



E·C·G·R·A
ERIE COUNTY GAMING REVENUE AUTHORITY

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
AND
ANNUAL BOARD MEETING**

APRIL 18, 2019

CANCELLED

NO QUORUM AVAILABLE



E·C·G·R·A
ERIE COUNTY GAMING REVENUE AUTHORITY

**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT
FOR
APRIL
2019**



NEWS***NEWS***NEWS***NEWS***NEWS***NEWS***NEWS

ECGRA Funding Enhances Local Communities, \$175,515 Invested in Erie County Special Events

45 Erie County Festivals, Performances, and Parades Support Local Economies, Civic Pride

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ERIE, PA (March 21, 2019) - Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA) awarded \$175,515 in Special Events grants today to 45 local non-profits in support of special events that improve quality of place for Erie residents. Special events include parades, performances, and festivals that promote community spirit and inclusiveness and generate economic impact in localities across Erie County.

“Supporting local events helps support the economies, residents, and businesses in small and large communities across Erie County,” said **Perry Wood, Executive Director, ECGRA**. “Events like parades and festivals are part of the social fabric that enhance the attractiveness of a region, while elevating our pride in Erie County. Special Events grants are driving tourism, attracting talent to the region, and helping sustain some quintessential Erie traditions that have helped make Erie County a special place to visit and to call home.”

About Special Events Grants

ECGRA Special Events Grants fund up to 5% of events that take place within Erie County, are open to the general public, and promote the region economically and culturally. Applicants must be a 501(c)3 organization, municipality, or authority headquartered in Erie County and provide a 1:1 cash match. Grantees

Mercy Center for Women	Celebration of 25 Years Serving Women and Children on the Road to Recovery	\$1,629.00
Preservation Erie	Independence Hill District Flea Market	\$448.20
Presque Isle Partnership	2019 Special Events	\$3,500.82
Roar on the Shore Inc	2019 Roar on the Shore Bike Week	\$17,421.75
SafeNet	Scrabble Tournament, Garden Party, Intimate Partner Violence Conference, Big Backyard Children's Parties	\$1,620.00
Saint Joseph Church Bread of Life Community	Oktoberfest 2019	\$3,600.00
Saint Patrick's Church	Erie Irish Festival	\$4,181.40
ServErie	ServErie Saturdays, ServErie Spring Soiree, ServErie School Initiative	\$3,060.00
Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network	Saint Paul's Annual Italian Festival	\$3,310.80
The Goodell Project, d/b/a Goodell Gardens & Homestead	2019 Schedule of Educational and Cultural Events	\$810.00
The Iroquois School District Foundation	Erie Food Truck Festival	\$3,171.60
The Nonprofit Partnership	Nonprofit Day 2019	\$3,510.00
Tom Ridge Environmental Center Foundation	Sunset Celebration	\$608.40
Union City Pride, INC	Gathering at French Creek	\$722.14
Waterford Community Fair Association	2019 Waterford Community Fair	\$6,118.67
Wattsburg Agricultural Society, Inc.	Wattsburg Agricultural Society Inc. 2019 Erie County Fair at Wattsburg	\$10,575.14
WQLN Public Media	Sounds Around Town Summer Concert Series and TV & Radio Broadcasts	\$1,722.96
YMCA of Greater Erie	2019 Special Events	\$8,535.42
Young Artists Debut Orchestra	Four Seasons Performances	\$2,214.54
Youth Leadership Institute of Erie	Global Youth Service Day "Say it, Say it Loud"	\$505.80

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The Washington Post

Trump's unrealistic promises to the Rust Belt may come back to haunt him

By [David Ignatius](#)

Columnist

March 19, 2019

When General Motors idled its auto plant in Lordstown, Ohio, this month, President Trump adopted a familiar strategy: He issued a nasty string of tweets blaming other people and promised, in effect, that he would restore the past.

Trump's angry, backward-looking approach may still appeal to some Rust Belt voters. But in the Ohio and Pennsylvania towns that helped win the presidency for Trump in 2016, his vow to turn back the clock hasn't worked out very well, and there are signs the Rust Belt may be corroding for him politically.

