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City Council

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Agency: [Cleveland City Council](#)

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Summary

- Residents continued to urge council to pass a resolution calling for a Gaza ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas War. Three of eight commenters expressed this view during the public comment section of the meeting. After public comment, protestors disrupted the proceedings by chanting slogans such as “ceasefire resolution” and “shut it down.” Council President Griffin warned the protestors to stop their behavior, but ultimately the meeting continued with no protestors escorted out of council chambers and the meeting remaining open to the public.

Follow-Up Questions

- I noticed that during the public comment section of the meeting the camera showed the public seated in council chambers, but when protestors were disrupting the business portion of the meeting, they weren’t shown on camera. Is this a deliberate policy not to show the public on-camera if individuals are being disruptive to a meeting?
- I noticed at least one resident signed up during public comment to speak about Black history, but instead talked about the Gaza ceasefire resolution. Is this a common practice? Are people not being approved to speak during public comment if they indicate they want to talk about the ceasefire resolution? *[Editor’s note: Griffin announced the speaker’s topic as “Black history.” The public commenter said he was originally going to speak about the intersection of the struggle for Black liberation in the United States and Palestinian liberation.]*
- Why were Council Members Stephanie Howse-Jones, Richard Starr, and Deborah Gray opposed to the [ordinance](#) about installing a KeyBank ATM machine in the Vital Statistics office? It seems pretty non-controversial to me, along with the ordinances about the [Goodwill building](#) and the [summer employment program](#) that each had a dissenting vote from Council Member Brian Kazy. Is there more

going on here?

Notes

The meeting was opened on time with all members present. Roll call was followed by a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

The meeting began with Council President Blaine Griffin reading aloud an ordinance about [recent changes](#) to the public comment section of the meeting. If attendees are disruptive to the meeting, a warning will be issued. If disruptions continue, the meeting will go into recess while the council chambers are cleared. The meeting will reconvene with only media members present in chambers, while the public can still watch online (I [used](#) Documenter Kellie Morris' notes from the Jan. 29 meeting for this summary of the procedure.)

Public comment (eight people spoke)

Public comments were about evenly split between urging council to adopt a Gaza ceasefire resolution and other matters.

1. A Ward 5 resident was scheduled to speak but was not there. However, another individual came to the microphone and began reading a statement in support of council passing a Gaza ceasefire resolution. Griffin stated multiple times that she was not registered to speak, but the individual continued to speak. After Griffin banged his gavel and said she wasn't registered to speak, she stopped speaking.
2. James Lamb (Ward 3) spoke about his employment termination and said he had information to share with the mayor and council privately (though the connection was a little unclear).
3. Alicia Kirkman (Ward 15) spoke on behalf of the [Angelo Miller Foundation](#), an organization she founded after the 2007 killing of her son by Cleveland police. Kirkman spoke about programs at her foundation that address issues faced by Black people in Cleveland, and she encouraged council members to donate to her foundation.
4. Brenda Bickerstaff (Ward 8) with [Citizens for a Safer Cleveland](#) read a statement from LaTonya Goldsby (president of the organization). The statement alleged that the city was in violation of Charter Amendment 115-5, which states that the Community Police Commission (CPC) must be included in the hiring process for Cleveland police commanders. Bickerstaff also encouraged council members to attend CPC meetings. (Later in the meeting, Council Member Howse-Jones asked the city law director about this alleged violation. The law director said he didn't

know at the moment, but that his office was looking into it and would provide a “legal answer real soon.”) [Editor’s note: [Learn more from Signal’s Frank Lewis.](#)]

