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City Council

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Agency: [Cleveland City Council](#)

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Summary

- The public comment period was so wild that Council President Blaine Griffin cut off a few people.
- A public commenter spoke against Ohio Sen. Bill 158, which would ban participatory budgeting in Ohio cities.
- One commenter spoke appreciatively of Louise Jackson, who is leaving her post as commissioner of Community Development.

Follow-Up Questions

- Is Sen. Bill 158 only about one issue or multiple?
- Homophobia has been brought up in public comments before—why wasn't it stopped before? It seemed as though Griffin really reinforced the rules tonight.

Notes

The meeting started at 7:02 p.m.

The first public comment was from Reverend Pamela Pinkney Butts. She spoke about city and county leadership and was representing the People's Party. She said she is concerned because she feels those elected officials have a disregard for City Council and the police system.

The second public comment was from Randy Cunningham. He spoke about his opposition to [Ohio Sen. Bill 158, introduced by Sen. Jerry Cirino \(R-Kirtland.\) It would ban participatory budgeting.](#) He said he wants the administration and City Council to make a public statement and give testimony at the Statehouse against Sen. Bill 158.

The third public comment was from Roger Carney, who praised Louise Jackson, the outgoing commissioner of Community Development.

The next public comment was from Joe Schwarten from Clevelanders for Public Transit. He challenged everyone to take a week without driving. “For those who can drive, you might not know what it’s like to go throughout your whole work week having to walk, bike, roll down the street. This is a challenge for you to see what it’s like,” he said. The challenge will start on October 2.

The fifth public commenter was Chris Martin. His public comment topic was announced as “matters of public concern.”

Martin began by telling the council members that they are being paid by the taxpayers to be there. He asked if anyone would be going down to Columbus to speak against Sen. Bill 158. He then listed off the council members that accepted money from the Council Leadership Fund in 2022. *(Editor’s note: Sen. Bill 158 would preemptively ban the participatory budgeting process outlined in Issue 38. Money from the Council Leadership Fund has been used to pay for anti-Issue 38 campaign materials.)*

In the middle of him listing off the council members, Council President Blaine A. Griffin interrupted to remind Martin that comments are not supposed to address individual council members. As Griffin said that, Martin raised his voice, interrupting Griffin, “I am not impugning the character of any councilor.” Griffin threatened to cut Martin’s mic if he continued. After Martin continued to read from the list, the microphone was cut off. Griffin told Martin to remove himself from the stand but Martin went on, even without the microphone.

The sixth public comment was from Mariah Crenshaw. She said she is working on a statewide issue concerning police officers not taking their training.

The seventh public comment was from DeSeanna Morgan. She made hateful comments about the LGBT and Jewish communities. Griffin cut her off. “We cannot keep on using this public forum to insult different constituencies,” he said.

First Reading Legislation

- 15 emergency ordinances referred

One of them is Emergency Ordinance 1087-2023, which would vacate East 59th Street from Central Ave to Hawthorne Avenue and a portion of Hawthorne Court.

- 2 emergency ordinances read in full and passed

One of them is Emergency Ordinance 1100-2023, which relates to the first amendment to

the agreement with Northwest Neighborhood CDC for Cleveland City Council.

- 6 emergency resolutions read in full and adopted

One of them was 1097-2023, which objected to the transfer of ownership of a C1 and C2 liquor permit to 15518 St. Clair Avenue.

Second Reading Legislation

- 14 emergency ordinances passed

One of the Emergency Ordinances is 585-2023, which allows the directors of Finance and Economic Development to enter into one or more agreements with DigitalC for the deployment of a citywide broadband network.

- 2 emergency resolutions adopted

One of them included 1020-2023, which asks the County Fiscal Officer to make advances during the year 2024.

Griffin congratulated Council Member Stephanie Howse on her recent marriage.

Griffin reiterated that public comment is not a forum for hate or attacks.

“Tonight was unhinged. Wild accusations, homophobia, and anti-semitism,” said Council Member Kerry McCormack. He also mentioned that Yom Kippur, a Jewish holiday, was that day.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

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