Lordstown's struggles, like those of other nearby factory towns, illustrate the harsh fact that manufacturing is a dynamic process. Old jobs are disappearing because of changes in technology and consumer preferences; trying to resist change is usually a fool's game. Rust Belt communities that are succeeding are the ones that have adapted by embracing new technologies and innovation.

Presidential leadership in this period of technological transition should focus on the future rather than the past. But Trump seems almost a

technophobe. Axios reported this week that he thinks driverless cars are “crazy.” He tweeted March 12, after the crash of a high-tech Boeing jetliner: “Airplanes are becoming far too complex to fly. . . . I see it all the time in many products. Always seeking to go one unnecessary step further, when often old and simpler is far better.”

Trump’s response to Lordstown was to attack David Green, the United Auto Workers Local 1112 president, implying that he was at fault along with GM, and demanding that he “get his act together and produce.”

Green had sent letters to Trump in July 2018 and February 2019 warning about threats to the plant. Trump didn’t respond.

After Trump’s Twitter tirade, Rep. Tim Ryan, the Ohio Democrat who represents the Lordstown area, fired back: “The President’s tweet . . . is offensive and does nothing to help bring back the manufacturing jobs he promised to my district.”

Ryan argued that “the best thing is to help” GM renovate the Lordstown plant and perhaps build electric vehicles there. Local residents said much the same thing to the Vindicator newspaper of Youngstown, Ohio, over the past few weeks: GM or a new owner should focus on new technology and making products people want to buy, rather than restore production of the low-selling Chevrolet Cruze.

Trump is vulnerable in the Rust Belt because he made such extravagant promises when he successfully wooed voters in 2016. “He won this area — a largely Democratic area — and he has not said a word yet, and that’s just pathetic,” warned Jim Graham, a former union leader at GM

Lordstown, during an interview with the Vindicator back in November, when GM said it planned to halt Cruze production there.

Local residents remember Trump's proclamation at a July 2017 rally in nearby Youngstown: "Those jobs [that] have left Ohio, they're all coming back . . . Don't sell your house." Tommy Wolikow, a former Lordstown worker, told the Vindicator: "I kind of turned into a Trump supporter at that time. I believed what he said. Almost two years later, I'm seeing nothing but job losses."

Homeowners in Youngstown certainly haven't seen a boom. According to Zillow, the online realty broker, the median price of homes currently listed in Youngstown is \$39,900. The national median price of homes currently listed is \$279,000. Browse the real estate ads for factory towns across Ohio and Pennsylvania and you'll see just how tough it is to be a Rust Belt resident, trapped in a downward cycle.

What's the right answer for Rust Belt towns where the old manufacturing base has disappeared? An interesting example is Erie, Pa. Most big factories there have closed in recent years, but the city is rebuilding itself around its local universities and a big insurance company. Profits from a big gambling casino in Erie County are funneled partly to "innovation spaces" at four local campuses.

Erie may have lost manufacturing jobs, but it's above the state average in advanced industries, says Ben Spегgen, a local journalist who helps run a think tank in Erie called the Jefferson Educational Society. "There has been a real shift in understanding that our Rust Belt economy is not solely tied to manufacturing," he says.

Another key to success is welcoming foreigners. About 10 percent of Erie's population is refugees, according to James and Deborah Fallows in their recent book, "Our Towns." One of the 10 characteristics they found in successful local communities adapting to change is that "they make themselves open."

One more lesson from Erie County, in the heart of the Rust Belt: Trump won there in the 2016 presidential election, but in the 2018 midterm congressional election, the county voted Democratic.

Read more from David Ignatius's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook.

