

County Council Regular Meeting: December 9, 2014

Observers: Patricia Solomon and Lynda Mayer

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

I. Introduction. The meeting was called to order by Council President Connally at 5pm with all Council members except Jack Schron present. County Executive FitzGerald also attended.

II. Antecedents, Announcements, or Public Comment. Mr. FitzGerald noted that the new Family Justice Center for supportive services for families has officially opened. He also encouraged Council to accept and adopt the County 2014 Disparity Study. See the proposed ordinance at the end of the report below.

III. Business Transacted.

* Council officially approved the publication of the new revised County Charter, as amended through 11/4/2014.

* A block of five resolutions supported applications for funding under the Clean Ohio Fund Green Space Conservation Program available through the Ohio Public Works Commission for the conservation of ecologically significant areas as follows:

- on behalf of West Creek Conservancy, the Baldwin Creek Corridor
- on behalf of West Creek Conservancy, along the West Creek Reservation, Phase 4,
- on behalf of City of Bedford Heights, along the Solon Road Preserve,
- on behalf of Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners, along the Bear Creek,
- on behalf of Western Reserve Land Conservancy, along Lakeshore Blvd. in Bratenahl.

* A related resolution was also passed on behalf of Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works for the preservation and restoration of natural open space within Stage 3 of the Towpath Trail Extension, in connection with the Tremont Pointe Preserve and Greenway Project.

* Four resolutions related to collective bargaining were approved:

-- Two rejected Fact-finder reports regarding negotiations between Cuyahoga County and Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association representing Deputy Sheriffs (this action sent the issue to binding arbitration), and Deputy Sergeants (sent issue to conciliation).

-- One accepted the Fact-finder report for a collective bargaining agreement representing 556 Correction Officers.

-- A fourth approved a Collective Bargaining Agreement between the County and several unions representing Correction Officer Corporal.

* \$1.2 million in additional funds and an extension of a 2012 contract for transitional housing program services was approved. R. Gillette, a representative of the Department of Health and Human Services/Homeless Services explained that the government shutdown in 2013 delayed a number of steps required to implement that program.

* A \$1.4 million contract was authorized for administration of the FY2013 Shelter Plus Care Sponsor-based Rental Assistance Program, also delayed for the above reason.

* \$2.8 million in Community Social Services Program awards were proposed to 19 agencies and municipalities, including Cities of Euclid, Lakewood, Maple Hts. & Parma Hts. It was referred to the Health & Human Services Committee.

* The 2014-2015 Biennial Operating Budget and Capital Improvements Program Annual Update for 2015 was adopted, after a substitute changing some technical language was agreed to.

* \$1.5 million to various municipalities for grant projects for the 2015 Community Development Block Grant Municipal Grant Program. Among the recipients are Shaker Heights, Rocky River, S. Euclid and Parma Hts.

* An agreement with Mayfield Village was authorized for its participation in the County Benefits Regionalization Program. To date, many other municipalities have joined this program.

* \$1.6 million for hardware and software maintenance and support services for a new Automated Fingerprint Identification System, through mid-2019.

* \$18.8 million agreement with MetroHealth System for management, healthcare and related services at the County Jail. This will not only save money but is considered a major accomplishment, providing services that were otherwise unavailable or limited for inmates.

* Three resolutions for group healthcare benefits for all County employees and their eligible dependents were passed: with Caremark for \$40.1 million, Medical Mutual for \$116.1 million, and United Healthcare Services for \$68.3 million.

* The MetroHealth System's annual budget, with actual amounts integrated into the County's own budget.

* Finally, an ordinance was introduced to accept and adopt a just-completed 2014 County Disparity Study and Community Benefit and Opportunity Initiative Report, as well as to establish a new County Equal Opportunity Programs. Without this study and report, the County's former efforts to establish fair contracting for Minority and Women's Business Enterprises had been suspended due to a Supreme Court ruling of unconstitutionality. See PD article, 12/10.

IV. Notes.

Council voted to name the Council Chambers for C. Ellen Connelly, first Council President under the new Charter. Council and others (including LWV) lauded Ms. Connelly's leadership during this difficult start-up period.

The organizational meeting of the new Council will be on January 2, and next regular Council Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 13, 2015. Subsequently, the new Council, under new leadership, might decide to change some details of its meeting schedule.