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City Council

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Agency: [Cleveland City Council](#)

Date: March 18, 2024

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Summary

- A series of 26 **emergency ordinances** were introduced and adopted.
- Public comment was orderly. Residents spoke on the need for a Gaza ceasefire resolution and to stop the spread of anti-semitism. They also spoke about the Cleveland Community Police Commission and homelessness.
- Council Member Richard Starr voted no on Emergency Ordinance 160-2024 - to make appropriations and provide current expenses for the daily operation of all municipal departments of the City of Cleveland for the fiscal year from Jan. 1, 2024, until Dec. 31, 2024.

Follow-Up Questions

- Have the private phone records of council members ever been requested/released through a FOIA request before?

Notes

Meeting started at 7 p.m.

Council members present:

Kevin Bishop

Kerry McCormack

Richard Starr

Blaine Griffin, council president

Stephanie Howse-Jones

Kevin Conwell

Anthony Hairston

Danny Kelly

Rebecca Maurer
Kris Harsh
Jasmin Santana
Jenny Spencer
Brian Kazy
Charles Slife

Griffin announced a change in the order of business for the meeting.

A series of 26 **emergency ordinances** were introduced. Motion to suspend the rules was read by the clerk of council.

Starr voted no on 160-2024, an emergency ordinance to make appropriations and provide current expenses for the daily operation of all municipal departments of the City of Cleveland for the fiscal year from Jan. 1, 2024, until Dec. 31, 2024.

COMMUNICATION

Oath of office for Dornat A. Drummond, Interim Director, Department of Public Safety, City of Cleveland.

Oath of office for Dorothy A. Todd, Chief of Police, Division of Police, Department of Public Safety, City of Cleveland.

From Council President Blaine A. Griffin: Designating, without objection by council, Allan Dreyer to serve as Clerk of Council Pro Tempore for all matters requiring the clerk's signature between March 7, 2024, and March 15, 2024.

Oath of office for Diana M. Cyganovich, member, Civilian Police Review Board, City of Cleveland.

Oath of office for David Gatian, member, Civilian Police Review Board, City of Cleveland.

A series of an additional 10 communication motions were read, followed by the motion to suspend the rules.

Ten **condolence resolutions** were read, followed by a moment of silence.

Five **congratulations resolutions** were read.

Three **recognition resolutions** were read.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Rev. Pamela Pinkney Butts, representing the People's Party, spoke on the need for the administration to address homelessness.

Dallas Eckman, representing the Party for Socialism and Liberation, started by reminding the council members that texts sent by a public official on a private device during a public meeting are public record. He said he will be submitting a public records (Freedom of Information Act or FOIA) request. He said City Council has lost the opportunity to enact a ceasefire resolution. He called for the city's complete decoupling from the government of Israel.

Juan Collado Diaz, representing the Libertarian Party, stated it's not a Left vs. Right issue. It is a Right vs. Wrong issue. He remarked that the council has failed to call for a ceasefire. He also addressed his concern that Cudell Park is in danger of being destroyed for a school to be built. He supports the school and wants the park to remain. He said when architect Frank E. Cudell died, he left the space to be used as a park. He called on Mayor Justin Bibb to speak to Cleveland Metropolitan School District to stop it and support the park.

Basma Hamid from Rocky River spoke on "justice for all." She said that council failed to speak out for a ceasefire on behalf of the Palestinian community residing and paying taxes in Cleveland. "Where is justice? Where is the humanity?"

Brenda Bickerstaff from Ward 9 spoke on the Cleveland Community Police Commission. She said she is a private investigator. She said a "dirty cop" had her wrongfully indicted while working on a case in 2012. The officer was fired but then got his job back.

Richard Jackson from Cleveland's West Side spoke on the Cleveland Community Police Commission, saying he was there to ask for their cooperation. He was one of the authors of Issue 24 and had spent 30 years in the Cleveland Division of Police, with prior service in the U.S. Marine Special Forces. He said the consent decree is "starting to do some things. You're starting to see some ripple effects, but they're small." He proposed that the commission "have its independence that the law demands, you will more than likely see a very, very quick turnaround and a larger part of the consent decree completed." The city needs to get to 100%.

Alec Popivker spoke on freedom of speech. He acknowledged those celebrating Ramadan and Purim. He expressed his concern for the “abuse of freedom of speech” in light of hate speech and propaganda being spread. He gave the example of a demonization of a group of people. He mentioned that although the city has organizations for diversity, none of them address anti-semitism. He asked that council look into doing something about “evil speech” and balance it with good speech and knowledge.

Sarah Popivker had planned to speak on modern feminism. She read the names of women still being held hostage and abused in Gaza.

Rasmia Alnadi read a list of names of children killed under the age of one. She said, “Fifty infants of the 11,000 children, 50 infants of the 30,000 Palestinians. Human beings. So I ask again, have I humanized them enough?”

MISCELLANEOUS

Conwell remarked that he wants more children involved in the arts. He said a band that played at the St. Patrick’s Day parade has been nominated to play in Washington, D.C. on July 4 and that council members can make sure through donations they can make it there. He also said he wants youth and children musicians to open up for his band on June 12 and other such events.

Kazy mentioned upcoming World Down Syndrome Day and the awareness event Rock Your Socks. He sent socks to council members and the mayor and asked that they take a picture with mismatched socks and post on social media.

Griffin congratulated the members on the budget being appropriated for the year. They are going to be doing an assessment to work on the budget process.

Conwell reiterated that they need money for the art and music camps at the Music Settlement and Julio de Burgos. “This is how you stop crime. You keep them busy.” Griffin said they have a meeting set with the mayor to discuss it.

MOTION TO EXCUSE THE ABSENCES

Absences were excused for Council Members Michael Polensek, Deborah Gray and Joe Jones.

Meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

Additional Resources:

Cleveland City Council Public Comment

<https://www.clevelandcitycouncil.org/resources/public-comment>

Cleveland City Council Public Comment Policy

<https://www.clevelandcitycouncil.org/sites/default/files/Public%20Comment%20FINALA.pdf>

Cleveland City Council Members

<https://www.clevelandcitycouncil.org/council/council-members>

Clerk of Council

<https://www.clevelandcitycouncil.org/council/clerk-council>

Dallas Eckman, organizer, calls for City Council to pass ceasefire resolution

<https://www.liberationnews.org/cleveland-peoples-council-seizes-initiative-from-cowardly-city-council-to-pass-ceasefire-resolution/>

Freedom of Information Act

<https://www.foia.gov/how-to.html>

Griffin read the warning and rules for public comment according to codified ordinance 605.04

https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/cleveland/latest/cleveland_oh/0-0-0-31573#JD_605.04

Cleveland Community Police Commission - Consent Decree

<https://clecpc.org/resources/consent-decree/>

World Down Syndrome Day

<https://www.worlddownsyndromeday.org/>

Julia de Burgos

<https://juliadeburgos.org/>

The Music Settlement

<https://www.themusicsettlement.org/>

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