Downtown North East, April 10, 2019 meeting

Invitees:

ECGRA: Perry Wood & Tom Maggio

DNE: Charlene Kerr, Vern Frye, Pat Federici, Chas Wagner

Chamber: Holly Ferruggia

Historical Society: Chas Wagner, Dick Tefft

NR Community Foundation: Billy Lewis, Vern Frye

Agenda:

- Reason for meeting--Char
 - Too many empty buildings/storefronts in downtown
 - Building owners who are willing to sell are asking prices that are too high
 - Buildings are in disrepair; continued lack of maintenance will be catastrophic
 - Viable tenants have left because of owner demands—too high cost of repairs
 - Vacant or underutilized upper floors due to lack of access/repair needs
 - Need for a more aggressive marketing/recruitment effort

- Buildings that are vacant, soon to be vacant, or in dire need of upkeep—Holly
- Potential building vacancy tax--Holly

- One potential solution for upper floors—Char: We have a quote from Bostwick Design Group to study the potential of adding an outside elevator and decking to the back sides of the East Main/South Lake block. This could provide access to all upper floors, making them more accessible and viable. Need \$7,000 to fund this study. This concept, if workable, could also be applied to the other two blocks in the future. Issues: How do owners contribute? Electric lines...

- Another solution—Char: Need for an economic development revolving loan fund (ED RLF) to purchase buildings (most likely by DNE in order to be eligible for grants), acquire grants for renovation, then sell or lease the buildings, with proceeds going back into the ED RLF. Need capital to start this fund. Likely several hundred thousand dollars.

- Renovation funds available—Perry/Tom: What can ECGRA assist with?

- What are other sources of funds to get started?

- Discussion—is this worth pursuing? If so, next meeting? Who else should be included?



Funding Opportunities	Awards
Erie School District/Mercyhurst University – PAsmart Award	\$ 500,000
Greater Erie Community Action Committee – pre-apprenticeship program	\$ 49,995
ARC Grant – Investing in Appalachia’s Future: ARC 5-year Strategic Plan	\$ 200,000
EDA – Regional Innovation Strategies Assistance to Coal Communities Program	\$ 1,000,000
Millcreek School District Foundation – tax credit	\$ 20,000
TOTAL:	\$ 1,769,995



Ridge Policy Group Activity

ECGRA March 15 – April 5 Report

Overview

For more than a year, the Ridge Policy Group has looked for any and all relevant state and federal funding opportunities for the county of Erie on behalf of our work with ECGRA. We are excited to see that many of those funding opportunities are being recognized and awarded to benefit the community in January-February. This month, we were focused on find opportunities for GECAC's prison reentry program, supporting the Blue Zone effort, and helping the Innovation District develop a competitive application for funding.

Additional RPG Relevant Activity for this Month

- March 18 – Call with Sheila Silman on GECAC reentry funding opportunities
- April 1 – Sent follow-up information to Sheila with updated funding opportunities (attached)
- April 1 – Provided quote from Gov. Ridge to Melissa Lyon on Blue Zone initiative in Erie County
- Throughout month – Worked with Karl Sanchack and the Innovation District on a RCAP application for the Innovation District, including:
 - Conversation with Sherri Collins and Neil Folwer
 - Connection to Rep. Bizarro
 - Meeting with Rep. Bob Merski on March 29
 - Meeting with Senator Laughlin on March 28
 - Call with Scott Deitrich on the Governor's Action Team on March 29

Tammi Michali

From: Tom Maggio
Sent: Thursday, April 4, 2019 9:08 AM
To: Perry Wood; Tammi Michali
Subject: Fw: AmeriMasala

From: Lynn Johnson <turtleback350@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 4, 2019 7:39:33 AM
To: Tom Maggio
Subject: AmeriMasala

Hi Tom,

I want to thank you so much for hooking me up with Edinboro Bee Hive. They have been such a help on so many levels. Not only just a technical and design level, but the energy of the students and professors inspire me. Going through the process of bouncing creative ideas forces me to look at the weaknesses in my game. I was hitting a wall here in Erie because I didn't have that kind of energy to feed me.

A couple of the students came by yesterday to do a video. My brain has been on fire ever since.

Thank you so much.

MEMORIALS

A special thank you to the family of
Berta Wilhelmine Liedtke
Died - December 2018
for designating memorials to the
Neighborhood Art House in her memory.



