



Allentown

435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, Pa. 18101

Minutes - Final

City Council

Saturday, December 15, 2018

11:30 PM

Council Chambers

Special Budget Meeting

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Candida Affa, Roger MacLean, Courtney Robinson, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Julio Guridy, and Ed Zucal

[15-2690](#)

R137
Veto Override

Sponsors: Mr. Zucal, Guridy, Hendricks, Mota and MacLean

Attachments: [R137 Veto Override](#)

[15-2632](#)

Bill 77
An Ordinance of the City of Allentown, County of Lehigh and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, establishing the General Fund, Administrative Order Fund, Risk Management Fund, Debt Service Fund, Equipment Fund and Golf Fund Budgets for 2019

Attachments: [Bill 77 2019 GENERAL FUND ORD](#)

[Veto Message](#)

[Ordinance #15504](#)

Enactment No: 15504

[15-2638](#)

Budget Information and Memos

Attachments: [Budget Amendments - Dec 3](#)
[Budget Memo 1 Personnel 5 YR PLAN -11-5-2018](#)
[Budget Memo #2 - Information Technology](#)
[Budget Memo #3 - Mayor's Office and General and Civic](#)
[Budget Memo #4 - Community and Economic Development](#)
[Budget Memo 5](#)
[BUDGET MEMO #5 20181203 144937](#)
[Allentown Fire Department 2018 Overview](#)
[2019 DPW Goals](#)
[Capital Improvements 2019-2023](#)
[Cost NB Salary increase](#)
[2019 Budget Presentation](#)
[5YP 2019-23 MAYOR EXCEL TEMPLATE V2 110518](#)
[5YP 2019-23 SUMMARY V7 110518 PUBLIC](#)
[- Info Systems](#)
[Budget Schedule V2](#)

Courtesy of the Floor

Mayor Ray O'Connell asked that the time be put on the screen. It is very imperative that the time is up there so everyone can see what the time is.

Mr. Roger MacLean stated that Mr. Hanlon is working on it and asked Mr. Hanlon does he have the time on his computer.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that he has it on his computer.

Mr. Edward John White stated that he expects the Mayor to veto the amendment and hopefully Council has time to override the veto. Whatever happens tonight, please keep in mind in budgeting you have three options: raising revenue, cut expenses or a combination. He believes that the Mayor submitted a budget based on what happened in the past 13 years that he felt was necessary for the City of Allentown to be on a sound financial footing. It is important to reflect on priorities in the city and decide what you want the city going forward. While he can afford to pay an additional 20 percent for his city's property tax, some cannot.

Mr. Roger MacLean wholeheartedly agreed with Mr. White. One of the things we want to look at next year is the budget process.

Mr. Joe Hoffman, 761 St. John Street, stated that he talked about the subject on revenue enhancement. He was pleased to see that there has been careful consideration on the types of revenue enhancement strategies

that the city can use. There were a dozen separate strategies. Four of six were on the list. He stated that in 2019 you must make it the year of revenue enhancement. You need to find more money other than the taxpayer.

Mr. Roger MacLean thanked Mr. Hoffman and stated that Mayor O'Connell is taking notes.

Allentown Resident (no name provided) commended everyone. It is a tough and long-ranging decision. It will affect this budget year and the budget year going forward. It is easy to say cut, cut, cut. Emergency Management has to be looked at in training and management mechanisms. If there is a disaster police and fire will be tied up dealing with the issues of the emergency. They need a rehab of the Emergency Management structure. He commended Mr. Robinson for his Facebook post. It gave us some of the answers. He commended the Mayor for putting together a fair budget. IT just spent over a \$1 million because the IT gate was left opened. He believes Council should follow the administration on this. Good planning in advance saves money in the future.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that this is one of the most ridiculous meetings he ever attended because they could have taken care of this at least in the last five days when they met. We could have come to an agreement that would have been satisfactory to the Mayor, Council and helpful to our citizens who is getting the brunt of this. He received Facebook comments of people who are very dissatisfied of what they are doing. He stated that is why he is fighting to lower the tax. This budget being a 27 percent increase is really going to put a toll on some people that can't afford to pay that. He is not saying the city doesn't need to raise taxes. We can raise it a little bit, but not 27 percent. People say that you can do it incrementally.

