ken Varhola - Chief of Staff

MR. MACEY: I'm calling the meeting of the Allegheny County Council for January 26. Please rise for the pledge allegiance to the flag and have a small silent prayer or reflection.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

MR. MACEY: Thank you. As you can see, I'll be chairing this meeting. President Catena has stepped aside for this meeting because he has some personal issues to take care of. Okay. Roll Call please.

MR. VARHOLA: Councilman Baker.

MR. BAKER: Here.

KEN VARHOLA: Councilwoman Bennett.

MS. BENNETT: Here.

KEN VARHOLA: Councilman DeMarco.

MR. DEMARCO: Here.

KEN VARHOLA: Councilman. Duerr.

MR. DUERR: Here.

KEN VARHOLA: Councilman. Futules.

MR. FUTULES: Here.

KEN VARHOLA: Councilwoman Hallam.

MS. HALLAM: Here.

KEN VARHOLA: Councilwoman Kirk.

MS. KIRK: Here.

KEN VARHOLA: Councilman Klein.

MR. KLEIN: Here.

KEN VARHOLA: Councilman Palmiere.

MR. PALMIERE: Here.

KEN VARHOLA: Councilman Palmosina.

MR. PALMOSINA: Here.

KEN VARHOLA: Councilwoman Prizio.

MS. PRIZIO: Here.

KEN VARHOLA: Councilman Walton. Councilman  
Zavarella.

MR. ZAVARELLA: Here.

KEN VARHOLA: Councilman Catena. Chairman  
Macey.

MR. MACEY: Here. And I want to thank you all for attending this meeting in person and by phone. Proclamations and certificates.

KEN VARHOLA: 11710-21. Proclamation recognizing Chief Gene Roach for his 40 years of dedicated service to law enforcement sponsored by Council Member Palmiere.

11711-21. Certificates of Recognition presented to the 2020 Highland Volunteer Fire Department Awardees sponsored by Councilwoman Kirk.

11712-21. Proclamation honoring Ms. Elizabeth King upon the celebration of her 100th birthday sponsored by Council Member Macey.

MR. MACEY: Thank you, Ken. Public comment on agenda items and Mr. Varhola there are --- I notice there are some letters that are identical in verbiage and spelling and what have you. Do you believe we should read all them that are the same or lump a few of them together and read --- and mention the person's name who wrote in with the same concerns?

KEN VARHOLA: That's the will of council, Mr. Macey.

MS. HALLAM: Point of personal privilege, Chairman Macey.

MR. MACEY: Go ahead.

MS. HALLAM: Yeah. I would just like to say in my experience when public comments are summarized even when we think they're similar they may not be identical and often we lose the intent of the commenters. So I would just like to have that in mind before we decide to lump them all together.

MR. MACEY: Well, that's a good point, and I'll go along with that. Anybody else have a comment?

MR. FUTULES: I'm in favor of lumping them all together.

MR. MACEY: Well, I think we should just read them. That way we shouldn't have any issues with those people who wrote in and wanted their voices heard. Thank you.

KEN VARHOLA: Brandi Mann Pittsburgh 15212. Her general topic was hazard pay for officers. No comment.

Brian Englert West Mifflin PA. Hazard pay for corrections officers at the jail work the entire pandemic without hazard pay. We've seen our peers across the country receive hourly raises or pay bonuses yet we received nothing. In Atalla, Alabama it was \$2 an hour, in Montgomery, Alabama it was \$100 a week, in Michigan the state Department of Corrections provided an extra \$750 per pay and recently South Carolina DOC gave an extra \$500 hazard bonus on top of the hourly wage increases due to pandemic.

The officers at the jail are asking for the bare minimum \$4,000. That's \$100 a week for 40 weeks. We are essential employees who worked our tails off to keep this jail running as smoothly as possible. Through over 115,000 of overtime we've come to work. Hours spent away from our families. Hours spent around potential cases. A hundred officers tested positive out of 285 officers tested, an infection rate of 35 percent. Officers on second or third administration ordered quarantine without pay. Do the right thing.

