

ALLEN COUNTY COUNCIL REORGANIZATION  
MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 6, 2005  
8:30 AM

The Allen County Council met on Thursday, January 6, 2005 at 8:30 am in the County Council/Commissioners Courtroom. The purpose of the meeting was for election of officers, reorganization, appointments to boards and commissions and liaison assignments. Also any other business to come before Council.

Attending: Darren E. Vogt, President; Roy A. Buskirk, Vice President; Michael W. Cunegin II, Paula A. Hughes, Calvert S. Miller, Paul G. Moss and Paulette L. Kite.

Also Attending: Lisa Blosser, Auditor; Tera Klutz, Chief Deputy Auditor; Jackie Scheuman, Financial Manager and Commissioner Marla Irving.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am by President, Darren Vogt.

**Darren Vogt:** The first order of business is Election of Officers and I will turn the meeting over to Auditor, Lisa Blosser.

**Lisa Blosser:** Good Morning, I will entertain nominations for President of the Allen County Council for 2005.

**Mike Cunegin:** Due to the fine job that he did last year and being a fine gentlemen and a credit to his community I would like to nominate Darren Vogt for President of Allen County Council for 2005. Roy Buskirk seconded it.

Lisa Blosser: Are there any other nominations?

**Cal Miller made a motion to close the nominations for President 2005. Mike Cunegin seconded it. Motion to close nominations passed.**

**Lisa Blosser: All in favor of Darren Vogt as**

**President for 2005 say aye.  
Motion passed 7-0.**

I will now accept nominations for Vice President of Allen County council for 2005.

**Roy Buskirk:** I would like to nominate Paula Hughes for Vice President of Allen County Council for 2005. Paul Moss seconded it.

**Lisa Blosser:** Are there any other nominations?

**Cal Miller** made a motion to close the nominations for Vice President of County Council for 2005. Mike Cunegin seconded it. Motion passed.

**Lisa Blosser:** All in favor of Paula Hughes as Vice President of Allen County Council for 2005 say aye. Motion passed 7-0.

**Darren Vogt:** Before we get started I would like to formally welcome Patt Kite as a new member of the Allen County Council. We welcome you; you will be an added asset to this Council.

Thank you for your confidence in me as your President for 2005. I hope to do a job that satisfies you and if there ever any comments or complaints please let me know as I am well aware of things and would like to do the best job possible to represent you all.

We have been working on our board appointments and have some recommendations from the committee. The current board positions that are up and that are recommended for continuing service and all have said they are willing to continue to serve the count are:

Allen County Park & Recreation Board: Christine Vandervelde and Roger Moll these are 4 year terms.

City Economic Development Commission: Lanni Connelly for a 4 year term.

Allen County Economic Development Commission: Steven Bercot for a 4 year term.

Board of Zoning Appeals: Thomas Black for a 4 year term.

There was a group that met recommended those folks and I would like to thank Council Members, Hughes, Moss, Buskirk and Hernandez for being involved in that discussion. We heard from the above board members at our meetings in November and December, they came before us and told us what was happening on their different commissions and boards.

At this time I will entertain a motion for those individuals.

**Paula Hughes** made a motion to approve the above recommended individuals to serve on Park & Recreation Board, City Economic Development

**Commission, Allen County Economic Development Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals. Mike Cunegin seconded it. Motion passed 7-0.**

We also have a new appointment to our Library Board; we had three outstanding individuals that were interviewed. We had a set series of five or six questions that were asked of the individuals and they all did an outstanding job of answering the questions. Those individuals were Jesse Rios, Kathie Fleck and Jim Coday. We all interviewed them and the consensus of the committee was that Kathie Fleck would be the appointment that would most represent this Council in philosophy and perspective that we would have.

