

# Documenters

POWERED BY CITY BUREAU & SIGNAL CLEVELAND

## Health, Human Services & Aging Committee

Documenter name: Angela Rush

Agency: Cuyahoga County Council

Date: July 24, 2024

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

---

### Summary

- Much of the work and discussion in this meeting was about homelessness and the housing crisis.
- The Director of Cuyahoga County Department of Health and Human Services says improvements are needed in the procurement processes.

### Follow-Up Questions

- Are we doing enough? What will happen to the temporary housing unit after the transition of patrons?
- Are we putting bandaids on our housing crises, while lining the pockets of developers/vendors?

### Notes

Upon entering the Cuyahoga County Council chambers, there were two handouts available: the [agenda](#) and "[Procedures for Public Comment](#)" dated July 9. I was then asked by the clerk if I planned to comment and was given a parking pass.

**Call to order** 1:06 p.m. by Health, Human Services & Aging Committee (HHSA)

Chair Yvonne M. Conwell.

**Roll Call** included attendees HHSA Chair Yvonne M. Conwell (District 7), Vice Chair Martin Sweeney (District 3), Cheryl Stephens (District 10), Dale Miller (District 2).

A motion was made to excuse the absence of cCouncil Member Meridith M. Turner (District 9). That motion was seconded and approved.

A meeting [quorum](#) was established, however I noticed immediately after that Council

Member Stephens left the meeting only to return at 1:46 p.m.

**A public comment** was given by Loh who was pleased about [planned renovations](#) of the Norma Herr Women's Shelter. Loh feels the conversation should have begun occurring over a year ago due to the increased need. Specifically, Loh spoke on how no long term investment in housing was made during COVID pandemic. Loh is pleased about the new temporary Norma Herr Women's Shelter location on Walton Avenue, but wants funding increased for the site.

A motion was made to approve the previous meeting minutes. That motion was seconded and approved.

### **Presentation**

Lovell Custard, president and CEO of [Murtis Taylor Human Services System](#) was moved up on the agenda. Custard gave an update on their Community Center Capital Repair, Renovation and Expansion project.

The project was originally budgeted for \$892,520.00. \$700,000 was awarded from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Community Grant Fund, leaving a shortfall of \$195,000. Murtis Taylor was prepared to narrow the scope of the project. In addition, increased costs due to inflation will further limit how the center is able to serve residents. Despite the project being on schedule (December 2024 is the projected completion date), a request was made to add back the \$195,000 into the project to mitigate these risks and allow the project to be fully realized.

### **Matters Referred to Committee**

**R2024-0268** - First reading of a resolution awarding up to \$6,100 to [Motivated and Empowered Inc.](#) for the Take the Limits Off Project from the District 9 ARPA Community Grant Fund.

Bianca Crawford, the founder of and executive director of Motivated and Empowered Inc. (ME) gave a presentation on the resolution. Crawford said that ME is an organization removes barriers and limitations of social infrastructure for young people. ME's Take the Limits Off initiative was launched in 2024. The initiative kicked off with three days at Browns Stadium giving 225 young women access to education, resources, mentorship, workforce development, and infant mortality related health care resources. The organization has programs for transitional housing, primary care services and after school programming.

Conwell asked how the organization will continue after the one-time ARPA funding.

Crawford said ME to use funds raised through their recently launched capital campaign.

Crawford requested additional funding be added. Sweeney made a motion to amend the contract to \$10,000, adding the difference of \$3,900 to their funding. After discussion a motion was made to consider the amended resolution at the second reading on July 30. The motion passed.

**R2024-0288** - A resolution for a loan of \$600,000 for a new 50-unit supportive housing building for foster care transition-aged youth experiencing homelessness in Cuyahoga County.

Sarah Parks Jackson, Director of the Cuyahoga County Department of Housing and Community Development gave a presentation on the resolution, including an update on the project. The developer, [CHN Housing](#), indicated that due to increased construction cost, they were experiencing a gap in their funding..

Jennifer Chandler and Laura Boustoni from CHN Housing stepped up to provide more information. Chandler said the project was located between East 45th Street and East 47th, and between Superior and St. Clair avenues, and that it should be completed in September. They expect to begin renting in October. The project is for young adults experiencing homelessness, aged 18 to 24 years old. Total project cost is now \$18.8 million. A motion was made and approved to move the resolution to a second reading by the full council.

## **Discussion**

**A contract with Emerald Development and Economic Network, Inc.** for \$875,000 renovation of the Norma Herr Women's Shelter temporary location, 2710 Walton Ave.

Presenting on the contract was David Merriman, Director of the Cuyahoga County Department of Health and Human Services; Melissa Sirack, Director of the Cuyahoga County Office of Homeless Services; Elaine Gimmel, Executive Director of [EDEN, Inc.](#); and Richard Carr, Director of Real Estate Development & Construction for EDEN, Inc.

Merriman said the facility will include ADA accessibility, a hot room for bed bug treatment, outdoor space with a gazebo, security and surveillance. The grant budget includes the following:

- Hard Construction cost \$820,000
- Architectural and inspection fees \$15,000
- Kitchen equipment and items \$35,000
- Furniture/Fixtures/Equipment \$5,000

Relocation will take place within a three-day period. Transitional planning is ongoing. The 102 guests will return to a new and expanded building on Payne avenue.

Council member Miller asked ([YouTube at 51:25](#)), "What is going to happen to this facility after the three years or whatever the amount of length of time it's done?"

Gimmle answered that the county will have a right of first refusal on the facilities' use moving forward.

Merriman asked for a sense of urgency with the winter weather coming. He asked that council suspend the rules and pass this resolution on the first reading.

The resolution will be heard at the Tuesday, July 30 council meeting.

**An amendment to a master contract with various providers for the Community Social Services Program** in order to add funds and additional vendors for the period of 1/1/2024-12/31/2025.

Merriman asked for passage on the first reading due to urgency for sustaining the program through the end of the year.

Merriman said that problems with the procurement process are causing delays. Natasha Petrocola, Director of Cuyahoga County Division of Senior and Adult Services, gave an overview of the process for allocating monies. She said that with master plan contracts, one vendor can delay the contract for everyone in the master contract.

Miller mentioned the complication for managing 33 vendors and said he was willing to push to move the passage next Tuesday's council meeting.

---

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