

County Council Regular (Remote) Meeting, June 23, 2020

Observer: Lynda Mayer

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 remote meeting was called to order by Council President Brady at 2 PM with all members present. After remarks by County Executive Budish, the Council “adjourned” to go into executive session regarding labor contract talks and litigation. After two hours, this observer left briefly, only to come back to see the full council adjourn the full meeting. Therefore, this report is only a selective summary of Council’s e-published agenda items.

II. Antecedents, Announcements, and Public Comments.

Mr. Budish read a prepared statement explaining that the County is facing dire budgetary shortfalls. He hopes that the federal government will pass a second stimulus to help offset local, county and state expenses incurred and revenue decreases due to the ongoing COVID-19 shutdown and weak recovery. However, he is worried that Congress may not pass such a measure. He has inquired whether COVID funds may be used to help with additional public safety expenses, but has so far received contradictory answers. There were no public comments, which is actually one of the major drawbacks of holding these meetings via teleconferencing video. The adjournment for executive session lasted over two hours, or at least that is how long the message remained on the Council’s website. In the past, such executive sessions had been scheduled at specific times prior to the announced start of the regular public meeting, so this new format must be counted as an additional drawback. Few if any viewers will have remained online indefinitely.

III. Business to be Transacted (from Agenda)

- * Among resolutions scheduled to be adopted at this meeting were the following:
 - A cost-saving agreement with the Sheriff’s deputies to accept 10 unpaid furlough days.
 - Hazard Pay agreements with security officers’ and deputy sheriffs’ bargaining units.
 - The annual Alternative Tax Budget for the year 2021.
 - \$1.25 million in additional funds to extend stop-loss insurance services to employees in the Benefits Regionalization program for an extra year.
 - \$5 million from the Coronavirus Relief Fund and \$1.8 million in Community Development Block Grant funds to provide emergency rental assistance to eligible tenants unable to pay rent due to the economic impact of COVID-19.
 - \$2.1 million in additional funds to extend through the end of 2020 the operation of the Workforce Service Center and job-seekers and on-the-job training programs by the United Labor Agency.
 - \$4 million in additional funds to extend the time for a program of employment, education, and training services for young adults.
 - \$22.3 million to resurface 14 different roads, avenues and streets in various municipalities.

* Resolutions scheduled for earlier stages of the process include the following:

- The declaration that racism in Cuyahoga County is a public health crisis.
- A replacement levy of 2.5 mills, plus an increase of 1 mill, for the benefit of and to meet current expenses of the Cuyahoga County Public Library system. This would put the question on the November ballot of all county voters in communities served by CCPL libraries.
- A \$3.5 million Economic Development loan for the benefit of a Purell manufacturing facility to be on Lee Road South, in Maple Heights.
- \$1.4 million in additional funds to design and build an Emergency Supplies Storage building.
- \$1 million for the Home Repair Program through 6/30/2022.
- \$1.4 million for the Shelter Care Spectrum of Services program through 6/30/22
- \$1 million in additional funds for 4 city school districts for Closing the Achievement Gap services: Garfield Heights, Maple Heights, Warrensville Heights, and Cleveland Heights/University Heights.

IV. Notes.

If there are important additions, subtractions, or changes to this list, they will be reported in a follow-up report. Interested readers should also check the Wednesday PD or Cleveland.com, assuming that their reporter had better luck than I “attending” this meeting! I also emailed Council President Brady after the announced adjournment, so perhaps he will explain what happened.