

County Council Regular Meeting: January 12, 2016

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 first County Council meeting of 2016 was called to order by Council President Brady at 5pm with all members present. The relatively long agenda, accumulated since the last regular meeting on December 8, was concluded by shortly before 5:30pm.

II. Antecedents, Announcements & Public Comments

Previous to this session, the Council met as Committee of the Whole, in executive session, in order to consider a number of collective bargaining agreements. County Executive Budish announced the formation of the founding board for the new Infant Mortality Initiative, established to combat the alarming number of infant deaths in Cuyahoga County. Norman Edwards, speaking for Minority Contractors, reported observing few or no black construction workers on several large County building projects. He claimed continuing corruption in the building trades and unions and demanded contract resolutions be held up and leadership be changed. Two other citizens took the mike to complain of the lack of confidentiality for victims of domestic violence and the lack of interpreters for deaf people at the County jail.

III. Business Transacted

* An ordinance was passed which establishes a new board: the Cuyahoga County Healthier Buckeye Council. It was sponsored by Mr. Budish and Mr Hairston of Council District #10.

* An ordinance was introduced and referred to committee to adjust the County Code to align the Casino Revenue Fund & Job Creation Fund with the new biennial County budget.

* Four collective bargaining agreements and the usual routine budget adjustment item were approved after only one reading.

* Four sizeable outlays were approved on second reading, along with a number of appointees to major boards or commissions:

-- \$4.5 million was added to a contract for design-builder services for the rehabbing of the Huntington Park Garage. The item passed, but with only hesitant support by Ms. Simon and several others. They want the arrangement updated again by April 1, do better deal with Justice Center considerations.

-- \$238 million will be the guaranteed maximum price for design-build services for the Convention Center Hotel Project across the street from the Huntington garage. This item passes without a word's being spoken.

-- \$1.7 million in additional funds plus a one-year contract extension were both approved for insurance brokerage and risk management services.

-- \$1.2 million in additional funds plus a two-year contract extension were approved for an agreement with the City of Cleveland regarding cellular 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Point Services.

* Read for the second time but not yet adopted was \$3.2 million amendment for additional funds, intended for the County Airport Runway Safety Area Improvements.

* Among the many new resolutions just introduced and referred to committee were these:

-- Adoption of administrative rules for the County Personnel Review Commission, to be thereafter to be codified in the County's Administrative Code. That amounts to civil service policies & procedures;

-- Adjustment of the municipal boundary between Cleveland and Shaker Heights, which bisects eight parcels of land along VanAken Blvd. between Sutton and Onaway Roads, so as to render the entire piece within the municipal boundary of Shaker Heights.

-- Parking rates for all County owned garages and surface lots, beginning on Feb 1 of this year;

-- \$2.1 million for cleaning, televising and maintaining sanitary and storm sewers;

-- Revised rates for leasing County-owned equipment to governmental subdivisions;

-- A \$3 million Economic Development Accelerated Growth Loan to benefit a project at Victory Center 7012 Euclid Ave. and a similar \$1.5 million loan to benefit a project at 2700 East 55th Street, both in Cleveland;

-- A \$1.1 million ED Fund Small Business Growth Loan for the benefit of a project at 31900 Solon Road in Solon;

-- A \$2 million ED Fund Large Scale Attraction Loan for the benefit of a project at various corners of West 25th St. & Detroit Ave.;

-- \$3.8 million for purchase of stop-loss insurance services for County employees and the County's Benefits Regionalization Program participants. Both participants include their eligible dependents;

-- \$1.7 million for general office supplies and related services for various County departments;

-- \$8.5 million to raise the cap on spending for traditional residential treatment services, in order to change the scope of services; and

-- \$3.1 million in additional funds to two providers of emergency shelter services.

IV. Notes.

Tip -- it is expected that two proposed amendments to the Code of Ethics will be discussed in two weeks by the Council's Council Operations Committee -- Michael King will send the League preview copies. Mr. Greenspan will hold a town meeting in Bay Village with the Medical Examiner about the heroin epidemic -- at the Dwyer Center at 7pm on January 21. Mr. Pernel Jones met with Norm Edwards after the meeting about minority hiring on County building projects.