Eric Gamboa Pittsburgh 15239. Correctional officers at the Allegheny County jail are still working during pandemic without hazard pay. We are dealing with positive COVID-19 inmates. They are not being housed on a medical unit to be monitored by medical. Instead they are being housed on a unit with correctional officers. We are on the front lines of this deadly pandemic. We at least deserve hazard pay. We are getting mandated for overtime anywhere between one to three times a week. Some of us are getting mandated to work on a unit where there are positive cases. Not to mention being around inmates that are positive but have no symptoms. The government extended CARES money expenditures to December 2021, in South Carolina they paid \$500 bonus plus pay raises to their correctional officers. Nurses are receiving hazard pay at the jail and officers are not even though we are in direct contact with these inmates for seven hours minimum a day. Nurses are in contact with COVID positive inmates for minutes. Please compensate us for our relentless fight during this global pandemic.

Michael Barone West Mifflin 15122. I ask your board to take a vote for a hazard pay to be given to Allegheny County Correctional Employees. We are in an environment that few can handle. You all can freely enter the jail as committee members. As a testimony to my statement, take a walk down the 1M back wall and look at the names on the wall then look at the seniority listing of employees. This job is not for everyone. It is difficult to live a life as a correctional officer. This employment takes a toll on your mind, your body, your soul. They told me when I started that this place will change you forever. I didn't believe them, but they were right. Things can be done that would improve our situation, but we have seen no relief. Yet the majority of us still come to work, still try to do the best we can

and count our blessings. It would alleviate some of the stress we are undergoing if we were to receive a hazard pay. Anyone who has attempted to do this job or had a tour can attest to this. We do not have a normal 9:00 to 5:00. Please press the county to do the right thing and look out for employees who are long forgotten. Thank you for your time sincerely Officer Barone.

Billy Martin Pitcairn 15140. I have worked as a corrections officer at the jail for almost four years. I love my job. I am proud to work for the great and historic Allegheny County. Most people would never understand the difficulties of our job and most wouldn't believe it unless you saw it with your own eyes. The mountains we overcome are different for every officer. The pandemic took a difficult job and added new hills we could never have imagined. For some it may be time. For others it may be stress. For myself, it's having a young child at home with severe health issues who may not be able to battle back if I were to bring home the virus and he contracted it. On top of our job, many of us have had a spouse lose a job due to what is happening in the world. We would love to feel appreciated in a way that can help us. Hazard pay is more money than a lot of us. Thank you for your time.

Sergio Leone Pittsburgh 15211. I personally feel our Bureau is greatly neglected compared to other agencies within Allegheny County. We are working in forced double shifts in a dangerous environment in close proximity of a multitude of different people that we have no idea of their previous whereabouts or contacts during a pandemic. It has also been a hardship on officers like myself who have disabilities. My hearing loss on top of social distancing and masks procedures made it very hard for me to conduct my daily duties and communication amongst inmate population. This administration forced me out of work until I was forced to buy \$6,000 hearing aids to get my job back. I was out of work for two months. They refused to accommodate to any of my requests under the ADA. I feel that corrections officers of the Allegheny County jail deserve hazard pay and I'm hoping my personal experience will shed light on how this has greatly affected our brothers and sisters of the Bureau. Thank you.

Ken C McKeesport PA. Agenda item of hazard pay.

Raymond Curley of Pittsburgh 15227. I have worked at the Allegheny County jail for over 26 years now, and this pandemic has created more overtime and chaos in the facility that I have seen in my entire career. It is a shame that we have not received any kind of hazard pay as of yet when we are confined in such small areas with inmates who have tested positive. We are front line workers and we are treated lesser than people who work at grocery stores and necessary businesses that are paying their employees hazard pay. Corrections officers protect the community just as the police and sheriffs do but we are not treated the same. We all have families to worry about taking the virus home to and a lot of us have children and family members with existing health conditions which makes the fear of the virus even worse. We are asking you to consider us for hazard pay and try to imagine what we have to deal with every time we walk through those doors to start our shift.

Anthony Berger West Mifflin 15122. Why won't HR tell jail employees if FFCRA time was restored for 2021? We just want to know if we are covered if we ordered to quarantine by administration like other county employees who get paid when ordered to quarantine by management.

Zachary Oravetz Pittsburgh 15227. Hazard pay for employees of the Allegheny County Jail. During this pandemic I have sought medical treatment twice. Both times non COVID-19 related and was denied medical treatment twice due to working at the county jail. Once was at a local MedExpress for an ear issue and once at my local eye doctor for an eye exam to refill my prescription contacts. Both times while I was in the parking lot calling in to go over the questionnaire both establishments asked if I was in a jail recently and when I said that I work at the Allegheny County jail both establishments told me that I could not enter the facility due to where I work. With Westmoreland County Jail approving hazard pay that Allegheny County should follow. Thank you.

