

**Report: Westshore Council of Governments (WCOG) meeting, Wednesday March 26, 2014**

**by LWV observers Susan Murnane (Bay Village chapter), Sue Fink (Bay Village chapter), and Nikki Salupo (Fairview Park chapter).**

*This report, which contains observations and selected highlights of a meeting of the WCOG, is not an official statement of the LWV. Official minutes are prepared by Mayor Patton's office.*

Present: Mayors Patton (Fairview Park), Summers (Lakewood), Kennedy (North Olmsted). Mayor Sutherland (Bay Village) arrived at 10:30.

Absent: Mayors Bobst (Rocky River) and Clough (Westlake)

Also in attendance: Dave Greenspan, District 1 Representative, Cuyahoga County Council; Fiscal Officer Steve Presley, Westlake Director of Purchasing Larry Surber, and Senior Transportation Connection Executive Director Janice M. Dzigiel.

Mayor Patton called the meeting to order 9:30 in the Birch Room at the Gemini Center in Fairview Park. It adjourned at 11:35. No quorum was present initially, so the minutes of the prior meeting and the budget were deferred until Mayor Sutherland arrived.

Commission Reports:

**NOACA:** Mayor Sutherland and Mayor Summers are on the Board of Directors. NOACA has \$44 million in sustainable community funds for infrastructure repairs throughout the five counties included in NOACA: Lake, Geauga, Medina, Lorain and Cuyahoga. Cuyahoga County wants the funds distributed on the basis of greatest need, while the exurban counties want the funds distributed on a percentage basis. Current estimated need is \$20 billion.

**LWV Hot Topic:** Mayor Patton acknowledged the LWV observers, and asked for information about our upcoming Hot Topic: Regional Antidotes to Sprawl on April 8, 2014 featuring Grace Gallucci, Executive Director of NOACA. For reservations and additional information go to [lwvcuyahogaarea.org](http://lwvcuyahogaarea.org).

**Senior Transportation Connection (STC):** Executive Director Janice Dzigiel described the services provided by STC as a kind of regionalism proved through a non-profit corporation. STC operates a fleet of vehicles and provides senior transportation services on behalf of municipalities and other non-profit entities. 90 percent of its costs are covered by fees paid by the municipalities or the passengers, and 10 percent of costs are covered by philanthropy. STC offers municipalities maximum flexibility; the municipalities determine what services are covered, who is eligible, and passenger fees. STC can offer weekend service, and it transports patients to the Avon facility of Cleveland Clinic. STC aspires to

become a county-wide service, but North Olmsted is its only Westshore customer at this time. STC will meet individually with municipalities for further information.

#### Old Business:

*FirstAid4Autism:* Akron Police Sergeant Mark Farrar offers training for safety forces on interactions with autistic people, but none of the mayors expressed interest. Autism training is included in other training currently offered to safety forces in North Olmsted, Lakewood and Westlake. Furthermore, Mr. Greenspan said that Cuyahoga County offers comprehensive training to any municipal employee at no cost through ADAMHS. The mayors agreed to coordinate ADAMHS training sessions, and Mayor Patton and Mr. Greenspan will put something together.

*Regional Dispatch and 911 Consolidation:* WCOG will do nothing with regard to the county's proposal but wait and see what develops.

*2014 Budget:* The WCOG budget was approved after a discussion of cash reserves, with a resolution calling for using the reserves to fund 2014 dues allocations in excess of the 2013 amounts.

#### New Business:

*Simple Recycling:* A for-profit company, Simple Recycling, distributes bags and collects recyclable material such as clothing, toys, and household goods directly from residences on regular trash collection days. The service sells the collected material and returns a rebate to the municipalities based on tonnage. The service is not intended to divert donations from charities such as Goodwill but to provide residents with a convenient way to recycle material while saving their cities landfill expenses. Mayor Patton will distribute information about the company and its services to the other mayors.

*Ready Notify:* Cuyahoga County has started an automated notification system similar to Nixle that is free to every community. Like Nixle, it is a citizen opt-in system, but it is more flexible and comprehensive. Communities must sign up for their community's information to be distributed---the county only broadcasts information that affects the whole county---but communities can narrowly tailor the households to which information is broadcast even down to street level. Lakewood, Fairview Park, and North Olmsted are interested in the program.

*ODOT Salt contract:* Mayor Summers complained that the recently received ODOT contract for next winter's road salt demands action by April 8 but does not disclose essential information such as the price and supplier of the salt. Typically, the deadline for salt contracts has fallen in May or June. Furthermore, ODOT's contract does not address the numerous service problems encountered in the past winter. North Olmsted received all its salt from Cargill and was happy with its service last winter. Mayor Summers said that while the price from ODOT

would likely be the lowest price, given the difficulties encountered last winter he would be willing to pay more for better service. Mayor Sutherland arrived and advised that her city council passed an ordinance authorizing her to sign ODOT's contract but she has not yet done so. Mayor Summers asked the mayors to advise if they sign ODOT's contract. He proposed contacting ODOT to request an extension of time for signing the contract. He will also prepare a request for proposal with regard to salt contracts direct from the suppliers. Mayor Bobst previously indicated to Mayor Summers that she was also interested.

*Lake Erie Dredging:* Mayor Summers presented a letter he has sent to Ohio EPA questioning whether there is science supporting the U.S. Corps of Engineers proposal to dump soil dredged from the Cuyahoga River shipping channel directly into Lake Erie. Mayor Summers expressed concern that the dredged soil could adversely impact drinking water. He argued that the Corps of Engineers is primarily interested in keeping the shipping channel open at minimum expense not in public health, and he urged the mayors to take a strong stand as a region. It is his understanding that the current on-land disposal sites can receive dredged material for about two additional years, so there is time to study the issue. The Corps of Engineers is threatening to stop clearing the shipping channels if it is not allowed to dump in the lake.

*Lifelight Helicopters:* Mayor Summers said that some of his constituents have complained about noise from Cleveland Clinic's Avon facility helicopters flying over their homes at low altitudes. He understands that this is unnecessary, but none of the other mayors have received complaints.

*Supervision at Westshore Central Dispatch:* Mayor Sutherland said that questions about the chain of command at the Westshore Central Dispatch need to be deferred until the matter can be discussed at a central dispatch meeting.

*County Council Update:* Mr. Greenspan said that the County Council has not been briefed on County Executive Fitzgerald's announced plan to seek borrowing authority for a \$50 million fund to demolish abandoned homes, and it will seek advice from a bond attorney. Mr. Greenspan also said that the Council has begun discussing county and city responsibilities for major and minor repairs to county roads.

*The Westshore Council of Governments was founded in 1971 "to foster cooperation between municipalities in all areas of municipal service." All meetings are open to the public. The next meeting will be May 14, 9:30-11:30 a.m., in the Fairview Park Gemini Center's Birch Room.*