

County Council Regular Meeting: July 10, 2018

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

I. Introduction.

President Dan Brady called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m. All Council members were present. The meeting ended before 3:30 p.m.

II. Antecedents, Announcements and Public Comments.

A representative of Clevelanders for Public Transit urged Council to appoint a “regular rider” to the RTA Board. Two women spoke about the safety risks, overcrowding, and weekend/holiday understaffing at the Norma Herr Women’s Shelter operated by the YWCA. One of them complained that women with addiction problems are posing risks to other residents and ought to be moved to a nearby building that could serve as a treatment site. She would like to see the formation of a task committee to discuss the shelter’s problems and possible solutions.

III. Business Transacted.

* Four resolutions calling for the submission to county voters of four county charter amendments proposed by the Charter Review Commission, which met regularly over the past six months. All four amendments will be discussed at a Committee of the Whole meeting on Tuesday, July 17, at 1 p.m. The meeting will be chaired by Councilwoman Nan Baker. The four proposed amendments, all sponsored by Mr. Brady on behalf of the Charter Review Commission, are:

1. Adding an Article XV to establish the Agency of Inspector General and provide for the appointment, removal, qualifications, and the powers and duties, including access to county information and subpoena power, of the Inspector General. The other 10 Council members all joined Mr. Brady in sponsoring the resolution.
2. Amending Article IX to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Personnel Review Commission and the Department of Human Resources, to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression in county employment, and to provide for the establishment of the unclassified service by general law and council ordinance. Council members Dale Miller, Sunny Simon, Yvonne Conwell, and Shontel Brown added their sponsorship. The PRC and the DHR worked together to clarify their distinct roles and have agreed on this amendment.
3. Amending Article XI, to give the Department of Internal Auditing discretion to bill certain departments for the cost of conducting audits and to adopt one of two acceptable auditing standards. The DIA requested this housekeeping change.
4. Amending Article III, to empower the Council to enact laws governing the election of county officers. This includes campaign finance regulation, donor disclosure

requirements, and donor age limits. This amendment could actually do very little, if Council prefers to do very little, but it also could add some push to the issue.

* Among several resolutions introduced and referred to committees were the following :

-- An \$8.2 million expansion of the county's Universal Pre-Kindergarten program through July 31, 2020. This part of the contract continues funding for 31 preschools and adds two more preschools, one in Cleveland and one in Garfield Heights. Funding for an additional 30-plus schools is already in place.

-- A \$1.1 million contract with the sewer district for disposal of wastewater sewer grit through May 31, 2020.

-- A \$500,000 Economic Development Fund "special large-scale attraction forgivable loan" to Covia Holdings Corp. for the benefit of Fairmount Santrol-Unimin Corp. merger and headquarters project in Independence.

-- A \$796,000 contract with Woolpert, Inc., for digital oblique photography mapping in connections with the Ohio Statewide Imagery Program, which will enhance GIS services across all levels of government in the state.

-- An \$8 million contract with Americab Transportation for Medicaid non-emergency transportation services through Aug. 31, 2020.

* Several appointments were also confirmed and approved:

-- Walter Parfejewiec as director of the Department of Health and Human Services at an annual salary of \$126,000. "Walter P," as he is known, has been interim director of HHS since last October; before that, he was the department's management services manager.

-- Michele Pomerantz as the new director of the Department of Regional Collaboration at an annual salary of \$115,000.. Pomerantz was formerly policy and labor liaison for the Cleveland Municipal School District. Shontel Brown recused herself from the vote, while Jack Schron voted against the appointment because he said the department wasn't worth its expense

IV. Notes.

Plain Dealer articles the next day covered some of these actions in more detail:

-- https://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2018/07/all_11_cuyahoga_county_council.html --

-- https://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2018/07/cuyahoga_county_council_consider_2.html

It is likely that the LWV will want to support and work for several of the charter amendments. At Charter Review Commission meetings, League spokespersons who attended advocated for the Inspector General amendment, the Campaign Finance amendment, and some parts of the Personnel Review Commission amendment. Our proposal for Nonpartisan Primaries was not adopted.