**Cal Miller:** Was it a unanimous vote of the committee?

**Darren Vogt:** Yes it was.

**Cal Miller:** And that committee was Mr. Hernandez, you, Paula and Roy?

**Darren Vogt:** Mr. Hernandez was not available for the vote because by the time we voted his term had already expired. His vote would have probably gone with Mr. Rios as that was his recommendation. Again all of them were very qualified individuals and I will call them personally and thank for their willingness to serve. We should keep them in mind for other board appointments because they are all very talented and very qualified individuals.

**Mike Cunegin:** I feel very familiar with Ms. Fleck as our appointment to the Library Board and I think she will work well with our other appointment Mr. Williams. She has represented herself well in this community in other positions.

**Cal Miller made a motion to approve the appointment of Kathie Fleck to the Allen County Public Library Board. Mike Cunegin seconded it. Motion passed 7-0.**

**Darren Vogt:** Susan isn't here today; we will give her instructions to send a letter to the folks that were approved today.

We also need to look at our liaison assignments, I have talked to everyone and the only changes that we have for 2005 is that the Treasurer will move from Councilwoman Hughes to Councilwoman Kite; Councilwoman Kite will take over for Councilman Hernandez. Councilman Cunegin will take over Safety and Environmental Affairs and Solid Waste from Councilman

Hernandez. LEPC will also go to Councilwoman Kite. There will be copies available for everyone.

**Darren Vogt:** With that we will move to our discussion regarding the 2006 budget process. You have in front of you the Auditor's proposed time line; please take a moment and look it over. This is for discussion only, not a formal process.

**Paula Hughes:** Maybe I could walk through how we handled the process last year for everyone and also walking through the time line at the same time. Basically we moved the process up we asked the Auditor's office to provide us with estimates of budget revenue as early in the year as possible; this year they believe they can have that accomplished by April 21<sup>st</sup>. Early last May we distributed a pre budget allocation questionnaire. Basically Council asked all department heads to evaluate their current budget and respond by a set date; last year it was May 28<sup>th</sup> this year the date is May 20<sup>th</sup>. Council needs to know whether or not you believe your budget should stay the same, be reduced or increased. If you believe your budget should be increased we had some very specific questions that we wanted you to respond with those being the specific amount of increase and specific use of the increase and all other funds that are under that departments control that might be used to fund the increased amount. We want a lot of detail on that; we have been two years into this process and feel we are getting better understanding about each budget works; how the other funds work to help supplement the general fund budgets. I will speak for most of Council, Patt you haven't had the experience of going through this process before but in conversations among us individually we have been fairly satisfied with how the process has gone particularly how it went last year. We want to give the Department Heads a chance to have input into this part of the process. That is why we are introducing the topic early at our organizational session because we are at a point where we can still change it. We want to know what you think.

**Darren Vogt:** This is an informal session you don't need to approach as long as you speak loud enough for us to be able to hear.

**Cal Miller:** I want to just mention that a lot of you are hear as Elected Officials and Department Heads we invited you to come and would love to hear from you to help us improve this process so if you have any thoughts at all to not be bashful and let us know. Paula outlined quite well what we did last year and we are going to try to improve on that process.

**Paula Hughes:** Some of the things that we had as pressing issues this past year were the fact that we were very much set on giving employees raises in 2005 and we were able to accomplish that goal. We had a list of priorities

that included raises, keeping the step increases, included fully funding the annual debt for Boys & Girls School placements; we wanted to better fund technology and we took a big step forward with that; those priorities still exist with us. Something else that we are facing this year that wasn't as pressing in 2004 is the decrease in our CEDIT revenue; as the City is annexing more and more of the population. CEDIT is allocated to the governmental entities based on how much of the population they oversee. We will see less and less of those dollars as the City annexes more and more of the population. CEDIT has been a fund we have been able to use for a lot of high priority economic development projects and we are going to have to look for other sources to fund those because economic development continues to be a priority for most of the leadership of the County.

**Darren Vogt:** We also have concerns with the Surveyor and the Clean Water Act as we don't know what the long term ramifications will be. We still have the on going debt of the Boys and Girls School. If you are not prepared to discuss any of those changes or recommendations to get with your liaison and have frank and open conversations with them because we are here to make this a smooth and easy process for all of us.

