

Pierce County Council Meeting
November 21, 2017

By Alison McCaffree

Six members were present at the meeting. The meeting started at 3:05 pm and adjourned at 3:20 pm until 3:50 for staff preparations. The Council took a break for 10 minutes at 5:00 pm and reconvened at 7:00 pm. The meeting ended at about 8:30 pm. Councilmember McCune was absent and excused. The agenda was approved, 6-0. The consent agenda passed unanimously, 6-0.

I have not captured the entire four-hour meeting, just a few of its highlights.

Budget & Budget Implementation Ordinances

Notes on the Budget and other implementing legislation. When the County passes the budget for the year, it also passes 3 addition pieces of legislation.

The overall budget:

2017-73s3 An Ordinance of the Pierce County Council Adopting the Annual Budget of Pierce County for Fiscal Year 2018; and Setting an Effective Date. (2018 Annual Budget) Passed 6-0.

Changes to code that are needed:

2017-61s2 An Ordinance of the Pierce County Council Implementing the 2018 Budget; Amending the Pierce County Code and the Powers. Passed 6-0.

Specific action requested of departments to implement the budget:

2017-62s2 An Ordinance of the Pierce County Council Implementing the 2018 Budget by Requesting Certain County Departments, Boards and Commissions to Take Certain Actions; and Setting an Effective Date. (Implementing the 2018 Budget - Requesting Certain Actions)
Passed 6-0 with some minor amendments.

There was also a fourth piece of legislation that sets policy and requests information from certain entities:

R2017-108s A Resolution of the Pierce County Council Implementing the 2018 Budget; Declaring Certain County Policy; and Requesting Information from Agencies of County Government. (Implementing the 2018 Budget - Declaring Policy and Requesting Information)
Passed 5-1; P. Roach voting no.

Other Ordinances

2017-80 An Ordinance of the Pierce County Council Authorizing Wage Adjustments for Non-Represented Employees; Amending the Pierce County Salary Classification Plan; and Setting an Effective Date. (Wage Adjustments for Non-Represented Employees)

Passed without amendment.

Interesting procedural process:

During a discussion of reducing the salary of Steven O'Ban, Senior Counsel for Behavioral Health from \$197,900 to salary to \$100,000 plus benefits (New position this year), there was a procedural dispute. Staff confirmed that the base salary was \$163,000 without benefits. Councilmember D. Roach proposed an oral amendment to Amendment 1 on reducing the salary. Councilmember P. Roach supported the amendment because this person will not be full time; he also a state senator. Staff confirmed that the days this individual works for both legislature and the county, the portion of the day would be prorated. Staff believed this is not the place to do this – should be done in a salary scale bill.

There was an oral amendment voice vote, then Councilmember P Roach called for division. The Clerk called the roll and votes were confirmed 3:3 (P. Roach, D. Roach, C. Ladenberg voted aye; Richardson, Talbert, Young voted no.). By parliamentary rules, a tie always loses; so the oral amendment was not adopted.

Then there was a vote on the Amendment 1 without any changes. A voice vote was tied, with P. Roach, D. Roach and Ladenburg voting no and the other three voting yes. The amendment failed. Then Ladenburg changed her mind, she had voted the prevailing side so could call for reconsideration. She wanted to change her vote to yes. The chair called for the clerk to call the roll to vote again. P. Roach and D Roach voted no, four others voted yes. Therefore, the amendment was approved. P. Roach called for a point of order to check parliamentary procedures – can you have a vote of reconsideration on the same day? Chair Richardson put the issue on hold so that staff could check. It was not returned to in the meeting. In the end the salary was not changed in this session.

Observer Comments: The chair didn't get a second on the reconsideration, but presumably that would have been done by one of the 3 who had voted yes, without changing the results. Also, checking with Roberts Rules of Order, if there is more pressing business to be done that day, then the item should wait; otherwise it can be voted on that same session. It could be assumed that the Chair decided other business was not more pressing,

Verbal Altercation between Councilmembers.

During an amendment procedure to add \$40,000 for a litigation fund, Councilmember P. Roach and Councilmember Talbert got in a verbal altercation. Councilmember P. Roach didn't like the vagueness of the words "money for litigation." She thought that if the County were going to use resources to sue the State of Washington for unfunded mandates, that should be voted on as a policy issue and not in a funding request. She objected to what she referred to "this kind of hiding" and thought that citizens "Cannot tell the purpose of the money."

Council Member Richardson recommended Councilmember P Roach make a motion to add a 'Where As' to the amendment. Councilmember Talbert commented on a lack of information and preparation and inattentiveness of a councilmember but didn't name a person. Councilmember P. Roach assumed it was herself and called a point of order saying Councilmember Talbert was demeaning her character. Councilmember Talbert went on record as being frustrated about several assertions (presumably by Councilmember P.

Roach) about things being hidden and stated that he was tiring of having to deal with the paranoia every few minutes. There were several points of order called as Talbert, P. Roach and the Chair were talking over one another. Councilmember Ladenburg tried to calm P Roach, as she was sitting next to her. Councilmember P. Roach said at one point "I am a responsible member of the Pierce County Council and I won't change my ways." Councilmember Talbert raised his hand to his face and Councilmember P. Roach said something about Councilmember Talbert giving her the finger. The Chair restored order. At the end of the exchange, Councilmember P. Roach proposed an amendment to add the language "To initiate a lawsuit regarding unfunded mandates by the State." The chair did not hear a second so there was no amendment.

The vote on Amendment 28 without changes passed 4-1

Resolutions

Other resolutions passed at this meeting.

R2017-130 Confirming the Appointment of One New Member (Brandy Frederich) to the Pierce County Tourism Promotion Area Hotel Commission. (Appointment - TPA Commission)

R2017-131 Declaring Pierce County's Desire to Participate in the Tacoma Tideflats Subarea Planning Process and Requesting the Executive Negotiate an Interlocal Agreement with Relevant Jurisdictions that Assures an Appropriate County Role in the Process. (Tacoma Tideflats Subarea Planning Process)

Meeting evaluation: Questions on the Observer sheet regarding standards were positive. The meeting started at 3:03 pm and adjourned 3:50 pm but continued later, as noted above.