Patti Farrell Oakdale 15071. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, essential workers are those who conduct a range of operations and services that are typically essential to continue critical infrastructure operations. Critical infrastructure is a large umbrella term encompassing sectors from energy to defense to agriculture. Council members, I please urge

you to consider hazard pay for corrections officers at the Allegheny County jail. We have been away from our families and the mandated overtime has been incredibly taxing on our health. Not to mention the dangers of being in an enclosed facility in tight quarters with an ongoing pandemic with no end in sight. So again, I encourage you to consider giving us hazard pay for working a year in these conditions. Have a great day.

Jonathan Caridi Pittsburgh 15223. Officers at the county jail have not received hazard pay while other county employees did. Why do we not get it? I feel as if we county jail employees deserve hazard pay as well.

Christopher Barker Pittsburgh 15227. Allegheny County jail employees have not received hazard pay throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. All other agencies that are paid by Allegheny County did receive hazard pay. Why?

Joseph Toraso Pittsburgh 15221. Hazard pay for county corrections officers.

And that is it for public comment on agenda items.

MR. MACEY: Thank you, Mr. Varhola. Very well done. Approval of minutes.

KEN VARHOLA: 11719-21. Motion to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2020 regular meeting of Council.

MR. MACEY: Do I have a motion?

MS. BENNETT: Second. Liv.

MR. PALMOSINA: Second here.

MR. MACEY: Motion has been made by Councilwoman Bennett seconded by Councilman Palmosina. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

MR. MACEY: Those opposed? Thank you. Additional minutes.

KEN VARHOLA: 11720-21. Motion to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2021 regular meeting of Council.

MR. MACEY: Do I have a motion?

MR. FUTULES: Motion for approval.

MR. MACEY: May I have a motion for approval?

MR. FUTULES: We did.

MR. MACEY: Who was the motion?

MR. FUTULES: I think it was Liv.

KEN VARHOLA: I didn't hear.

MR. MACEY: Motion made by Councilman Palmosina and seconded by Councilman Futules. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

MR. MACEY: Those opposed? Okay. Thank you. The ayes have it. Presentation of appointments.

KEN VARHOLA: 11713-21. Approving the appointment of Leslie Zacharias to the Mental Health/Intellectual Disability Advisory Board for a term to expire on December 31, 2023 sponsored by the Chief Executive.

MR. FUTULES: This is the first reading, right?

MR. MACEY: Right. Would you do me a favor and read them all please?

KEN VARHOLA: Sure. 11714-21. Approving the appointment of Conrad Kalcich to the Mental Health/Intellectual Disability Advisory Board for a term to expire on December 31, 2023.

11715-21. Approving the re-appointment of Holly Dick to the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council for a term to expire on December 31, 2024 sponsored by the Chief Executive.

11716-21. Approving the appointment of Lycia Neumann to the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council for a term to expire on December 31, 2024 sponsored by the Chief Executive.

11717-21. Approving the re-appointment of Michelle Pepitone to the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council for a term to expire on December 31, 2024.

11718-21. Approving the re-appointment of Lisa Story to the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council for a term to expire on December 31, 2024 sponsored by Chief Executive.

MR. MACEY: These will all be sent to appointment review committee chaired by Councilwoman Hallam.

Unfinished business. Councilman Palmosina please.

MR. PALMOSINA: Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to make a motion to amend the agenda to add the item we just discussed in the budget and finance committee.

MR. MACEY: For the motion is there a second?

MS. HALLAM: I'll second that.

MR. MACEY: Motion has been made by Councilman Palmosina. Second by Councilwoman Hallam. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

MR. MACEY: Those opposed? Thank you. Councilman Palmosina?



MR. PALMOSINA: Yes. Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. MACEY: Okay. We're going to have Ken Varhola read the amendment.

KEN VARHOLA: 11708-21. A resolution of County of Allegheny amending the grants and special council budget for 2021 sponsored by the Chief Executive.

MR. MACEY: Okay.

MR. PALMOSINA: Thank you, Mr. President. The budget and finance met today at 4:00. A motion was affirmatively recommended to full council. I'd like to make a motion to approve.

MR. PALMIERE: Second.

MR. MACEY: Motion has been made by Councilman Palmosina and seconded by Councilman Palmiere. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

MR. MACEY: All right. Liaison reports.

MR. FUTULES: I've got one.