5. Robert Cranford (Ward 1) spoke about a gentleman’s club on Lee Road that he said has caused repeated and continuing overnight disturbances in the neighborhood. Cranford said the police have not been appropriately responsive but that he is working with Council Member Joe Jones to resolve the matter.
6. George Pittman (Ward 7) spoke about the need for Cleveland to have a Black history museum. He noted that other Ohio cities have Black history museums.
7. Khalid Hamdallah (no ward or location given) spoke about the [Israeli assault on Sunday](#) (Monday morning in Gaza) on the Gaza city of Rafah. Hamdallah urged the council to pass a resolution in support of a Gaza ceasefire.
8. Noelle Naser (Ward 15) from the Cleveland chapter of the [Palestinian Youth Movement](#) spoke about why she felt council didn’t support a proposed Gaza ceasefire resolution. She read aloud text from a proposed resolution and noted that other cities (e.g., Akron, Chicago) had adopted ceasefire resolutions.

Communications

The clerk read into the record information about the following:

- Oaths of office
- New license applications and transfers of license/ownership applications
- Condolence and congratulation resolutions

Protest interruptions:

At this point in the meeting (around 7:30 p.m.), protestors in council chambers began loudly chanting “ceasefire resolution” and “shut it down.” Griffin warned the protestors to stop multiple times and ordered the clerk to continue. He did not stop the meeting or have the protestors removed. For about 10 to 15 minutes the clerk read legislation into the record over the protestors. This author could hear the clerk, but it was difficult at times. After around 7:45 p.m. or so, the volume of the protests decreased, but the background noise continued for the remainder of the meeting.

First Reading legislation

Eight emergency ordinances for administrative and committee review were introduced. Some were for the purchase of specific items (e.g., two grapple trucks for the Public Works Department), but other ordinances for the [Departments of Public Health](#) (“provide essential services for individuals and families with addiction issues”) and [Finance](#) “enter into various written standard purchase and requirement contracts to provide building

construction materials, equipment, supplies, and services, including labor, for the various divisions of City government”) sounded vague.

First Reading to be passed

Three emergency ordinances were read in full and passed regarding separate and unrelated matters.

Resolutions to be adopted

There was one resolution objecting to the transfer of a liquor license. It passed unanimously.

Second Reading legislation to be passed

Council passed 10 emergency ordinances covering various matters, including changing the name of “Lake Park” to “Lake Pool Park.” An [emergency ordinance](#) of note was the establishment of a tax abatement for International Food Solutions for the Goodwill building on East 55th Street to encourage economic development (this measure passed 16-1).

In addition, Council Members Starr, Howse-Jones, and Gray voted “no” on [Emergency Ordinance 4-2024](#) (which will establish a KeyBank ATM in the Vital Statistics room at City Hall).

[Emergency Ordinance 84-2024](#) (about designing a Youth and Young Adult Employment Program for Summer 2024) passed 16-1. (Council Member Kazy cast the dissenting vote, according to the meeting minutes).

Ordinance passed

An ordinance was passed changing zoning setbacks on two streets in Ward 15.

For the full rundown of legislation introduced and passed, check out [City Council’s meeting minutes](#).

Introductions

The following introductions were made:

- Council President Griffin introduced Julian Khan and Carmen Lane as residents of Ward 6.

- Starr introduced an individual from Ward 5.

Announcements

- Howse-Jones informed the council that [“What’s in Your Wallet” meetings](#) (a series of community meetings for Cleveland residents to give feedback and suggestions about the proposed 2024 budget) would be held Feb. 13 at the Estabrook Recreation Center and on Feb. 14 at the Gunning Recreation Center. Howse-Jones said residents could also provide feedback by calling the city budget hotline at (216) 714-3006 or sending an email to webmaster@clevelandcitycouncil.org.

Miscellaneous

Starr wished Griffin a happy birthday today. He spoke of the City Council as a team going through adversity (“don’t let the drama get in our way”) and voiced support for Griffin (“we’re gonna be here to protect you”). Starr spoke in favor of the tax abatement for the Goodwill building on East 55th Street referenced earlier.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned around 8 p.m. There will be no council meeting next Monday due to the Presidents’ Day holiday, so the next council meeting is scheduled for Feb. 26.

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