

West Shore Council of Governments (WCOG) Meeting February 8, 2017

By LWVGC observer Kathryn Kosiorek (Lakewood)

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

The meeting took place at Westlake City Hall on Wednesday, February 8 and was called to order at 9:30 am by Westlake Mayor Clough presiding. The meeting adjourned at 10:45 am.

Present: Mayors Clough (Westlake), Bobst (Rocky River), Patton (Fairview Park), Koomer (Bay Village). Mayor Kennedy (North Olmsted) was absent. Also present Renee Mahoney (fiscal officer), Jeff Capretto (West Shore Enforcement Bureau), and the LWV observer.

Commission Reports

RTA – Mayor Clough reported that the situation concerning bus access to Public Square on Superior Avenue remains essentially the same. A study, commissioned by RTA and released on February 7th stated reopening Superior Ave did not create safety issues. Concerns about loss of revenue created by the replacement of the Medicare tax continue. The \$12 million fine from the federal government imposed on the City of Cleveland is still in play. Alternate routes for special events were discussed.

Mayor Patton stated that parking on side streets near the transit center on Center Ridge Road is a problem.

Mayors and City Managers Meeting – Mayor Bobst reported several concerns about the proposed central collection of business taxes through the Business Gateway by the state of Ohio. The state has estimated that this would save nine million dollars per year. Municipalities would be charged 1% of the collection from their jurisdictions. Questions arose about the purpose of central collection.

A new formula for the distribution of local government funds is also of concern. This change would involve a portion of the funds being distributed on a need or the local government's capacity to raise local revenues. Mayor Summers pointed out that rural areas suffer more and some attempt to alleviate disparities is needed.

WEB Annual Report – Special Agent in Charge Jeff Capretto delivered an oral annual report that emphasized the increasing problem with serious drug overdoses and increasing deaths despite the use of naloxone, NARCAN inhalers. New, more effective NARCAN inhalers are available and will be purchased.

Agent Capretto again emphasized that a many-pronged approach is necessary to address the use and abuse of all kinds of drugs. The need for more prevention education

beginning in elementary school, education for families with a suspected abuser, and convictions of traffickers are all part of addressing the epidemic.

Drop boxes have been used extensively. Over 3000 pounds of prescription drugs were collected in the six municipalities in 2016.

The WEB budget, approved in January, included raises for WEB agents.