**Lisa Blosser:** A comment I heard was that during the Budget Allocation Meetings the departments would like to have a little more input at that point. I don't know if you want to open it up then but I am just throwing it out.

**Cal Miller:** Is that a concern of the Elected Officials and Department Heads? Last year you were asked to submit in writing very detailed remarks about the budget. I know that many of you attended as we pored over the documents that we received to consider what your allocation would be before the appeal process. Do you want to be heard at the same time you provide your submittal at the pre allocation meeting?

**Therese Brown** stated that she would like to have an opportunity to explain what her needs are.

**Darren Vogt:** Would it help to have specific times scheduled to come and explain your situation at the June pre allocation budget process? We could slot a 10-15 minutes to let them plead their case if they are requesting additional funds.

**Cal Miller:** I would certainly be receptive to that and Therese Brown our Clerk; last year took the assignment very seriously as did the other Elected Officials and Department Heads and she had some very specific detailed and somewhat complicated arguments based on the funding stream that she had.

I would be in favor of having an opportunity for the Elected Officials and Department Heads to be heard so they could explain and not necessarily just relying on their liaison. It could be an option, if someone wants to submit with a written explanation and not address Council that would be their prerogative; if they want to address Council that would be fine too.

**Roy Buskirk:** You could have a box on the form to check if they want to appear before Council.

**Lisa Blosser:** Then we could schedule those interested in appearing before Council.

**Darren Vogt:** First, last year we set different levels of priorities and that was one of those things that we need to keep in mind. We have to hear all of the argument before we can make a decision on allocations across the board. If we have 10 people that want to appear before us we need to hear all of them before we can make an across the board decision.

**Mike Cunegin:** I agree with Councilman Miller and President Vogt primarily because it gives the Elected Officials and Department Heads an opportunity to present things that are going to be coming down the pike to the General Assembly possibly in June or July of this year.

**Paula Hughes:** To me one of the important parts of the process is that it strengthened the need for a relationship between the liaison and the Department Heads. I don't want to lose that and also I don't want lose the requirement for the submissions to be in writing. I don't want Department Heads to just show up and talk because that was one of the things that bogged down the budget process and made it a lot less organized. Maybe a situation of compromise would to have the Elected Officials and Department Heads there available for questions. I am just afraid of getting back to a full week of back and forth and we have made such great strides in streamlining and making more effective and efficient the budget process and I don't want to backslide on that.

**Cal Miller:** I don't want to either; I would be in favor of continuing to receive the written information it may be a tedious process for the Department Heads and Elected Officials but it is very useful for us get our minds wrapped around the big picture of County finances and needs and at the same time allow an option for a limited period of time to address Council at the pre allocation meetings. That would be a good compromise and assist us in making decisions.

**Mike Cunegin:** In giving the option to come to this body I know that the Auditor will have the information there when we need it. I have always worked with my departments as we all have. Last year we didn't really give them an opportunity and as Councilman Miller said if they choose to come before us we should give them the opportunity.

**Commissioner Irving** stated that she would like to see, from the Council, more ideas on how we can do the things more involved. The Commissioners have, over the past couple of years tried to get our arms around the maintenance contracts. I would like to have a line in our Purchasing Department and have all maintenance contracts go through our purchasing department and there may even be some things with maintenance that we could do a collaborative effort with the city. It may help us to save costs.

**Darren Vogt:** We would also realize what we are spending and we may not even some of the maintenance contracts that we currently have.

**Lisa Blosser:** It would also make it easier for the Department Heads if they knew who to go to and what is the best bid.

