

## **County Council Regular Meeting: November 26, 2013**

Observer: Lesley Hahn

*This report contains member observations and selected highlights of a meeting of the Cuyahoga County Council and is not an official statement by any League of Women Voters in the county. For the official disposition of all agenda items, consult the Cuyahoga County Council website at [council.cuyahogacounty.us](http://council.cuyahogacounty.us)*

### **I. Introduction**

All members except David Greenspan were present for the meeting which began promptly at 5 p.m. Council went into executive session at 6:30 p.m. to discuss a collective bargaining agreement.

County Executive Ed Fitzgerald noted the County's participation in the Heroin Summit at the Cleveland Clinic, a meeting between law enforcement personnel, medical personnel and government officials. Heroin usage, and especially experimental use by young people, has reached epidemic proportions and Fitzgerald expressed his concern. Two hundred deaths are anticipated this year, exceeding deaths from vehicular accidents. He stated that about half the deaths come from urban areas, half from the suburbs.

Public comment mostly concerned the vote on selling the County Archives Building to Welcome House, with most local residents expressing opposition or concern.

### **II. Business Transacted:**

\* Resolutions of support for applications under the Clean Ohio Fund Green Space Conservation Program were referred to Education and Environmental Committee for first reading. These concerned areas along the Chagrin River Watershed and North Chagrin Reservation, areas along the Cuyahoga River and Chagrin River, along the headwaters of Big Creek and Lower Big Creek, in Bradley Woods Reservation, along the East Branch of Euclid Creek, Green Creek and Euclid Creek Metropark Reservation, adjacent to Dunham Tavern Museum, and areas along the Irishtown Overlook.

\* Council approved MetroHealth System's policies and procedures to participate in joint purchasing associations. It also established a Cuyahoga County Monument Commission. Council President Connally said this was one of her pet projects and would allow for an orderly process for dealing with monuments, relevant in light of the construction of the new County Admin. Bldg.

\* The routine amendment to the 2012-2013 Biennial Operating Budget was passed on first reading, although Councilman Miller offered two minor amendments. He stated that the overall impact of appropriations was positive, with about \$8 million in increases and \$9 million in revenue enhancement. He provided a paper of questions and answers regarding fourth quarter Health and Human Service Budget Forecast Analysis.

\* Several road resurfacings were referred to Public Works committee, including \$2.8 million for Woodhill Road in Cleveland, and \$3.6 for Belvoir Boulevard in Shaker Heights, University Heights and South Euclid.

\* Several other resolutions were approved as well, among them:

-- Convention Center Hotel: cooperative agreements among the County, City of Cleveland and the Port Authority, presented as a major step in building a new hotel near the convention center.

- Towpath Trail: an award for design engineering services for the fourth stage (Tremont-Literary Trailhead to Canal Basin Park) of the Towpath Trail, to be completed in 2016.
- Sewer inspections: an award \$1.6 million for sewer inspection over the next five years (an example of shared services, according to Councilman Jones).

\* \$1.9 million was awarded to Shindler Elevator Corporation for elevator maintenance and repair. In the public comment segment earlier in the meeting a representative of Kone company voiced his objection to this resolution, requesting that this contract be broken down into component parts for bidding. Councilman Germana during discussion also spoke against aggregation. However, since aggregation appeared to result in the lowest bid for the County, the resolution was passed by all other Council members.

\* Council approved a cooperative agreement with Olmsted Township for maintenance of 22 miles of County roads and structures, touted as saving the county \$500,000.

\* \$2.3 million was awarded to Office Max for office supplies for a two year period, despite objections from a representative of Staples during the public comment segment. Councilman Jones noted that due diligence was performed prior to the committee's recommendation of Office Max.

\* An amendment with United Way of Greater Cleveland for emergency food purchase was approved, with Councilman Brady advising that his Health, Human Services & Aging Committee would continue to pay close attention to such amounts coming from the U.S. Health and Human Services funds. Councilwoman Simon noted that lines at food pantries are now appearing at the beginning of the month rather than at the end of the month.

\* Time period extension and additional funds to 25 providers of Universal Pre-Kindergarten services was also approved.

\* The City of Bedford Heights received an award on behalf of Southeast Council of Governments in connection with consolidation of government services by the cities of Bedford, Bedford Heights and Maple Heights

\* A contract with Oriana House, Inc. of \$1+ million was awarded, with the comment that Oriana's day programming services will keep several offenders from incarceration, thus saving County money.

\* Council approved the sale of the County Archives Building to Welcome House, Inc. for housing disabled children, with the proviso that the County would lease back this building at \$1 per month for the next 24 months to allow the County adequate time to locate a suitable location for housing its archives. Several residents of the neighborhood were permitted to comment, most of whom advised holding off on a final decision.

**III. Notes:** There will be a budget hearing on 12/10, preceding the last Council meeting of the year.