

**Westshore Council of Governments
Wednesday, August 12, 2020**

9:30 a.m.

Dwyer Memorial Senior Center, 300 Bryson Lane, Bay Village

Present: Mayors Koomar, Bay Village; Bobst, Rocky River; Clough, North Olmsted; Cooney, Fairview Park; George, Lakewood. Guests: Rep. Dave Greenspan; Michelle Pomerantz, Director, Dept. of Regional Collaboration, Cuyahoga County.

Meeting was called to order at 9:35; minutes of last meeting approved without change.

Fiscal Officer's Report - Renee Mahoney: Financial Statement was produced. Nothing to more to report. Council doesn't have a formal audit, but relies on "agreed-upon conditions."

Commission Reports:

RTA - Clough: Will receive \$111 Million from Federal government, which will cover recent loss of revenue. Rep. Greenspan is working with Sen. Dolan to increase state funding, which was cut. General Manager has been on maternity leave, but will be back in September, and will be invited to a WCOG meeting.

NOACA - Bobst: Board and Staff have finished an Equity Statement that recognizes its role in creating some of the problems it will address. The Statement is posted on their website. They are looking for community information and involvement in creating a long-range transport plan.

Land Bank - George: Nothing to report.

Planning Commission - Bobst: The leader's position is open, as former head is now working for Lakewood. Mayor Bobst is on the selection committee. A County datebook has been released, using data from outside sources; it will be updated periodically. There are five different Community Planning Boards.

Mayors and Managers Assn. - Koomar: Cities may use CARES funding for salaries related to sanitizing and other COVID-related work. They will need authorization by their Councils to use in audits. All departments have had losses that need reimbursement.

Rep. Greenspan, capital and legislative update: He has submitted some 54 projects to the State Appropriations Committee; they are good projects that will put people to work. They include projects for community colleges and schools. The Legislature is in the first year of its two-year cycle. Since the shakeup in the Statehouse over the SB 6 scandal, and with legislators on summer break, the rest of this year may constitute a lame duck session. When they return, there will be a lot to make up. There is no money for the Land Bank now. They are making small gains in school funding. The deficit is less than projected, because revenues were up

before the pandemic. Ninety percent of the state budget is devoted to education, Medicaid, and incarceration. Greenspan stated that Ohio is well positioned, due to our location, infrastructure, etc., to bring industries such as pharmaceuticals, into the state. The goal is to reach 4% unemployment.

Bobst expressed appreciation to Rep. Greenspan for standing up for the district in the Legislature, and all concurred.

Michelle Pomerantz, Census and Election: The County is obviously working to get past the current crisis, with some offices open, and many people working from home. Clough noted that for a while, there was no way to leave a message in some offices, and it was difficult for anyone needing to get a title transferred, or the like. Email is the best way to reach people now. Greenspan noted that the deadline for renewing driver licenses, etc., will probably be extended.

The County is also working on improving digital access for residents and businesses.

The County is working to increase response to the Census. They can provide PPE and support for Census workers. West Shore communities are doing well, with response rates from 68.5% in Lakewood to 86.5% in Bay Village. Other areas are harder to reach, so it's hoped the West Shore will help to make up for them. The County qualifies for CARES money based on Census.

They are also working to promote a fair election. Greenspan supports HB 680, which will require the Secretary of State to send absentee ballots to every voter at least seven days before the election, instead of the previous deadline of three days before. Council agreed to allow County workers to take Election Day off in order to work at the polls, if they wish.

Respectfully submitted,
Judith Weiss, LWVGC Observer