MR. MACEY: Councilman Futules.

MR. FUTULES: I would just like to recognize my friend Danny Monaco that owned Hoffstot's and Chelsea Grill in Oakmont had just passed away last week. He died from COVID and the entire community was devastated over his loss and Danny makes six people now that I know that have lost their lives to COVID and let's hope that this vaccine gets out as soon as possible for all of us. It's despairing to hear that many lives have been lost above the casualties of World War II. That's horrible. I wish everybody good health and be safe. Thank you.

MR. MACEY: Thank you, Councilman Futules. Anybody else have a liaison report?

Well, ladies and gentlemen I have one. I serve on a southwestern Pennsylvania commission. And we had a meeting yesterday and one of the issues that was brought up on transportation, you know we have the transportation improvement projects better known as TIP. And they're having some concerns with regards to landslides, cracks on the garlands where there's guide rail, worried about trees that seem to be coming down off the hills and that. So all I'm asking you to do is if you see something that concerns you or you feel that a hillside or somebody's property is in danger or the road is in disrepair, I think it's important that you share that with the authorities. And whether you know this or not I mentioned it once before Pennsylvania has more landslides than any other

state in the County and it's because of our makeup of the shale and the clay and what have you. So if anybody sees or feels that there's an issue with the roads, the hillsides, walls, things of that nature, please tell your local public works officials. Thank you. Anybody else? All right. New business. Ordinances and resolutions.

KEN VARHOLA: 11721-21.

MR. MACEY: New business and resolutions. This is supposed to be a motion right?

KEN VARHOLA: We don't have any.

MR. MACEY: Okay.

KEN VARHOLA: 11721-21. Motion of the Council of Allegheny County expressing the sense of Council regarding the potential for providing hazard pay for corrections officers employed at the Allegheny County Jail sponsored by Council Member Hallam and Council Member Bennett.

MR. MACEY: May I have a motion to approve?

MR. DEMARCO: Should we do any debate?

MR. MACEY: I've got to wait until after the motion then it will go to debate.

MS. HALLAM: Councilman Macey.

MR. MACEY: Say again.

MS. HALLAM: This is Bethany. I'll make that motion.

MR. MACEY: Okay. Motion has been made by Councilwoman Hallam.

MS. BENNETT: Second by Liv.

MR. MACEY: Second by Councilwoman Bennett. Okay. Discussion please. I'll let the --- I certainly will prefer to have Beth Hallam speak first please. Beth? Bethany Hallam are you going to ---?

MS. HALLAM: Can you hear me, Bob?

MR. MACEY: We have a hard time. You're cutting in and out.

MS. HALLAM: I'm moving. Is it better now?

MR. MACEY: Much clearer.

MS. HALLAM: Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to speak about this. I know our inboxes and our phones have been filling up with testimony from corrections officers who believe they are being slighted, that other departments throughout the county have a personal interaction with other folks have been afforded hazard pay but the correctional officers in our jail have not. Since the process for us to actually as county council re-open the budget and try to legislate this via ordinance is near impossible, I thought that what we could

do as a body is express our support for hazard pay for our correctional officers at the jail via this motion. So I ask my colleagues to think of the workers in the jail who are responsible for protecting one of our most vulnerable populations and support this request for hazard pay. Thank you.

MR. MACEY: Thank you, Councilwoman Hallam. Anyone else please?

MR. DEMARCO: Yes, President Macey. This is Councilman DeMarco.

MR. MACEY: Okay, Councilman.

MR. DEMARCO: This might sound odd coming from me as a republican but I have been a member of two unions. One was Local 751 which is Glaziers and the building trades and the other was Local 57 which is now, I think, Unite which is when I worked my way through college. But in both of those unions, union membership elected their leadership to represent them. And I guess my concern with this while it sounds, you know, like, reasonable it --- what happened in the six years that I have been on council is we have gotten multiple complaints from folks at the jail about issues that seem to be arising every time there is a union election coming up. I heard from Mr. Englert back in March of '19 about life safety issues for correctional officers at the jail. I heard from him back in May of '19 about A2 and heart attack at the jail. I heard from him back in May of '19 about segregation law. I heard from him back in --- this was here in 2020 about mandatory 12 hour emergency schedules, and I heard from him about Allegheny County Jail mask donation where he was upset that his wife had donated masks. He wasn't happy with the way that was treated.