**Cal Miller:** Can we have an active list that says what they are, when they started and when they are going to end?

**Commissioner Irving:** When this all started we had answering machines and a lot of small things that really didn't need maintenance agreements so we are slowly weeding through them. I think that sometimes some of the departments might be a little bit hesitant to come forward with new ideas on how to do a more collaborative effort because they are afraid they may lose funding in other areas. We have made great strides by looking at the big picture rather than the small picture. If I can give you any advice it would be that Council needs to be more open in trying to get the departments to work together without penalizing them in their own budgets and then not have enough to fund their own budgets.

**Darren Vogt:** I hope that most of the Department Heads realize that the Council is very willing and open for any discussion with for creative ideas. I again encourage you to have open dialogue with this Council for any creative ideas that work across the board. By no means would we put anyone in jeopardy for coming up with a great idea to save money and ask you to cut some place else. If we are saving money that's the game plan. Where we look at cutting is an inefficiency which would make more sense than just cutting something out of the budget just to cut an extra percentage out of the budget.

**Roy Buskirk:** On the space study, Commissioner Irving mentioned the fact of scanning in documents and records as far as saving space; it isn't very often that we have almost 100% of the Department Heads in the audience and I would just like to emphasize that each one of you ought to look at all of the records and documents that you have to see if possibly they could be scanned or something of that type to save space.

**Commissioner Irving:** Roy we need to qualify that we are talking about prime space the space that is public accessible. The Commissioners are looking at some type of a county wide scanning system and what the cost would be. It may be cheaper for us to do our own than to pay Iron Mountain to store our records for us.

**Cal Miller:** I would like to move back just a bit so that we are clear on the change in processes being recommended and ask for some more input. Would you feel that you had enough time if you were given a time frame of 10 or 15 minutes to present your pre-allocation budget to Council? One of the concerns that Councilwoman Hughes raised is that we really don't want to turn it back into a 2-week process of looking at every penny; we want to make a broader overview and rely on each of you to do the effective job you do in managing the funds that are allocated to you. Would anyone not feel hurt if you were given a time limit of 15 minutes to present your budget allocation? Would any of you object to that as long as you were given a time frame to present your pre allocation budget requests?

Are there any other suggestions on how we can approve the frame work for decision making that we have utilized over the past 2 years?

**Jerry Noble:** This is not a suggestion; I just want to tell you that from my perspective the process is better and more systematic. In our case it puts pressure on us within to figure out our priorities. It is a better system then we have had in the past.

**Cal Miller:** That is exactly what we want to do and we want your comments as well.

**Paula Hughes:** I will read through the time line so everybody knows how things will proceed this year and it looks like it will.

April 21, 2005	Auditor presents the 2006 Budget Revenue Estimates
April 28, 2005	Distribution of Pre-allocation letters to Departments
May 20, 2005	Pre-allocation letters due Auditor to compile summary
June 1-2, 2005	Budget Allocation meetings in City Council Chambers
June 9, 2005	Adjusted Allocations distributed to Departments

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July 1, 2005	2006 Budget due to Auditor
August 5, 2005	First Advertisement of 2006 Budget
August 12, 2005	Second Advertisement of 2006 Budget
August 15-19/05	Budget Hearings Scheduled
Sept. 15, 2005	Final Budget Adoption at September Council Meeting

I think if we go through this process, particularly on June 1 & 2 we may want to change that to a 3-day time frame but I don't think there is any need for 5-days for the Budget Hearings in August.

Lisa Blosser: We did that so we could get the room scheduled.

Darren Vogt: One of the things we need to add is a Council session where we set our priorities after the April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting for our actual budget estimated revenues.

Paula Hughes: We can do that on April 21<sup>st</sup>.

Cal Miller: We won't have the pre-allocation information yet; don't you think we need to at least have read them before we hear the comments?

Paula Hughes: That's a good point; maybe at the beginning of the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting we set the priorities.

Cal Miller: I think we set the priorities before we started going through and making the allocations. Do we want to set the priorities before we have heard from the Elected Officials and Department Heads but after we have read the written submissions or do we want to wait until we have had the opportunity to hear from them and read their written submissions?

