

## **County Council Regular Meeting: Dec. 12, 2017**

Observer: Marcia Goldberg

*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](http://council.cuyahogacounty.us)*

### **I. Introduction.**

President Dan Brady called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m. All Council members were present. The meeting ended shortly after 6 p.m.

### **II. Antecedents, Announcements and Public Comment.**

The afternoon's expected Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss the proposed plastic bag ordinance was cancelled (see Notes, below.) Also, public comment today featured mostly complaints about RTA cutbacks and rate increases.

County Executive Armond Budish spoke at length about the process his office and council members used to create the county's 2018-19 budget to be voted on at this meeting. He said they faced tough decisions because of additional losses of state funding and the need to use Medicaid transition funds carefully [this is about the loss of \$27 million per year in sales tax paid by Medicaid Managed Care Organizations]. He also said the county faces serious challenges, including the opioid epidemic, the fact that the jail is a major provider of mental health care, the need to get more children into pre-kindergarten programs, and the pressure to create more jobs. With limited resources, he also hopes to continue to demolish blighted properties and to help municipalities upgrade their infrastructure.

### **III. Business Transacted.**      The following resolutions were all approved:

\* The 2018-19 biennial operating budget and capital improvements program. Mr. Miller, chair of council's finance committee, thanked Mr. Budish and council members for all the work they put in to create a budget that's a "blend of our best thinking." While everyone realizes current spending levels can't be sustained, he said, the budget does restore money for demolitions, homeless shelter overflow, childcare, and public defenders.

\* The Fixed Automated License Plate Recognition Project and an \$870,338 contract with Selex ES to install one pair of cameras at one location in each of 20 communities in the county, including the intersection of Carnegie and Ontario avenues in downtown Cleveland. Installation of the cameras is expected to be completed by the end of June 2018. The project is a countywide information-sharing system designed to locate vehicles linked with crimes.

\* MetroHealth's 2018 budget, including \$33.2 million in county funds; and MetroHealth's participation in various joint purchasing associations in 2018.

\* An \$875,000 casino revenue funds grant to Berea for the Coe Lake redevelopment project at Coe Lake Park, John Mucklo Playground, and the Berea branch library.

\* The sale of county property at 7001 Euclid Ave. for \$2.75 million to George Family Enterprises. The 3.4-acre property in the midtown corridor was formerly used as a center for the

county's board of developmental disabilities. The sale price, Mr. Miller said, is \$250,000 more than preliminary offers and exceeds the property's appraised value. The BDD will receive most of the proceeds.

\* A \$1.44 million contract extension until Dec. 31, 2018, with Hyland Group for insurance brokerage and risk management services.

\* A three-year \$56.3 million contract with Caremark for pharmacy benefit management services for county employees; and a three-year \$303.4 million contract with Medical Mutual for group healthcare benefits for county employees (because University Hospitals' system now accepts Medical Mutual, the county no longer needs to also contract with United Health).

\* A contract extension and an additional \$2.5 million for legal services provided by the prosecutor's office, mostly involving juvenile court.

\* Five separate agreements for 2018, totalling \$48 million, with providers of various health and human services, including out-of-home placement and foster care, independent living for seniors, adult guardianship, temporary housing, and out-of-school-time for youth. Some programs are partially covered by federal funds and probate court fees.

\* An agreement with Newburgh Heights to help pay relocation costs for moving three county departments from separate locations to "Harvard Yard," the vacant RTA Harvard Avenue garage. Newburgh Heights will contribute half of the payroll taxes of county employees for the next 12 1/2 years, estimated at \$1.1 million.

\* The \$4.9 million resurfacing of Pleasant Valley Road from State Road to Broadview Road in Parma; and the \$1.1 million replacement of Stone Road Bridge over Hemlock Creek in Independence.

\* Miscellaneous other actions were the appointment of a member of one county board and the postponement of another to Jan. 9. In addition, routine appropriation transfers were made, a hazards mitigation plan was adopted, a few resolutions meant to be voted on at this meeting were held over for consideration at a future meeting, and several resolutions and an ordinance were referred to committees.

#### **IV. Notes.**

Before the meeting, Mr. Miller and Ms. Simon updated this observer about the plastic bag ordinance which League supports. It was to have been discussed and voted on today. Mr. Miller said he wasn't sure the ordinance had enough support yet. Ms. Simon said a few council members want more information. Jeanne Schmotzer, the council clerk, said she wasn't sure when the ordinance would be voted on, given the personnel issues council has to deal with right now (Cleveland.com has reported on these), and that the bag ordinance would face another round of discussion at a future committee of the whole meeting.

Please note that the next scheduled council meeting (a "special" one) is on Thursday, Dec. 28, at 10:30 a.m.