

County Council Regular Meeting: June 14, 2016

Observer: Lynda Mayer and Mary Graf

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 Cuyahoga County Council website at council.cuyahogacounty.us

I. Introduction.

The meeting was called to order by Council Vice President Pernel Jones at 5 pm and was adjourned at 5:50pm, with all members present save President Dan Brady, who was excused.

II. Antecedents, Announcements or Public Comment.

The meeting was preceded at 3:30 by a confirmation hearing for the new head of the Department of Public Safety and Justice Services, and an executive session to discuss a labor contract. Council and visitors observed a moment of silent meditation to observe the passing of former Cleveland Mayor, Ohio Governor and U.S. Senator, George Voinovich, as well as the victims of the mass shooting at an Orlando, FL, night club.

County Executive Budish noted that county flags are at half staff to honor them. He also noted that the County, along with its coalition partners, won a \$2.9 million Medicaid grant for its program to prevent infant mortality. He noted further that the County's just-opened Hilton Hotel is already very well booked -- that the Golden State Warriors, rivals of the Cleveland Cavaliers for the national basketball championship, are staying there during the series.

Mr. Jones and Councilwoman Yvonne Conwell recognized team members and coaches of Cuyahoga County's Special Olympics CCBDD (County Board of Developmental Disabilities) champion basketball team, the Rockets.

There were also five public comments at the end of the meeting, which are reported in "Notes," at the end of this report.

III. Business Transacted.

* Two resolutions were passed on second reading:

-- The appointments of the Rev. Cory Jenkins and Geralyn Presti to the Tri-C Board of Trustees were both confirmed. Councilman Miller spoke in favor of both individuals.

-- Twelve agreements or contracts with various nonprofit providers, totalling over \$800,000, were approved as part of the County's Fatherhood Initiative for the coming year. Councilman Gallagher protested, however, that some of this money should not be spent on expensive in-house administration of these allocations. He is of the opinion that there are other ways to administer this program without paying a full-time salary to an administrator who might even be ethically compromised. The Fatherhood Initiative also pays for a "boot camp" program for new fathers.

* Two ordinances received second reading and sent on to 6/28 for a final vote :

- An amendment to the law which includes community development as a permissible use for Casino Revenue funds and establishes the County Community Development Supplemental Grant Fund Program. To have their requests for funds considered, CD Corporations must be at least 2 years old and have been in existence at the time this ordinance passes.
- A change in the appointment process and the qualifications of the Chair and members of the Debarment Review Board, a board charged with enforcing the rule that companies in violation of the County's ethics law be barred for three years from doing business with the County.

* The following were among the resolutions read once and referred to committee:

- \$8.9 million for safety improvements to a runway at the County Airport,
- \$3.9 million for "green" friendly technology for digital and print management services,
- \$0.75 million for Taser body cameras, as requested by the Sheriff and the Co. Executive,
- \$10.7 million for rental assistance for homeless individuals and families,
- \$1.4 million to two providers of job readiness, job search, job placement and job retention services for cash assistance and food stamp recipients over the coming year.

IV. Notes.

The meeting concluded with 5 citizen comments unrelated to the agenda:

- Two spokespersons for a group devoted to saving the Lakewood Hospital in its current form urged the Council to get involved in their effort. One of the women claimed that 50,000 Lakewood citizens are at risk of losing neighborhood hospital services if the hospital is closed or replaced by a Cleveland Clinic outpatient and emergency facility.
- The Rev. Pinckney-Butz spoke of her personal trials and thanked Council for listening.
- A retired teacher from Bedford Heights sought Council aid in her campaign to establish a loan program to help aging baby boomers in her town fix code violations in their homes.
- A young RTA activist reminded Council that route reductions and fare increases for transit services will take effect on August 14 unless something is done. They are holding a Town Hall meeting on June 23, 6 pm, at Antioch Baptist Church, 8869 Cedar Ave. Cleveland, to try to prevent the changes. LWV has testified in support of adequate, affordable mass transit, and the County passed a support resolution on May 24.