201 East Tenth Street
Erie, Pennsylvania 16503-1007

Address Service Requested



From the Desk of Sr. Annette

BE KIND. That's what the buttons and magnets say. Distributed during Catholic Sisters Week in early March, they state the obvious, kindness is sorely needed always, but especially now.

Bullying among children, hateful or bigoted expressions in our language, our inability to discuss differences of opinion without ran-

cor, violence in our families and neighborhoods – these are signs of a society that is adrift from the basic values of mutual love and respect.

How do we change this? As Jane Goodall states, "What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." We decide to build up or tear down ourselves, each other and society itself through our everyday behaviors. Children or adults, affluent or needy, powerful or weak we can all be part of the solution. "Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good together that overwhelm the world." Desmond Tutu Every act of kindness builds a connection, and the connections build a society. Essentially, it all boils down to how we treat one another.

"I expect to pass through life but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, and not defer or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again." William Penn

Sister Annette

Art Displays and Competitions



Teajanae J.

At the request of Judge Elizabeth Kelly, a series of black and white photographs taken by Lourdes Jasso's photography students and framed by Sarah Everett, Program Assistant, are on display on the second floor of the Erie County Courthouse. The theme of this show is *A Child's*

View of Erie. Other display and competition opportunities that will have NAH artwork submitted include The Tom Ridge Environmental Center and the Barber National Institute upcoming art shows. As always, the walls of the Art House display children's art.

Donor Corner



Pictured are from L to R: Mike Batchelor, President, The Erie Community Foundation; Kelly Stolar, CFRE, NAH Development Director; Sister Annette Marshall, OSB, NAH Executive Director; Rachel Cacchione, Community Impact Associate and Patrick Herr, Community Impact Director, The Erie Community Foundation

Two current priorities, building security and organizational visibility, took on new life as three funders stepped up to join ECGRA (the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority) who previously awarded \$25,000 for the project, as sponsors.

The Blake Family Foundation awarded \$1,000 to the project in December 2018. In January The Erie Community Foundation awarded \$8,500

toward increasing building security through upgrading the surveillance camera system and installing a remote door attendant system designed to prevent unauthorized entry



into the building. In February the Erie Insurance Foundation awarded \$10,000 toward the visibility project which include installation of a new electronic sign and building mural. These will both identify the building, visually express our purpose and announce upcoming event and enrollment periods. The Neighborhood Art House will be safer and more visible to the public because of these generous funders.



Pictured L to R Back Row: Kelly Stolar, CFRE, NAH Development Director; Sister Annette Marshall, OSB, Inner-City Neighborhood Art House Executive Director; Kathleen Burik, Erie Insurance Marketing Manager; Ashleigh Montagna, Erie Insurance Senior Marketing Communications Specialist. Picture from L to R Art House students: Joshua (12yrs Armani (8yrs); Nhu (11yrs); Rickiemarie (10yrs)

Thank you, thank you

to everyone who has already responded to our recently mailed appeal. The funding from this appeal will increase our capacity to serve Erie's inner-city children.

This appeal was largely the effort of the Marketing Committee, chaired by Kathleen Burik, with assistance from the Development Committee, chaired by Tammy Roche. As always, we are grateful for the generosity with which they share their talents with us.

If you have not yet had an opportunity to consider a donation, you might wish to use the enclosed donation envelope.

Again, our sincere gratitude for your support.

Green Team Challenge

(Continued from front page)

- One trillion plastic bags are used worldwide each year, with an average "working life" of just 15 minutes.
- Estimates for how long plastic endures range from 450 years to forever.
- Some 9 million tons of plastic end up in the ocean each year.
- It takes a lot of energy to make a plastic

Plastics form a swirling mass called the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Currents and winds move the garbage patch throughout the oceans harming plants, animals and coral reefs.

Take the Plastic Pledge:



OUR VIEW

New toy gives Erie a leg up

The issue: New Erie dog toy bounces onto market
Our view: Native innovation is Erie's path forward

It is not made of cast iron, clearly. But the proud "ERIE PA" raised stamp on Lake Erie Rubber & Manufacturing's new made-in-Erie rubber dog toy recalls the iconic marker found on one of Erie's most renowned and valued local products — Griswold cookware. Who among us does not come across an old piece of cast iron and flip it over to check for the Griswold logo, complete with Erie bragging rights? Griswold, which made now-collectible cast iron and aluminum cookware, closed its plant in 1957. Many other manufacturing stalwarts faded away and the region shed manufacturing jobs by the thousands as the global economy changed and shifted away from Erie.

