

County Council Regular Meeting: May 12, 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.

* This meeting was called to order by Council President Dan Brady at 5:03pm, and it was adjourned exactly a half-hour later, at 5:33. Councilmen Gallagher and Greenspan were excused. There was no citizen comment, and County Executive Budish made brief comments about last week's having been National Nurses Week.

II. Business Transacted.

* The only legislation introduced by Council was a \$500,000 award to College Now in conjunction with the Cuyahoga County Educational Assistance Program. Ms. Simon and Mr. Miller were sponsors. That nonprofit provides scholarships and mentoring for approximately 300 graduating area seniors, based upon need and likelihood of academic success. This item was referred to committee. All other legislation was introduced by the County Executive.

* Adopted: Authorization of an agreement with the City of Euclid, to participate in the County's Benefits Regionalization Program. Later in the meeting, \$25.5 million in additional funds are to be awarded to Medical Mutual of Ohio to cover benefit management services to all those municipalities which participate in the County Benefits Regionalization Program for their employees and eligible dependents. The previous coverage for County employees had been \$141.6 million. This item, on first reading, was sent to committee for scrutiny.

* Adopted: A routine operating budget adjustment which contained over \$1 million from the County and the OH Attorney General for the processing of "rape kits."

* Adopted: A \$4.6 million award to Youth Opportunities Unlimited for the TANF Summer Youth Employment Program for the coming summer. This is a federally funded program.

* Adopted: \$2.1 million award to 4 different providers of emergency assistance services.

* Adopted: A \$10.7 million contract to a company for the administration of the Shelter Plus Care Tenant-based Rental Assistance Program. This assistance took the form of rent subsidies for disabled County residents.

* \$2.7 million was proposed for the resurfacing of Woodhill Road from Quincy Avenue to Kinsman Road in Cleveland.

* \$14 million in sales tax revenue bonds is proposed to pay for certain costs of the demolition of blighted and nuisance properties.

III. Notes.

Mr. Jones reported that 57 school children from 4 schools will be taking a trip to Atlanta and Alabama, under the auspices of the Closing the Achievement Gap Committee. They will visit Morehouse College as well as some of the historic sites of the Civil Rights Struggle. Mr.

Jones was the only Council member who spoke in favor of the several resolutions his committee reviewed and recommended to the full Council.

Otherwise, this observer was struck by yet another very short County Council meeting. Only a very few members spoke to any of the items they sponsored. It may be useful for League observers to begin documenting and commenting upon the continued extreme brevity of all Council meetings since the New Year began. They feature very few items introduced by Council, and it is the case that the Board of Control is now authorized to act off the public stage on a greater portion of the items than had been previously the case. Meetings seem to be quicker and more perfunctory than during the first 4 years of the new government, and they no longer give the visitor a sense of being able to see how the wheels of Council actually turn. Let us look at future reports with this thought in mind.