Mr. Courtney Robinson asked Mr. Guridy how long has he been the Chair of the Finance Committee for Council.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated you know that answer. I am not going to respond.

Mr. Courtney Robinson stated that Mr. Guridy has been Chair of the Finance Committee for many years and they both agree that incremental raises would have been far more financially responsible. How many times did you bring this issue up and propose a tax increase during the budgets when you were Finance Chair?

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that we knew that we were going to raise the taxes. He talked to the Mayor. He stated that he really didn't want to raise taxes.

Mr. Courtney Robinson stated that Mr. Guridy knew a problem was coming, but didn't want to deal with it because it would have been politically unpopular.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated no. He is not running next year like Mr. Robinson is. I don't do things here because it is politically unpopular. He does things because it is the right thing to do for our residents.

Mr. Courtney Robinson stated that he doesn't know any politicians that think it is a good idea to vote to raise taxes 27 percent before they run. He stated that he did it because it was the most reasonable, appropriate, and responsible financial decision for this city.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that he doesn't think so at this point. It may be responsible for you because you can afford it, but talk to the people out there that cannot afford it and live on a fixed income.

Mr. Courtney Robinson stated contrary to what Mr. Guridy stated that he is not just talking to millionaires. He stated that he has spoken to people on fixed incomes and spoken to renters because he goes to the community meetings throughout the city with regularity. The only person who gave any kind of guff over this is someone who mistakenly read an article and thought he voted against the tax increase when they had the initial budget vote. When he explained that was not the case and had supported it, this person who has been involved in her community and in the city for many years said ok, good because that is the financially responsible thing to do. We want our services. We need it.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that in regards to helping the poor, that has been brought up over and over again. Everyone of us here knows the needs of the people in the inner city. One of those is Public Safety. The fires, the Sweep tickets, and the police department. This is where the tax money and the services are all in the inner city. This is for the people who need the services. She stated that when you talk about helping the poor people, and her voting for this and not cutting any services, she believes she is helping the people in the inner city. We all agree that we want to do this, but voting for the budget does not mean that we are not here for the people in the city. She stated that her voting for the bill is for the exact reason to help the people in the inner city, not hurt them.

Mr. Julio Guridy asked Ms. Affa if they lowered the taxes five or 10 percent would it be detrimental to the people.

Ms. Candida Affa stated yes. What are they going to save \$42 a year? The people that own \$150,000 home is going to pay \$42 a year. People in

the inner city will be paying even less. She stated that she asked what would you rather do, pay this amount of money or have some of your services cut. Every single person said they understand. It's been 13 years. I don't want my services cut. We need more firemen. We need more policemen. We need EMS.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that he doesn't think it would hurt them. He read from two posts on Facebook: When they give the rich a huge tax break, look who suffers. This is insane. Just insane. This is the rich trying to clear out low income families from Allentown. He stated that this is just two of them. You posted things on my Facebook page and if you read the comments, you saw that people were fighting you and they were saying things about it.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that is 10 people on Facebook, but how many people that are out there.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated that there are a lot more than 10. He stated that he has dozens of people.

Mr. Roger MacLean asked Mr. Hanlon if they were going to get the time on the screen. Instead of arguing among ourselves, maybe we can give the time to the Mayor for the veto.

Mr. Julio Guridy stated if they keep talking maybe he won't have time to veto.

Mr. Courtney Robinson asked Mr. Kloiber if the Mayor vetoes in the next 45 seconds, do they need to allow time for both Council and the public to speak once it is an official action.

Mr. Matthew Kloiber stated that is correct.

Mayor Ray O'Connell handed Mr. Hanlon Bill 77 as a veto.

Mr. Roger MacLean stated that we have a veto on Bill 77 and opened it up to the public.

Mr. Courtney Robinson stated that they need to debate whether or not they can do that. Before they do anything.

Mr. Roger MacLean asked Mr. Kloiber.

Mr. Matthew Kloiber stated the time is up.

Julio Guridy moved to Suspend The Rules, seconded by Ed Zucal to Vote of this Bill.

ADJOURNED: 12:05 AM