Nostalgia is fine. But Erie's future does not lie in huring back departed industries, rather in creating new ones with the native ingenuity, networks and resources at hand.

The new "One Leg Up!" rubber dog ball, a simple thing, hits all those marks.

Start with entrepreneur Jon Meighan. A former mechanical engineer at GE Transportation, Meighan staked his hopes and fortunes on the Erie region's future in 2017 when he bought a group of businesses in Fairview Township and consolidated them into Lake Erie Rubber & Manufacturing with plans to diversify and create more jobs.

The company typically fills orders for others, but now it is putting on the market the dog ball that was created with help from local expertise housed in the Northwest Pennsylvania Innovation Beehive, as reporter Madeleine O'Neill detailed. The beehive, which receives crucial support from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, has helped dozens of innovators in all stages of business development tap for free the expertise of local colleges and universities. Penn State Behrend helped with the design of the One Leg Up! toy, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania with the branding and logo.

Another local business, Peninsula Pups Doggie Daycare helped them test the prototypes on Erie's canine community. The ball, soft, solid rubber, features a groove in which to put peanut butter or some other treat for a pup to gnaw on. Check it out at <https://ileguppets.com//>.

This product should prove popular not just with pooches, but also with local pet lovers, given the Erie connection. As Peninsula Pups owner Liz Freitag said, "Everyone is totally about Erie (here)."

It also meets a key demand for pet owners worldwide — safety. It is made with Food and Drug Administration-compliant materials. That is important at a time when products made overseas too often trigger sickness and death in our animals and lead to product safety recalls.

Hopefully, it won't be a one-off, but one among many innovative, made-in-Erie products to emerge from Meighan's plant. Other would-be entrepreneurs should take notice and heart.

Bayview Park revamp on way

Our West Bayfront will talk about the park improvements Tuesday at Emerson-Gridley

By Kevin Flowers
kevin.flowers@timesnews.com

For roughly two years, Our West Bayfront has been working on a plan to revamp Bayview Park on the city's west side.

On Tuesday evening, residents will hear details of the neighborhood organization's first phase of improvements for the park, which could start as early as this summer. Bayview Park is located along West Second Street between Cherry and Walnut streets.

Our West Bayfront will meet with westside residents at Emerson-Gridley Elementary School, 816 N. Park Ave., to discuss the first amenities that will be added to the park as part of an up to \$500,000 plan for improvements that could include public art murals; walking paths; a community garden; improved access for those with disabilities; renovated basketball courts; permanent restrooms; new playground equipment, and free wifi.

Tuesday's meeting begins at 6 p.m., and the public is invited to attend.

The project is funded by a \$150,000 state grant; \$50,000 from the Erie County Gaming Revenue

See BAYVIEW, A9



Our West Bayfront is moving forward with plans for significant upgrades to Bayview Park. (KEVIN FLOWERS/ERIE TIMES-NEWS)

BAYVIEW

From Page A1

Authority; \$20,000 from the Erie Community Foundation; and \$3,000 raised by Our West Bayfront, a nonprofit focused on improving neighborhoods from Presque Isle Bay south to West 12th Street and from Sassafras Street west to the Bayfront Parkway.

"We went through a long process of doing a neighborhood survey of park uses, and the types of things people want to see there," said Anna Frantz, Our West Bayfront's executive director. "We are going to share with residents the things we believe we can fit into our budget that will be installed this summer."

Our West Bayfront is still seeking additional funding for the project.

Frantz declined to discuss specific amenities that are part of the park

improvement plan's first phase, saying that she wants residents to hear about them first at Tuesday's meeting.

Renee Lamis, Erie Mayor Joe Schember's chief of staff, said she and/or Schember will attend Tuesday's meeting. The city has worked closely with the neighborhood group on the Bayview Park plan.

