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Council Meeting

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Agency: [Cuyahoga County Council](#)

Date: July 16, 2024

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Summary

- Public comment at the meetings seems important to the process.
- County Council has a lot of responsibility for fiscal matters for many projects/entities/businesses/services.
- Quite a bit of business is taken care of prior to the council meeting through the various committee assignments.

Follow-Up Questions

- Do the various committees also have public meetings, or is that internal business for the council?
- Is there an easy way for the public to determine which council member represents them in their residential area?

Notes

[Cuyahoga County Council](#) is the legislative body of Cuyahoga County government, made up of 11 elected representatives from across the county. The council makes policy decisions for the effective functioning of county government, and is a link between government agencies and citizens. It has legislative and taxing authority for the county, and is a co-equal branch of the county government with the executive branch. This form of government for Cuyahoga County was established in January 2011, replacing the three-member Board of County Commissioners, when the charter form of government adopted by voters went into effect.

All council meetings take place on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 5 p.m. on the fourth floor of the Cuyahoga County Administrative Headquarters at 2079 E. 9th St., Cleveland, OH, 44115. Meetings are open to the public and livestreamed on their [website](#) and the county's [YouTube](#) page. The website provides all meeting agendas as well.

Council chambers are arranged with the council members on the dais in the front of the room. For the public audience, there are six rows of chairs with eight chairs in each row on both sides of a middle aisle with a podium in front that faces the members. The clerk and other staff are at tables to the side of the audience. There are four large screens within the chamber that show whomever is speaking. There is an overflow area directly outside of the chambers by the security check-in if there is not enough seating for the public.

Most of the available chairs were filled, including people in groups that included young children, and there were a notable number of people who used symbolism within their outfits by having T-shirts with words, Palestinian keffiyehs (scarves), and Jewish kippahs (head coverings).

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m. (see [agenda](#) here) and the roll was called.

All council members were present:

- Patrick Kelly (District 1)
- Dale Miller (District 2)
- Martin J. Sweeney (District 3)
- Michael P. Byrne (District 4)
- Michael J. Gallagher (District 5)
- Jack H. Schron, Jr. (District 6)
- Yvonne M. Conwell (District 7)
- Pernel Jones, Jr. (District 8), council president
- Meredith M. Turner (District 9)
- Cheryl L. Stephens (District 10), council vice president
- Sunny M. Simon (District 11)

The Pledge of Allegiance was said with many members of the public in the seats not standing or reciting the words. Although silent meditation was listed as an agenda item, it was not offered.

The council president told the audience that input was welcomed and the public has a right to have their opinions respected. He said that reminders of the rules of decorum were posted at the door and available in the back and that “individuals who flagrantly or repeatedly violate the rules of decorum” would be removed from the council chambers and may be barred from attending future council meetings. He said that a lot of people had signed up for public comment and everyone would have the right to speak for three minutes with a bell notification for time. He also said that the Sheriff’s Department wanted to remind participants to be seated and not loiter in the aisles or the back of the

chamber. He said if seating is not available, they may go to the overflow area that has monitors. The Clerk of Council corrected Jones and said the language he used regarding public comment is no longer viable due to the [temporary rules](#) from the July 9 council meeting. The clerk said public comment is limited to 20 speakers chosen randomly from those who had signed up prior to the meeting, and they can submit written comments via the website, which will be shared with all members of council.

PUBLIC COMMENT

As the public comment section of the meeting was underway, many speakers expressed intense emotions explaining their perspective. The audience had many expressive reactions, including shouting out their disagreement with speakers (including insults and booing), holding up signs, snapping fingers in agreement, and applauding. This portion of the meeting lasted approximately one hour.

- Sixteen of the 20 public comments allowed related to a resolution concerning divestment of bonds issued by the nation of Israel, a topic being considered in past council meetings but not listed on the current agenda.

As this became a clearly emotional issue with many points being discussed, I checked further on the history of this resolution and discovered that [RF2024-0208](#) was introduced at the council meeting on June 4 (pages 13-15) to be considered for a first reading and referral to committee.

In [minutes from the June 4 meeting](#), there were 56 people named who provided public comment (pages 2-3) and Jones referred the resolution to the Committee of the Whole where council members commented (pages 4-5).

In [minutes from the June 18 meeting](#), there were 72 people named who provided public comment on the resolution. At the end of the minutes (page 24) it said, "Clerk Richardson reported that Resolution No. R2024-0208 was withdrawn at the request of the sponsors."

Issues raised during tonight's meeting included references to Cuyahoga County currently holding \$16 million in sovereign debt issued by the nation of Israel. One speaker questioned why these resources were not used to help locally with many concerns for the health and welfare of citizens. Five of the speakers expressed support for the investment in the bonds and for the County Council's withdrawal of the resolution. Six of the speakers became very emotional in asking for the resolution to be reconsidered from a moral standpoint. There was a polarity among many of the speakers, with references to genocide and anti-semitism. Several speakers referred to the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions ([BDS Movement](#)), both in support of the movement and against it.

Three speakers gave brief appreciation to the council for listening to concerns and continuing with county business and being thankful for their service.

A man who works for the Office of Child Support Services said that they woke up to “a nightmare” today of having flexibility taken away with working from home that will create difficulties for workers. He said that no workers were involved in the process and asked that the policy remain as-is, with three days working at home, and two days working in the office.

The vast majority of the audience left the meeting after the public comments were completed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were approved for the July 2 regular meeting and the Committee of the Whole meeting.

