

ORDINANCE No. _____, 2024

Repeal of Resolution No. 36, 2023 and Rescission of Agreement Between
The County of Erie and Gannon University

WHEREAS, on February 21, 2023, County Council approved ARPA funding of \$1.5 million to Gannon University to establish a Water Research Center to be located on the Bayfront with the understanding that Gannon University would lease property from the Erie-Western PA Port Authority; and

WHEREAS, while negotiating the terms and conditions of a Lease Agreement with the Port Authority, the Administration contacted and invited Gannon University to consider leasing 3200 square feet of property located in the Erie County Blasco Library; and

WHEREAS, the terms of the Lease Agreement with Gannon University called for a twenty-five (25) year term at \$7.00 per square foot, well below the fair rental value of the property; and

WHEREAS, the County of Erie is not in the business of leasing government property to private third parties or third parties with a particular religious affiliation; and

WHEREAS, on October 12, 2023, the Gannon Lease Agreement was first introduced and presented to County Council at its regularly scheduled Finance Meeting; and

WHEREAS, on October 17, 2023, pursuant to Resolution No. 36, 2023, Erie County Council approved the Agreement entered into between the County of Erie and Gannon University; and

WHEREAS, since the Lease Agreement was approved by County Council, the citizens of Erie County have publicly protested the Administration's unilateral interference with the operations of the Blasco Library and the resources and services it provided to the public; have protested that they were not included or given sufficient notice of the County's plan to lease the Blasco Library to Gannon University, and were denied the opportunity to voice their objections to leasing the Blasco Library to Gannon University; have protested that, contrary to the representations of the Administration, the Blasco Library does not have the space to accommodate Gannon University; that the Lease to Gannon University will have significantly reduced the space and compromised the resources otherwise available to the public; and finally, that the Lease will have hamstrung the Library by frustrating its plans for future growth; all at the expense of the public at large; and

WHEREAS, Erie County Council, after hearing and considering the protests of the citizens of Erie County, after weighing the disadvantages of the Lease Agreement against the advantages, after considering the Lease’s irretrievable impact upon the future growth of Blasco Library, and the importance of the role it plays and the resources it provides to the citizens of Erie County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, pursuant to Article II, Section 3B(2)(f) of the Home Rule Charter of Erie County, the County Council of the County of Erie hereby repeals Resolution No. 36, 2023 and rescinds the Lease Agreement between the County of Erie and Gannon University for the Gannon Great Lakes Water Research Center at Blasco Library.

I, Karen Chillcott, hereby certify that on the Motion of _____, seconded by _____, this Ordinance was ENACTED and ORDAINED this ____ day of _____, 2024, by a vote of ____ to ____.

Attest:

COUNTY COUNCIL OF THE
COUNTY OF ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

Karen Chillcott, County Clerk

Terry M. Scutella, Chairman

Date: _____

Andre R. Horton, Vice Chairman

Charlie Bayle

Approved by:

Rock Copeland

Brenton Davis,
County Executive

Chris Drexel

Date: _____

Ellen Schauerman

Jim Winarski