

County Council Regular Meeting: March 8, 2016

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 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 together at 5pm by President Dan Brady, with all 11 Council members present. It ended at 5:30pm

II. Antecedents, Announcements and Public Comment.

The meeting was preceded by an executive session concerning a labor negotiation, and it also featured two public comments. Reverend Pinkney-Butt brought up several matters of concern, while the City Engineer of Mayfield Heights expressed his community's thanks for the Block Grant to be passed at this Council meeting (see below.)

County Executive Budish also reminded Council and those present to double down on the campaign to pass Issue #23, the Health and Human Services renewal levy. He warned that, even though it's just a renewal, it's not easy to predict what this year's primary electorate will do.

Committee chairs whose groups would normally meet on March 15 and 16th announced postponements due to next week's Primary Election and immediate aftermath. Discussion of large 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.

III. Business Transacted.

* Several resolutions were adopted at this meeting:

-- \$1.5 million in 10 separate Municipal Block Grants. Among these are awards to Fairview Park for sidewalk improvements, to University Heights to resurface Cedarbrook Road, and Mayfield Heights for repairing West Minor Road. The City Engineer appeared at this meeting to thank Council for approving the grant.

-- \$1.4 million, \$2.9 million and \$4 million were awarded, in three separate contracts, with Starting Point for administering and coordinating three pieces of the Invest in Children Program for the coming year. An additional agreement with the City of Cleveland was approved to administer and coordinate that program's Moms First component.

* Numerous appointments by the County Executive for departmental directorships or board memberships appeared at various stages of the confirmation process. Noteworthy among these were the directorships of the Department of Health & Human Services and the Department of Development. Today, Theodore Carter was confirmed and took the oath of office at Development. Berea Mayor Cyril Kleem was confirmed for a seat on the County Planning Commission. Others will soon undergo committee consideration.

* Several big items received second reading and will return on March 22nd for final action:

-- A Memorandum of Understanding with several community organization regarding Benefits and Inclusion. 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. This is in response to renewed stress on hard-to-achieve inclusion of minorities and women on County construction projects. Mr. Jones explained that this MOU is aspirational, and that there are other concrete measures in the works.

-- \$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.

* Additional resolutions were introduced and referred to committees:

-- \$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.

-- \$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.

-- \$1.6 million to resurface a stretch of Bradley Road in North Olmsted and Westlake, and a stretch of Mastick Road in North Olmsted.

* A new ordinance was proposed, sponsored by Mr. Miller and Ms. Simon, to provide for creating and adopting of a County Sustainability Strategic Plan.

IV. Notes.

Director of Communications, Mary L. Madigan, spoke afterward with this observer about the LWV's 1990's publication, "Here's Cuyahoga." She hopes that future conversations regarding a possible update of that publication might bear fruit.

Councilman Miller expressed his firm belief that legally registered 17-yearolds must be permitted to vote in the Primary as well as the General Elections, at which time they will have attained the age of 18. That issue is currently being litigated, according to a current Plain Dealer article today, March 9.

Councilman Jones thanked this observer for helping bring him together with those complaining to Council several months ago about the continuing lack of diversity on County construction crews. He explained that, as a result of those meetings, new measures are underway to try to solve the ongoing problem.