

County Council Regular Meeting: July 24, 2018

Observer: Tessa Xuan

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.

Council President Brady called the meeting to order at 3:28pm. All County Council members were present. The meeting adjourned at 4:31pm.

II. Antecedents, Announcements and Public Comment.

There had been a Committee of the Whole meeting before the regular session, at which Council members discussed a proposed Ordinance establishing a Commission on Human Rights.

During Public Comment, Cathy Boff asked Council to vote no on the above ordinance, citing voter concerns about the powers and oversight of the Commission. Will Tarter asked Council to vote to table the proposed amendment regarding Campaign Finance Regulations rather than voting it down, explaining that Council's feedback on the amendment from 1 week ago contradicted previous feedback provided to him by the Charter Review Commission. Mark Szabo and Miss Lu each spoke favorably about the Commission on Human Rights ordinance, due to discrimination experienced by individuals in homeless shelters and veterans, including those who have been dishonorably discharged.

County Executive Armond Budish spoke about the 3rd annual Grandparents Family Day Picnic at Luke Easter Park on Saturday July 28, an event to honor and celebrate grandparents.

III. Business Transacted.

* Action on four proposed charter amendments was expedited due to the August deadline and the expectation that numerous Council members will be absent at the next session..

-- Adopted: Placing on the ballot an amendment adding an Article XV to establish the Agency of Inspector General and to provide for the IG's appointment, removal, qualifications, and powers and duties, including access to county information and subpoena power. This was an updated version of the original proposal, with an additional requirement that the IG have a law degree.

-- Adopted: Placing on the ballot an amendment to 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 require the establishment of the unclassified service by general law and council ordinance.

-- Adopted: Placing on the ballot an amendment to Article XI, to give the Department of Internal Auditing discretion in billing certain departments for the cost of conducting audits and flexibility in applying auditing standards.

-- Rejected: a proposed amendment, supported by the LWV, which would have granted Council authority to create campaign finance regulations. County Council's Special Counsel Michael King clarified during the meeting that Council already has the power to create campaign finance regulations without placing an amendment on the ballot.

* Following second reading, the following resolutions were also adopted:

-- The 2018 Economic Development Plan.

-- A \$1.1 million contract with the Sewer District for disposal of wastewater sewer grit.

-- \$8.2 million in awards to 33 providers of pre-kindergarten education for the county's Universal Pre-Kindergarten program.

* Among other measures receiving first or second readings were the following:

-- An ordinance establishing a Commission on Human Rights and enacting Title 15 of the County Code: Anti-Discrimination, to ensure equal opportunity and treatment for all citizens of the county.

-- An ordinance establishing a Children and Family Services Advisory Board. This is in response to community pressure for better attention to possible home abuse of children served by the County.

-- A \$1.1 million grant to the City of Rocky River for the Bradstreet's Landing Park Fishing Pier Reconstruction Project.

-- An \$8 million contract for Medicaid non-emergency transportation services.

-- A \$1.9 million contract for elevator maintenance and repair services for various county facilities.

-- A \$1.2 million contract with Schirmer Construction, LLC for the replacement of a bridge over Hemlock Creek in Independence.

IV. Notes.

In accordance with the county charter, Council was required to vote down the original inspector general charter amendment in order to clear the way for the updated charter amendment, which Council had just approved to adopt following 1st reading. (Ed note: the process of and reason for expediting the vote on the charter amendments was explained afterward by Councilman Miller.)

The only August meeting has been moved up to August 7th from the 14th.