Paula Hughes: Typically the priorities have been things that have been County wide issues.

Mike Cunegin: I like the format that you have on the time lines. Will it be possible for the Auditor to have the numbers by April for Council?

Lisa Blosser: I am confident that we will have good numbers in April.

Paul Moss: As far as setting of objectives, goals and priorities; if I recall correctly last June we talked about this; personally I don't see why we can't discuss that earlier actually; even prior to understanding what the actual budget revenues are because priorities can be changed. I think that setting priorities is pretty high level and is an issue that might take some time. I would suggest we talk to the Commissioners before April to look at that.

Darren Vogt: I agree; I think that one of the things we know is that this year there will be a roll-over of funds. That is something we have stayed away from in the past. I would rather set the county wide perspectives before we get influenced by any individual department. Look at it and say we have a big picture item and how do the other Department Heads fit into this big picture.

Cal Miller: Sometimes our county wide perspectives took a backseat to some of the needs of the Elected Officials and Department Heads. I would agree that hearing the comments from the rest of Council that we need to set those earlier rather than later and then entertain the individual needs of the Elected Officials and Department Heads and then make sure we maintain the ability to remain fluid with it.

Darren Vogt: If you recall, in our meetings, we talked about the raises to the County employees so they knew what our priorities ahead of time.

Paula Hughes: I want to congratulate Councilman Moss because it makes sense to make the individual departments aware of what county wide priorities are before they make individual requests because certainly that will change the priorities.

Cal Miller asked if there were any comments from the audience regarding the process. There were no comments. Do we want to extend the time for the June meetings and add a day making it June 1, 2 & 3?

Darren Vogt: The Pre Allocation Letters are due to the Auditor by May 20<sup>th</sup>. We are distributing them to the Departments on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

We can go ahead and schedule an additional meeting making the days June 1, 2 & 3, 2005 if we don't need it then we can cancel it.

Cal Miller: Which meeting do we want to earmark for the over all priorities for 2006?

Darren Vogt: That needs to come sooner, I think it is an April meeting after we have the overall budget revenues after April 21<sup>st</sup> which is or regularly scheduled meeting.

Paul Moss: My suggestion was to have that discussion fairly soon.

Paula Hughes: If we want to have the revenue estimates; we can do that at the April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. We have talked about having a joint meeting with the Commissioners this year and if we do that and include as one of the agenda

items County Wide Budget Priorities, in a general sense and then we can tighten that up on April 21<sup>st</sup> when we know what the numbers are.

Darren Vogt: I think that would be a good meeting to have after we know what our roll over is.

Lisa Blosser: You will know that next week.

Darren Vogt: My suggestion would be that we have that meeting early in February then if one meeting isn't enough to discuss it all then we can schedule another meeting.

Cal Miller: Will that be a separate meeting where the sole objective is to talk about those priorities?

Darren Vogt: Yes and I will schedule it with the Commissioners. Our scheduled meeting is on February 17<sup>th</sup> so it would be good to schedule it early in February during the morning. I will get several dates from the Commissioners and then e-mail every body.

Are there any other comments from the audience?

Again I want to reiterate the fact that this Council is extremely open to conversation, ideas and thoughts. Feel free to come to anyone of us to express your opinions. We will openly open all of your comments.

Paula Hughes: I would like to comment on Commissioner Irving's suggestions about maintenance agreements. We have done this with cell phones, we have created a specific technology purchases; it makes sense to do it with the maintenance agreements. The issue about departments to collaborate because of fear of loss of funding in their own budgets; it is a real fear but the fact of the matter is that Council is cutting budgets because we are losing funding each year. Anytime we have to cut budgets we do it because we are trying to make sure that the prioritized operations of County government continue and it certainly not done in a random sense. We are thrilled with cost savings and we view them as a way to make sure we can keep everything rolling; not a way to penalize individual departments. I just wanted to clarify that for everyone.

The next meeting is January 20, 2005 at 8:30 am

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 am.