There were no announcements from the council president, and no messages from the county executive. In fact, I did not see the county executive, and asked a clerk after the meeting if he usually attends, and she said that he was there but came in late. I did not see him arrive, and it wasn't clear to me where his assigned seat would be.

LEGISLATION INTRODUCED BY COUNCIL

See the [agenda](#) for specific information relating to the listed resolutions.

- a) **CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR COUNCIL FOR FIRST READING AND REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE**
R2024-0268 referred to [Health, Human Services & Aging Committee](#).
R2024-0269 and **R2024-0270** referred to [Community Development Committee](#).
- b) **COMMITTEE REPORTS AND CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTIONS OF COUNCIL FOR SECOND READING**

All of the following resolutions were “moved to the July 30 council agenda for consideration for third reading adoption”:

R2024-0226
R2024-0246
R2024-0247
R2024-0248
R2024-0249
R2024-0251

R2024-0252

R2024-0253

R2024-0250 - A member of the County Council staff came to the podium with a proposed substitute to increase the amount of the award to \$40,000 instead of the original amount of \$20,000 with the additional amount coming from a specific grant fund. A verbal vote approved the change and the item will be “moved to the July 30 council agenda for consideration for third reading adoption.”

R2024-0254 - Several minutes were spent discussing this resolution regarding Variety Properties LLC for the benefit of a project located at 11801-11825 Lorain Ave. in the City of Cleveland. Sweeney, Schron, and Simon had back and forth discussions regarding this project that has been in process for quite a few years. Recent meetings were held with the developer and they wish to again extend the sunset provisions, changing the date to December 2025. A roll call to allow amendment of the timeline passed with eight affirmative votes, and then all members voted “aye” to accept the legislation as a whole with the amended timeline. This resolution then will go to the July 30 council agenda for consideration for third reading adoption.

c) CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION OF COUNCIL FOR THIRD READING ADOPTION

R2024-0225 approved with an all-affirmative voice vote. Stephens referred to it as a program that “creates new skill sets in the community” and as a workforce development initiative to show young people in urban centers what the film industry can offer them.

d) COMMITTEE REPORT AND CONSIDERATION OF AN ORDINANCE OF COUNCIL FOR SECOND READING

02024-0007 moved to the July 30 council agenda for consideration for third reading adoption.

LEGISLATION INTRODUCED BY EXECUTIVE

a) CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION FOR FIRST READING ADOPTION UNDER SUSPENSION OF RULES

R2024-0271 - Miller said it was part of the regular fiscal agenda and gave facts and figures regarding budget transfers. Passed by an all-affirmative voice vote.

b) CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR FIRST READING AND REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

All of the following resolutions were referred to the [Human Resources](#).

[Appointments & Equity Committee:](#)

R2024-0272

R2024-0273

R2024-0274

R2024-0275

R2024-0276

All of the following resolutions were referred to the [Public Works, Procurement & Contracting Committee:](#)

R2024-0277

R2024-0278

R2024-0279

R2024-0280

R2024-0281

R2024-0282

R2024-0283

R2024-0284

The following resolutions were referred to the [Economic Development & Planning Committee:](#)

R2024-0285

R2024-0286

R2024-0287

R2024-0288 was referred to [Health, Human Services & Aging Committee.](#)

The following resolutions were referred to the [Education, Environment & Sustainability Committee:](#)

R2024-0289

R2024-0290

R2024-0291

c) COMMITTEE REPORTS AND CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR SECOND READING

All of the following resolutions were “moved to the July 30 council agenda for consideration for third reading adoption”:

R2024-0243

R2024-0244

R2024-0260

R2024-0264

R2024-0265

**d) COMMITTEE REPORTS AND CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR
SECOND READING ADOPTION UNDER SUSPENSION OF RULES**

Turner gave brief information on two candidates who had met with the [Human Resources, Appointments & Equity Committee](#). All council members voted “aye” to reappoint them.

R2024-0233 - Deborah A. Abbott will serve on the Cuyahoga County [Archives Advisory Commission](#) for the term Dec. 1, 2023-Nov. 30, 2027.

R2024-0258 - Bishara Addison will serve on the [Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County](#) for the term July 1, 2024-June 30, 2028.

R2024-0261 - Miller presented information that this resolution will be supported through the park and garage revenue. Simon asked when the last restriping and pavement markings were completed. Matt Rimer from the [Department of Public Works](#) came to the podium and said it was last done in 2017. The resolution was adopted unanimously.

R2024-0262 - Miller said that Nicole English from the Public Works Department recently met with the committee and said that Independence Excavating, Inc. was the best and least expensive of five bids that were presented. Various local and federal funds will support the construction of a shared use path along North Marginal road from East 9th Street to East 55th Street in Cleveland, with expected project completion in early 2026. The resolution was adopted by all members with affirmative votes.

e) CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION FOR THIRD READING ADOPTION

R2024-0242 passed unanimously by voice vote.

**f) CONSIDERATION OF AN ORDINANCE FOR FIRST READING AND
REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE**

O2024-0008 referred to [Human Resources, Appointments & Equity Committee](#).

REPORT BY CLERK ON LEGISLATION WITHDRAWN AT THE REQUEST OF THE

SPONSOR

R2024-0232

MISCELLANEOUS COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council members stated the next meeting dates and times for their respective committees.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

[Schron remarked](#) on the loss of our local [Police Officer Jamieson Ritter](#) and firefighter [Corey Comperatore](#), who was killed in Pennsylvania, and expressed the hope that others can follow their examples of leadership.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

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