"We are excited about the plans for Bayview Park. The ideas were collected through a community process that engaged residents of the west bayfront neighborhood to provide their input," Lamis said.

Gannon University President Keith Taylor said the school is strongly behind efforts to improve Bayview Park. Gannon partners with Our West Bayfront on west bayfront renewal plans.

Kevin Flowers can be reached at 870-1693 or by email. Follow him on Twitter at www.twitter.com/ETNflowers.

Our West Bayfront outlines Bayview Park upgrades

New splash pad, improvements to basketball courts included in project

By Ron Leonardi
ron.leonardi@timesnews.com

Later this summer, children can cool down at a new splash pad — the first of its kind in Erie — scheduled to be installed at Bayview Park.

Those who play in the summer basketball leagues at the park, located along West Second Street between Cherry and Walnut streets in Erie, can expect to see upgrades to the basketball courts including fencing and lighting.

New walking paths within and around the park are in the offing. So are new benches and trash receptacles, and improved pedestrian access points.

Our West Bayfront officials outlined the \$370,000 initial phase of park improvements

See PARK, A3

PARK

From Page A1

on Tuesday evening at a public meeting at Emerson-Gridley Elementary School, 816 N. Park Ave., in Erie. About 100 people attended the 1½-hour-long community gathering.

"We have so much enthusiasm for this project and we're really grateful to everyone for seeing the vision and for willing to be a partner with us to make this happen," Our West Bayfront Executive Director Anna Frantz said. "I need to stress how grateful we are for the support of the city working with us. This would not be possible if they weren't willing to move this project along. The mayor and his staff have really picked up this ball and run with it."

Other park amenities include the transformation of a tennis court into a multipurpose court, and the addition of public art that conveys the history of Pontiac Baseball Field and the New Jerusalem neighborhood.

Improvements will focus on the eastern half of Bayview Park, Frantz said.

The project is funded in part by a \$150,000 state Greenways, Trails and Recreation program grant, a \$50,000 Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority community assets grant, a \$25,000 Erie Community Foundation grant, and about \$3,000 raised through the 2018 Erie Gives Day fundraiser.

"We don't have a splash pad in Erie and we think it's really important and something that's more common in public parks around the country, and we're excited for Erie to have the same kind of amenity that other communities have," Frantz

said.

The Our West Bayfront nonprofit targets improving neighborhoods from Presque Isle Bay south to West 12th Street and from Sassafras Street west to the Bayfront Parkway.

Bayview Park work is expected to begin in late spring or early summer. Some of the planned initial-phase work will go out for bid, which has not yet occurred, officials said.

"We still have more bid work and more design work," City Public Works Director Dave Mulvihill said.

Mulvihill said he hopes to have installation of the park's new splash pad completed by July 4. Crews will attempt to complete all of the improvements without disrupting the park's summer activities.

"We'll be working in and out of the activities going on," Mulvihill said. "We hope to have this work done by the end of the fall, or earlier, if possible. We don't want to shut down the park. We have a window of a few months, so it's better to do construction prior to the summer and after the summer."

A second phase of Bayview Park improvements is planned.

"We know what we want to be in phase two, but we haven't nailed it down," Frantz said.

"I think phase two will be more emphasis on taking advantage of the promenade and the overlooks, maybe some creative seating that looks out over to the bay, and hopefully some parking improvements on the west side of the park. We haven't gotten to the nitty gritty of that."

Ron Leonardi can be reached at 870-1680 or by e-mail. Follow him on Twitter at www.Twitter.com/ETNLeonardi.

County Council OKs cash for community college study

Council also to invest \$25,000 for a census coordinator

By Matthew Rink
matthew.rink@timesnews.com

Erie County Council narrowly agreed Tuesday to invest \$15,000 into its efforts to establish a community college here.

By a 4-3 vote, Council approved sending the general operating fund money to Empower Erie, the nonprofit agency that, with county government, has led efforts to establish a community college here.

The money will go toward an updated impact study and a marketing campaign to "re-invigorate and re-energize" stakeholders and the community at large, Empower Erie officials have said.

