

## **County Council Regular Meeting: February 28, 2017**

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](http://council.cuyahogacounty.us)*

### **I. Introduction.**

The meeting was called to order by Council President Dan Brady at 5:00 pm with all members of County Council present. It ended at approximately 5:30 pm. However, there had been a Committee of the Whole meeting all afternoon, starting at 2pm, which attracted so many members of the public that the chamber had standing room only, there were approximately 20 people outside the chamber's doors, and the two committee rooms served as overflow space with large-screen TV and soundtrack so that visitors could follow the session.

### **II. Antecedents, Announcements and Public Comment.**

Timothy Offtermatt, former Board Chairman of the Gateway Economic Development Corporation and current economic advisor to the County Council, explained to the Council the package plan for the financing of the County's share of the cost to completely renovate the Quicken Loans Arena. An official from the Cleveland Cavaliers business office also helped Offtermatt to field Council members' numerous questions. Among the many subjects discussed were community benefits, inclusion goals for contract labor, impact on the county's bonding capacity and general fund, the costs to the county of servicing the debt on such a large bond issue, the likelihood that the Indians and the Browns might be next in line, and the possibility that not every season will generate extra post-season revenue. The measure had been introduced on February 14 but did not receive second reading at this session. It was Mr. Offtermatt's opinion that, if Cleveland says NO to its part of the deal, that the project could not go forward.

Although the public had no chance to speak at the earlier committee session, only a few of them stayed afterward for the regular 5pm council meeting when they would have had a chance. Council Clerk Jean Schmotzer announced that written testimony had been received by former County Treasurer Jim Rokakis, by Lakewood Mayor Michael Summers, and by the Mayors & Managers Association. Norman Edwards, a local representative of black construction workers, spoke highly of the devotion of Cavaliers' owner, Dan Gilbert, to the economic promise of downtown Cleveland, but a Peter Patakos, a local lawyer and former opponent of the 2014 "Sin Tax," warned the council not to be taken in by what he termed lies and threats by those same Cavaliers' leaders to leave town. Michael Bulkons read statistics from several other small-market cities with arenas built the same year as the Q, to show that their cities are not being asked to shoulder as big a portion of renovation costs. On a different subject, an advocate for the homeless, claimed that there are more homeless people than ever, at the same time that the number of beds and meals have been reduced. She claimed that some of the county's regular contractors for these services need to be re-evaluated.

County Executive Budish reported to the council that he had met on the previous Friday with the county's delegation in Columbus regarding the county's top 10 needs from the state. Foremost among those ten "asks" are restoration of \$23 million annually in cuts to Medicaid and \$18 more in cuts to RTA.

### **III. Business Transacted.**

\* Among resolutions passed this evening were the following:

-- \$6.9 million to resurface a stretch of Turney Road in Cleveland and Garfield Heights.

-- \$2.1 million for design engineering to repair and resurface a stretch of Sprague Road in Middleburg Heights, North Royalton, Parma and Strongsville.

-- \$1.7 million to replace an Avery Road bridge in Broadview Heights.

-- \$650,000 for environmental consultations, and authorization for a Master Environmental Services Agreement. Mr. Miller said that brownfields projects formerly treated individually will now be treated more expeditiously under this agreement.

-- A \$2.5 million agreement with the Chagrin Valley Dispatch Council to share countywide criminal justice data among the 12 or 13 communities currently linked. Mr. Schron thinks this system will soon include Cleveland and others, and that it will be most helpful to local law enforcement officials.

-- \$2.6 million in additional funds to two providers of secure shelter care services for at-risk youth as a safer alternative to incarceration.

-- An increase to \$8.1 million total, to 7 providers of various services in the county's Tapestry of Care, mostly for family/youth advocacy and support services.

\* Among resolutions introduced and referred to committees were the following:

-- \$1,500,000 in 10 municipal grants to various cities, including Mayfield Heights, North Olmsted, South Euclid and Fairview Park.

-- A total of almost \$1 million to 22 municipalities or non-profits for various projects in connection with the 2017 Community Development Supplemental Grant Program. Recipients of these awards include Mayfield Village, Rocky River, Chagrin Falls, Bay Village, Euclid and Fairview Park.

-- \$4.8 million in amendments to agreements and contracts with 13 different providers of neighborhood collaborative services, owing to a one-year extension of their time periods.

### **IV. Notes.**

The next Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss the Q renovation funding will be on Tuesday, March 7, at 1pm.