

County Council Regular Meeting: March 22, 2016

Observer: Audrey Morris

This report contains member observations and selected highlights of a meeting of the Cuyahoga County Council and is not an official statement by the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland. For the official disposition of all agenda items, consult the county's website at council.cuyahogacounty.us

I. Introduction.

The meeting was called to order at 5:08pm by President Dan Brady, with all Council members present except Pernell Jones. A motion to excuse Mr. Jones for personal reasons was approved. Mr. Jones joined the meeting at 5:30pm. The meeting was adjourned at 5:48pm.

II. Antecedents, Announcements and Public Comment.

The meeting was preceded by an executive session to confirm County Executive Budish's appointment of Thomas Priston as Director of the Department of Health and Human Services.

County Executive Budish asked for a minute of silent meditation for the people of Brussels, Belgium. He noted that Issue 23 passed with close to 70% of the electorate supporting it.

He also updated Council on the authorization of LEEDCo (Lake Erie Energy Dev't. Corp.) to negotiate contracts with Fred.Olsen RenewablesUSA, a Norwegian company, to build an offshore wind energy industry in Ohio. Fred.Olsen Renewables is expected to bring millions of dollars to the project but is hoping to get a \$40 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. Executive Budish met with the DOE's Assistant Secretary to pitch the project.

There were four public comments. Dean Dilzell asked Council not to approve Matt Carroll as Interim Director of the Dept. of Health and Human Services. Tara Peppard commented on the Cleveland Clinic's closing of Lakewood Hospital, while simultaneously opening a new hospital outside of Cuyahoga County. She asked Dale Miller, Councilman from Lakewood, to look into possible bid rigging with MetroHealth, and she claimed the Clinic's plan contradicts the Strategic Vision for Lakewood. Rico Dancy then asked for a bill to stop the RTA from raising fares. Finally, Reverend Pinkney-Butts wanted to know why Gov. Kasich cut money from Cleveland's transportation, given its impact on black and multiracial communities.

III. Business Transacted.

* Several resolutions were adopted at this meeting:

- \$1.3 million in additional funds and a time extension for a contract with the county Board of Developmental Disabilities for eligibility verification services
- \$12 million for child support services, divided nearly equally between Domestic Relations court, Juvenile Court, and the Prosecutor's office
 - \$10 million to replace the Pleasant Valley Bridge over the Cuyahoga River in Independence and Valley View
 - \$2.3 million to rehabilitate the Cedar Point Bridge over the Rocky River, in the Metropark located in North Olmsted
 - \$1.6 million to resurface a stretch of Bradley Road in North Olmsted and Westlake, and a stretch of Mastick Road in North Olmsted

* Also finally adopted: A Memorandum of Understanding with numerous community organizations, in response to renewed stress on hard-to-achieve inclusion of minorities and women on County construction projects. The groups are the City of Cleveland, Construction

Employers Association, Hispanic Roundtable, Hard Hatted Women, Urban League, Greater Cleveland Partnership, Tri-C, the Cleveland School District, and the Cleveland Building and Construction Trades Council.

* An Ordinance was adopted establishing the Cuyahoga County Green Community Program, sponsored by Councilwoman Sunny Simon, who noted that this would allow the county to receive bond money and would be a conduit for money to flow from the state to the county. She said it would not affect the county's bond rating.

* An ordinance was sent to a third reading on April 2, sponsored by Mr. Miller and Ms. Simon, to provide for creating and adopting of a County Sustainability Strategic Plan.

* An appointment by the County Executive extending the appointment of Matt Carroll as Interim Director of the Department of Health and Human Services failed. Only Council members Miller, Germana and Brady voted for the appointment -- all other Council members voted no.

* Additional resolutions were sent for third reading on April 2, including \$500,000 to College Now, from the county's Educational Assistance Fund. That nonprofit supports hundreds of qualified high school graduates of limited means each year with advice, financial aid, and mentoring.

*Also introduced and referred to committees:

- \$11 million to finance the Cuyahoga County Community-based Correctional Facility project
- \$18 million for the Huntington Park Garage Rehabilitation Project
- \$1 million awarded for resurfacing roads in various municipalities
- \$1.2 million awarded to Chagrin Valley Paving for further resurfacing, with the allocation from County Motor Vehicle \$7.50 License Tax Funds
- \$804,000 for professional healthcare consultant services
- \$0.9 million for the Newborn Home Visiting Program
- \$5.7 million for Cuyahoga Tapestry System of Care for community wraparound care and family/youth advocacy and support services
- \$2.3 million for legal services from the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office
- \$1.3 million for Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities
- \$3 million for software maintenance, monitoring and support services
- \$510,000 for IT services for the Buckeye Case Management and Computer Network System

IV. Notes.

Discussion of a large-scale revision of the Code of Ethics will continue on March 29 and, if needed, April 4, at which time the semi-annual report of the Inspector General will also be presented.