

West Shore Council of Governments (WCOG) Meeting May 11, 2016

By LWVGC observer Janice Patterson (Westlake/North Olmsted)

This report is not an official statement of the League of Women Voters. Mayor Bobst's office prepares official minutes.

The meeting took place at Memorial Hall, Rocky River, was called to order at 9:38 am with Mayor Pam Bobst presiding. The meeting adjourned at 11:50 am.

Present: Mayors Bobst (Rocky River), Summers (Lakewood), Sutherland (Bay Village), Patton (Fairview Park) and Kennedy (North Olmsted). Mayor Clough (Westlake) was absent. Also present were Mary Ellen Umerly, Chris McNulty, Jeff Capretto, Kevin Bedarski, and the LWV observer.

Two extensive reports were presented. Chris McNulty, Director of Political and Community Affairs for the Republican National Convention Arrangements Committee, briefed the mayors on his office's responsibilities relating to the July 2016 Republican National Convention. Jeff Capretto, Special Agent in Charge, Westshore Enforcement Bureau (WEB), presented the 2015 Annual Report orally and in print.

Key points from McNulty's presentation:

- Convention committee members and media will begin arriving about July 8 for a week of conference work preceding the actual convention. Some 15,000 media personnel are expected.
- Delegate travel to and from the Q (by bus from their hotels in four counties) is not expected to change rush-hour traffic very much as they will be coming into town in late afternoon.
- Westshore suburbs can expect a lot of activity in shopping areas, restaurants and bars during the daytime from people who have come to the area with RNC delegates but do not have credentials themselves. Several bars are requesting temporary late closing hours.
- Volunteer recruitment continues; approximately 8,000 people needed to assist with logistics downtown as well as in all hotels where delegates are housed. Volunteers must commit to attending a training and to specific time assignments.
- Hosting the RNC as the opportunity to "rebrand" Cleveland as about 85% of delegates may never have been here.
- While there will be a specific national security "net" controlling egress in and around the Q for delegates, media and assigned volunteers, citizens are welcome to come downtown to enjoy the ambiance of a major event.

Capretto's sobering report highlighted the epidemic level of heroin addiction in Ohio and its presence in the Westshore suburbs. He stated that a many-pronged approach is necessary to address use and abuse of all kinds of drugs, beginning with health education for children and youth and following through to convictions of traffickers. Lakewood has four dedicated narcotics officers and Westlake has two. His remarks prompted questions from the mayors about the varied substances that are being sold and used. The group also discussed possible need for new ordinances that would control locations for sales of electronic cigarettes and marijuana products should medical marijuana become legal in Ohio.

Members accepted the financial reports for February, March, and April presented by Fiscal Officer Renee Mahoney.

There were no commission reports. The mayors also exchanged ideas on the ways they are using technology to inform citizens about emergency situations and community activities.

The preferred candidate for CERT Coordinator has declined the position, so the search will be reinstated.

County Chief Economic Development Officer Ted Carter did not attend the meeting as had been announced in the March meeting report.