

Documenters

POWERED BY CITY BUREAU & SIGNAL CLEVELAND

City Council

Documenter name: Elan Eichler

Agency: [Cleveland City Council](#)

Date: Jan. 8, 2024

[See more about this meeting at Documenters.org](#)

Summary

- Many Cleveland residents were in attendance to give public comment or show their support for City Council to introduce and pass a ceasefire resolution regarding Israel's war on Gaza. No resolution was brought forward by City Council even though impassioned Cleveland residents have been calling for council to act.
- Members of Cleveland's Palestinian Youth Movement and Jewish Voice for Peace Cleveland spoke during public comment, citing the letter calling for a ceasefire that was signed by more than 80 local businesses and organizations.
- During the miscellaneous portion of the meeting, Council Member Rebecca Maurer quoted Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech denouncing the Vietnam War, saying that it was controversial at the time, but she did not directly connect it with current events.

Follow-Up Questions

- What was Maurer's intention in quoting MLK but not taking any sort of stand herself?
- I'm confused about why the clerk speed-read all of the resolutions but no discussion followed. Have these resolutions already been discussed elsewhere?

Notes

The Finance Committee meeting went long, and the livestream of this full council meeting did not begin until 7:07 p.m. with a public commenter speaking on what is going on in Palestine and calling for the council to be held accountable for not calling for a ceasefire.

First public commenter: "Palestinian lives are not disposable."

Summer Husein: "Some of you sit on your phones while constituents are speaking."

Husein cited Mayor Justin Bibb's promises during his mayoral race to make Cleveland a

safer place, and she argued that Bibb's support of Israel's actions does the opposite. She ended her public comment with the following: "Pass the resolution, call for a ceasefire, free Palestine."

Cameron Irizarry, representing Ward 4: "It was not complicated for us to stand up with our neighbors ... trying to appeal to whatever humanity is left in you. We've been met with insult after insult."

Kamar Taweel: "In the lands where my ancestors planted their roots ... the very essence of our wellbeing is being torn apart.... We demand for a ceasefire not out of weakness but as a desperate plea for humanity."

Bayan Taweel: "Mayor Bibb, we do not stand with Israel, you do.... We do not stand for genocide and we do not stand for ethnic cleansing."

Tessa Xuan, statewide co-director of [OPAWL](#): "OPAWL stands in solidarity with Palestine." Xuan cited the historical invasion of China by Japan, speaking on her own family's experience during this period.

She also cited America's funding of Israel's military. "I'm sharing my family's story not to compare it to what Palestinians have gone through but to say that no land can ever be occupied without dehumanizing the people and children who live there."

Noelle Naser, member of Cleveland's Palestinian Youth Movement: "1.7 million Palestians have been displaced." Citing the rise of anti-Islamic, anti-Jewish, and anti-Palestinian rhetoric growing here in Cleveland, she said "global issues are not so far away or disconnected as they may seem" and a "melting pot of voices" have signed on to the letter demanding a ceasefire resolution.

Estelle Raskin, from Jewish Voice for Peace Cleveland: "I'm here as a Jewish person to stand publicly alongside our Cleveland Palestinian community and our collective, united, ongoing efforts to demand that the City of Cleveland pass a resolution that calls for an immediate ceasefire, condemns the genocide in Gaza, and condemns rising anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab, Islamophobic, and anti-Jewish attacks in our city. On Jan. 1 of this year, the Cleveland Palestinian advocacy community delivered a letter to each member of the council asking for a ceasefire resolution to be introduced and passed."

Koby Picker, from Jewish Voice for Peace Cleveland: "I have seen my Palestinian and Jewish comrades appealing to you week after week to recognize their humanity and to

request that you perform your minimal responsibilities as leaders in the city of Cleveland.... Show some spine and pass a ceasefire resolution. Today it was reported that the Cleveland Jewish Federation [has sent you a letter](#) urging you not to [pass the resolution]. As a lifelong member of Cleveland's Jewish community, I am shocked by the letter, which is full of twisted facts and misinformation and is diametrically opposed to the Jewish values I was taught growing up as a Jewish boy growing up in Jewish institutions that are supported by the Federation in Cleveland."

After public comment ended, Deputy Clerk Allan Dreyer began with the following communication (reading each item extremely fast):

- 1-2024: From Cuyahoga County Board of Elections. Certificate of Result of Election on Issue 38 for the election held on Nov. 8, 2023.
- 2-2024: Dreyer was designated as the clerk.

Condolence resolutions: Again the clerk read the list too fast to follow while Council President Blaine Griffin was visibly looking at his phone behind the clerk.

"All rise for a moment of silence." No one indicated what the moment of silence was for.

Emergency Ordinances: Again the clerk read the list extremely fast and it was impossible to follow.

Call to roll at 7:50 p.m:

- Any introductions? No introductions.
- Any announcements? No announcements.

Miscellaneous:

Council Member Rebecca Maurer told a brief story reflecting on her time as a council member and third year in office and reflecting on MLK day. She mentioned a story about MLK after he spoke out against the Vietnam War, "These days it's considered his most controversial speech, when he connected our domestic fight for civil rights, for racial justice, to the international fight for residents of Vietnam." She read a passage from the speech, calling for love over hate, but did not make any statement relating this story and speech to current events or comment on the ceasefire resolution.

Council Member Kevin Conwell talked about an upcoming [hiring event](#) on Friday. He talked about things he would like to see at the hiring event, such as someone to help people get their criminal records expunged.

No absences.

As the committee was adjourned, the voices in the back of the room rose. No resolution for a ceasefire was brought forward or passed.

Wrapped up around 8 p.m.

If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at cleddocumenters@gmail.com with "Correction Request" in the subject line.