Speaking in support of the community college, Councilman Andre Horton said a post-secondary education remains out of reach for a majority of Erie County residents, and that the county's skilled workforce is aging.

"Erie is the largest metropolitan area in the state without a community college," he said, later adding that the issue is "dire."

Horton would join Council members Kathy Fatica, Fiore Leone and Carl Anderson in approving the \$15,000 expenditure.

Council members Kyle Foust, Scott Rastetter and Carol Loll voted against it. Foust said the investment "misses the mark" and that the money would be better spent trying to persuade officials in Harrisburg to support the community college.

Community college proponents are waiting on the Pennsylvania Department of Education and state Board of Education to act on the county's application, which they submitted in June 2017 after a majority of

County Council and County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper decided to sponsor the college.

The state Board of Education isn't expected to take up the issue until July at the earliest, a spokesman with the Department of Education told the Erie Times-News recently.

Officials are concerned by both the inaction of state officials and the opposition of state Sen. Joe Scarnati, president pro tempore of the Pennsylvania Senate. Scarnati, of Jefferson County, R-25th Dist., helped found the Northern Pennsylvania Regional College, which rents classroom space to hold courses that are often live-streamed by a professor. Scarnati has argued that a community college for Erie would duplicate services that the NPRC already provides or is capable of providing.

Empower Erie officials Ron DiNicola and Judi Roth addressed County Council at its March 14 finance committee meeting. They said \$10,000 will be used to update a May 2017 study by the firm Parker Phillips to reflect changes to the county's original application and changes in the local economy that they say further necessitate a community college in Erie County. The other \$5,000 of county funds will be combined with donations from businesses and other groups for marketing.

Also on Tuesday, County Council voted to invest \$25,000 for a census coordinator for the upcoming 2020 Census and expand the county's Human Resources Department.

The census coordinator will be hired by the Erie Area Council of Governments and work on a contract basis. They will work for about 14 months and be paid \$60,000. The salary is part of a \$100,000 budget that EACOG has for census efforts. The budget

also includes \$35,000 for marketing, \$3,000 for travel expenses and \$2,000 for branding.

The census coordinator will organize the work of the Erie County Complete Count Committee, which Dahlkemper and Erie Mayor Joe Schember are co-chairing and which will include a range of community stakeholders. The goal of the committee is to work with Census Bureau officials locally to ensure the county's population is accurately counted. Census information is used to determine, among other things, federal funding for a range of things, from education to transportation.

The county's \$25,000, approved unanimously, enables EACOG to apply for \$50,000 from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority. EACOG is also asking the city of Erie for \$10,000. Smaller municipalities will pay for the \$15,000 balance of EACOG's budget.

Councilman Carl Anderson called it "an investment and insurance policy for the taxpayers of Erie County."

As for the Human Resources Department, it will add two new positions to its staff of four: A data specialist, at an annual salary of \$37,557, and a wellness coordinator, at a salary of \$39,800. The positions will help the county reduce turnover, which can lead to cost increases of up to four times a vacated position's salary, according to department officials, and improve participation in wellness programs, like blood pressure screenings, which can reduce health care expenses. Foust and Leone voted against the \$86,275 expenditure.

Matthew Rink can be reached at 870-1884 or by email. Follow him on Twitter at www.Twitter.com/ETNrink.

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The Our West Bayfront nonprofit targets improving neighborhoods from Presque Isle Bay south to West 12th Street and from Sassafras Street west to the Bayfront Parkway.

Bayview Park work is expected to begin in late spring or early summer. Some of the planned initial-phase work will go out for bid, which has not yet occurred, officials said.

"We still have more bid work and more design work," City Public Works Director Dave Mulvihill said.

Mulvihill said he hopes to have installation of the park's new splash pad completed by July 4. Crews will attempt to complete all of the improvements without disrupting the park's summer activities.

"We'll be working in and out of the activities going on," Mulvihill said. "We hope to have this work done by the end of the fall, or earlier, if possible. We don't want to shut down the park. We have a window of a few months, so it's better to do construction prior to the summer and after the summer."