My point being is that to my understanding the union leadership who represents the corrections officers' employees have not come to the administration and asked that, and I may be wrong. Maybe the administration will tell me I'm wrong, but that's what I was told. So what all I believe is I believe that we need to take and work through the folks who are duly elected by the members of the union and not allow ourselves to be played as political pawns in union elections. I'm done. Thank you.

MR. MACEY: Thank you, Mr. DeMarco. Are there any other comments from our council? Are there any other comments from our council?

MR. FUTULES: I make a motion to call for the vote.

MR. MACEY: Okay. I would like to put the motion in place. I would like to know who is in favor.

MS. HALLAM: I'll second that motion.

MR. PALMOSINA: I'll second.

MR. MACEY: We did have a motion, not a second. Okay so we have a motion from Councilman Futules and seconded by Councilman Palmosina. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

MS. HALLAM: Aye.

MR. MACEY: What we'd like to do is to call a roll call since this is significant and we are --- many of us are on phones so we just don't know who's saying what so we'll have a roll call please.

KEN VARHOLA: On 11721 motion of county council. Mr. Baker?

MR. BAKER: Yes.

KEN VARHOLA: Ms. Bennett?

MS. BENNETT: Yes.

KEN VARHOLA: Mr. DeMarco?

MR. DEMARCO: No.

KEN VARHOLA: Mr. Duerr?

MR. DUERR: I abstain.

KEN VARHOLA: Mr. Futules?

MR. FUTULES: No. Yes. We're going to take a vote.

KEN VARHOLA: This is the voting. We're voting on the motion.

MR. FUTULES: The resolution itself? I'm sorry. I'm a no.

KEN VARHOLA: Ms. Hallam?

MS. HALLAM: Yes.

KEN VARHOLA: Ms. Kirk?

MS. KIRK: No.

KEN VARHOLA: Mr. Klein?

MR. KLEIN: I abstain.

KEN VARHOLA: Mr. Palmiere?

MR. PALMIERE: No.

KEN VARHOLA: Mr. Palmosina?

MR. PALMOSINA: Yes.

KEN VARHOLA: Ms. Prizio?

MS. PRIZIO: Yes.

KEN VARHOLA: Mr. Zavarella?

MR. ZAVARELLA: No.

KEN VARHOLA: Chairman Macey?

MR. MACEY: No.

MR. BAKER: Mr. Varhola, it's Baker. Can I switch to an abstain? I was having some technical difficulties.

KEN VARHOLA: Mr. Baker from yes to abstain. Ayes are four. No's are six with three abstentions, Mr. Chair.

MR. MACEY: Motion has failed.

MS. HALLAM: Chairman Macey, this is Bethany. Can I have a point of order please?

MR. MACEY: What is your point of order?

MS. HALLAM: I would like to abstentions to give reasoning for their abstention.

MR. MACEY: I don't think that is absolutely necessary. That is a personal decision.

MS. HALLAM: I think that as to Robert rules it's necessary so I would like them to explain their abstentions please.

MR. MACEY: One second please.

MR. FUTULES: Get Jack Cambest on that one.

JACK CAMBEST: They don't need to explain. They need to submit in writing to the secretary the reason for the abstention.

MR. FUTULES: Even on a resolution?

MR. MACEY: A motion.

MR. FUTULES: Or motion.

JACK CAMBEST: Any vote.

MR. MACEY: So according to our parliamentarian they must submit a letter in writing to the secretary and it doesn't necessarily have to be explained verbally tonight.

MS. HALLAM: Okay. What is the deadline for those explanations to be due in who is the secretary of this body?

MR. MACEY: It'll go to Jared.

MS. HALLAM: Thank you very much.

MR. MACEY: You're welcome, and I order that to take place. Ken would you have that ---.

KEN VARHOLA: We'll take care of that.

MR. MACEY: Okay. Thank you very much. Okay.  
Notification of contracts.

KEN VARHOLA: We have none.

MR. MACEY: Public comment on general items.

KEN VARHOLA: Also have none. We have none.

MR. MACEY: May I have an adjournment please.

MR. PALMOSINA: Make a motion.

MR. PALMIERE: So moved.

MR. MACEY: Okay. Motion made by Palmosina,  
Councilman Palmosina and seconded by Councilman Palmiere  
to adjourn. All those in favor signify by saying aye.  
(Chorus of ayes.)

MR. MACEY: Meeting's adjourned.

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.

Dated the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of February, 2021

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Jeremy Harris,

Court Reporter