

County Council Regular Meeting: March 10, 2015

Observer: 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 President Dan Brady at 5pm, with all Council members present except Charles Germana and Shontel Brown, who were excused.

II. Antecedents, Public Comment & Announcements.

Prior to the regular meeting, the Committee of the Whole had met to explore several labor contracts and to confirm the nomination of Edward Kraus as Director of Intergovernmental Collaboration. He was later sworn in by County Executive Budish with his wife and son present.

Two speakers protested the just-begun Public Square beautification project, which the County has not yet even signed onto. The first citizen urged the County's focus should be on more jobs and fixing schools and streets, not on "beauty projects." The second citizen complained of lack of news coverage for the opposition to the same, reporting that a hunger strike was already into its second day.

Mr. Budish announced that the reports of the Transition Workgroups are now released and available online, that the County has filed an Amicus Brief with the U.S. Supreme Court in support of gay marriage, that round #1 of housing demolitions will remove 570 blighted County houses, and that he recently discussed business and ate at Edwins restaurant at Shaker Square -- a nonprofit devoted to rehabilitating and training ex-felons in the food service business.

III. Business Transacted.

* Council approved the appointment of Thomas Coaluca to the Personnel Review Commission.

* Council supported an application by the Chesler Group to receive Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credits for the restoration of the Stager-Beckwith Mansion, 3813 Euclid Avenue, which will subsequently house the Children's Museum. Mr. Brady recused himself, as his wife is personally involved in the project.

* An ordinance updating the operating rules of future Charter Review Commissions was approved on third reading.

* Two labor agreements previously discussed in executive session and a routine resolution amending the Operating Budget were all approved on first reading.

* A \$1.1 million contract providing emergency shelter services for homeless women, at the Norma Herr Women's Center at 2227 Payne Ave, was also approved.

* An ordinance changing the number of members on the Citizens' Advisory Council on Equity from 15 to a range of 9 to 15. It is expected that each of the 11 Council members may wish to appoint someone to this board from his or her district.

* The most interesting item brought up for the first time and referred to a March 24th Committee of the Whole session, was a \$13 million bond issue to pay for or reimburse the costs of constructing permanent improvements to Public Square.

* Some other items brought up for the first time and referred to Council committees were:

-- The appointment of Clifford E. Pinkney as Cuyahoga County Sheriff;

-- Further appointments to Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and to the Tri-C Board of Trustees;

-- A \$2 million award from the County's 9-1-1 Consolidation Shared Services Fund to the City of Beachwood to support its consolidation with Public Safety Answering Point;

-- \$7.6 million agreement for 2015 child support services with the Domestic Relations and Juvenile Courts as well as with the Prosecutor's office;

-- A \$1.7 million contract amendment with Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry for emergency shelter services for homeless men, at their facility at 2100 Lakeside Ave.

IV. Notes.

Mr. Brady told this observer that the very brevity of all the meetings so far is still owing to the changeover in administrations. He expects longer agendas in the near future. Meetings in 2015 to date have been well under one hour in length. Another note of interest: Mr. Budish now appears to be accompanied very closely by a bodyguard from the Sheriff's office, who is also his official driver. Final side note: Mr. Greenspan mentioned after the meeting that he has now joined the League of Women Voters!