A second phase of Bayview Park improvements is planned.

"We know what we want to be in phase two, but we haven't nailed it down," Frantz said.

"I think phase two will be more emphasis on taking advantage of the promenade and the overlooks, maybe some creative seating that looks out over to the bay, and hopefully some parking improvements on the west side of the park. We haven't gotten to the nitty gritty of that."

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County Council OKs cash for community college study

Council also to invest \$25,000 for a census coordinator

By Matthew Rink
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Erie County Council narrowly agreed Tuesday to invest \$15,000 into its efforts to establish a community college here.

By a 4-3 vote, Council approved sending the general operating fund money to Empower Erie, the nonprofit agency that, with county government, has led efforts to establish a community college here.

The money will go toward an updated impact study and a marketing campaign to "re-invigorate and re-energize" stakeholders and the community at large, Empower Erie officials have said.

Speaking in support of the community college, Councilman Andre Horton said a post-secondary education remains out of reach for a majority of Erie County residents, and that the county's skilled workforce is aging.

"Erie is the largest metropolitan area in the state without a community college," he said, later adding that the issue is "dire."

Horton would join Council members Kathy Fatica, Fiore Leone and Carl Anderson in approving the \$15,000 expenditure.

Council members Kyle Foust, Scott Rastetter and Carol Loll voted against it. Foust said the investment "misses the mark" and that the money would be better spent trying to persuade officials in Harrisburg to support the community college.

Community college proponents are waiting on the Pennsylvania Department of Education and state Board of Education to act on the county's application, which they submitted in June 2017 after a majority of

County Council and County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper decided to sponsor the college.

The state Board of Education isn't expected to take up the issue until July at the earliest, a spokesman with the Department of Education told the Erie Times-News recently.

Officials are concerned by both the inaction of state officials and the opposition of state Sen. Joe Scarnati, president pro tempore of the Pennsylvania Senate. Scarnati, of Jefferson County, R-25th Dist., helped found the Northern Pennsylvania Regional College, which rents classroom space to hold courses that are often live-streamed by a professor. Scarnati has argued that a community college for Erie would duplicate services that the NPRC already provides or is capable of providing.

Empower Erie officials Ron DiNicola and Judi Roth addressed County Council at its March 14 finance committee meeting. They said \$10,000 will be used to update a May 2017 study by the firm Parker Philips to reflect changes to the county's original application and changes in the local economy that they say further necessitate a community college in Erie County. The other \$5,000 of county funds will be combined with donations from businesses and other groups for marketing.

Also on Tuesday, County Council voted to invest \$25,000 for a census coordinator for the upcoming 2020 Census and expand the county's Human Resources Department.

The census coordinator will be hired by the Erie Area Council of Governments and work on a contract basis. They will work for about 14 months and be paid \$60,000. The salary is part of a \$100,000 budget that EACOG has for census efforts. The budget

also includes \$35,000 for marketing, \$3,000 for travel expenses and \$2,000 for branding.

The census coordinator will organize the work of the Erie County Complete Count Committee, which Dahlkemper and Erie Mayor Joe Schember are co-chairing and which will include a range of community stakeholders. The goal of the committee is to work with Census Bureau officials locally to ensure the county's population is accurately counted. Census information is used to determine, among other things, federal funding for a range of things, from education to transportation.

The county's \$25,000, approved unanimously, enables EACOG to apply for \$50,000 from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority. EACOG is also asking the city of Erie for \$10,000. Smaller municipalities will pay for the \$15,000 balance of EACOG's budget.

Councilman Carl Anderson called it "an investment and insurance policy for the taxpayers of Erie County."

As for the Human Resources Department, it will add two new positions to its staff of four: A data specialist, at an annual salary of \$37,557, and a wellness coordinator, at a salary of \$39,800. The positions will help the county reduce turnover, which can lead to cost increases of up to four times a vacated position's salary, according to department officials, and improve participation in wellness programs, like blood pressure screenings, which can reduce health care expenses. Foust and Leone voted against the \$86,275 expenditure.

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