

County Council Regular Meeting: January 13, 2015

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 regular meeting of the 3rd Cuyahoga Council was called to order by new Council President Dan Brady, with all members present. New faces were 9th District Councilwoman Shontel Brown and County Executive Armond Budish.

II. Antecedents, Announcements & Public Comment.

In President Brady's opening remarks he reiterated his vow to preside to the best of his ability in a spirit of bipartisanship, over a Council where "nobody is a minority." Mr. Budish reported that he had been able, in 3 days' time over the weekend, to secure grant funding for two snow-removal trucks for East Cleveland, due to the alert via Councilman Anthony Hairston and the help of Huntington Bank. He indicated that this is an example of the way in which he hopes to partner with all Council's district representatives -- he pledges his new administration will be "nimble" and responsive to need. He thanked outgoing officials for making his transition into the Executive's job an easy one.

III. Business Transacted.

* The first new member, Deborah Southerington, was appointed by Council to the newly renamed Personnel Review Commission. The newly passed Charter amendment gave Council this authority, and Ms. Conwell explained the circumspect process by which Council went about selecting and vetting Ms. Southerington.

* An ordinance to ensure transparency and equity cross county appointees was introduced and referred to committee.

* The usual regular item making various adjustments to the budget was passed. Mr. Greenspan, new chair of the Finance & Budget Committee, explained he'd like to get member questions in advance, so that answers are known by all before the meeting and there will be no surprises.

* The following items were introduced and referred to committee:

-- For dog owners: the deadline for applications and renewals of dog licenses to be moved back two weeks, from January 31 to February 14!

-- An agreement by seven new entities to participate in the County's Benefits Regionalization Program, among them the City of South Euclid, and the Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA).

- A c. \$2.4 million appropriation to the ADAMHS Board for the Adult Probation Substance Abuse Residential Treatment Program. (Alcohol & Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services)
- A total of c. \$2.2 million in awards to 5 different providers of residential treatment services for the Youth and Family Community Partnership Program.
- A total of \$1.4 million in awards to 16 providers of traditional residential treatment services
 - * The County-owned Whitlatch Building, at 1910 Carnegie Ave., was sold.
 - * Two contracts for Staff Secure Shelter Care were amended to provide additional funds, the larger being Carrington Youth Academy for c. \$2 million.
 - * An ordinance enacting the County's Administrative Procedures Act was given second reading. That includes the establishment of an Administrative Rules Board and procedures for the publication of the Cuyahoga County Administrative Code.
 - * This brief agenda and meeting were complete and adjourned by 5:30pm.

IV. Notes.

- * Clerk of Council Jean Schmotzer informed this observer that they now have 4 hand-held hearing-enhancement devices, which amplify all Council proceedings. A sign on the credenza inside the chamber entrance directs audience members who desire one to inquire at the Clerk's desk. This makes observing much more accurate.
- * Most Council members got new committee chairmanships and assignments. Of immediate interest to LWV are these: Mr. Greenspan at Council Operations and Intergovernmental Collaboration; Mr. Jones at Health & Human Services; and Ms Simon at Education, Environment & Sustainability.
- * Council members Greenspan, Jones and Simon re-iterated their happiness to speak to the League on February 5, and they look forward to email communications to clarify the format, topics and timing. It was also possible after this short meeting to greet personally not only the PD reporter of County issues, but many of the other present officials as well, including also Mr. Budish, Mr. Brady, Ms. Conwell, and Ms. Brown.