

Westshore Council of Governments Meeting
Bay Village City Hall
Wednesday, August 12, 2020

Mayor Koomar called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Present for the meeting were Mayor Koomar (Bay Village), Mayor Cooney (Fairview Park), Mayor Bobst (Rocky River), Mayor George (Lakewood) and Mayor Clough (Westlake). Also in attendance: Fiscal Officer, Renee Mahoney, and State Representative Dave Greenspan, 16th District, Michelle Pomerantz, Director, Department of Regional Collaboration, Cuyahoga County, and Judith Weiss, LWV. Mayor Kennedy (North Olmsted) was absent.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the March 11, 2020 meeting were distributed for review and approval. Mayor Cooney moved to approve the minutes. Mayor Bobst seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

Fiscal Officer's Report: Renee Mahoney distributed the June Financials for the WEB. They're on budget. She will present the State's agreed upon procedure at the next meeting following the Auditors final report. Web will begin logging their public records requests at the recommendation of the Auditors.

Commission Reports:

RTA - Mayor Clough reports that RTA received \$111 million from the federal government due to reduced riders and revenue. The financial situation looks good for the rest of this year, and going into next year. India Birdsong, General Manager and CEO of RTA, will be returning to work in September. We will get her on the agenda for an upcoming COG meeting.

Representative Greenspan noted that \$70 million is appropriated for RTA each year by the GRF. He is working with Senator Dolan to advocate for public transportation to provide funding.

NOACA - Mayor Bobst reported the Board and staff of NOACA finalized a racial equity statement which will be available on the NOACA website. The GIS portal is up and running on the website and contains layers of data. It includes a training module for staff. NOACA is looking for community input on the Long Range Transportation Plan. Flyers were sent to communities to promote the virtual Town Hall meeting.

Land Bank - Mayor George noted that she has contacted Executive Budish about being appointed as the COG representative. To date she has not heard back.

County Planning Commission – Mayor Bobst shared that Shawn Leininger, former Cuyahoga County Planning Commission Executive Director, has been hired by the City of Lakewood and the county's Executive Director position is currently open. Patrick Hewitt is serving as the county's Interim Executive Director. Several

candidates are being considered at this time. Mayor Bobst is on the selection committee and the interview process will begin soon.

The county data book has been released which contains information on demographics, economic information transportation, land use, and housing. It will be updated annually. The information is currently static, but will become interactive in the future.

Five (5) community planning awards were released. Rocky River received one. The Cuyahoga County Commission is currently receiving RFQ's for the Lakefront access plan to find a consultant to work with the Planning Commission and other partners. Funding will come from NOACA and the county.

Mayor Bobst would like to have a discussion about state and national bike routes that run along the lakefront.

Cuyahoga County Mayors & Managers Association – Representative Greenspan spoke about Tim Cosgrove updating the CARES Act. The state Treasury still has money available, but it must be spent by October 30, 2020. There was discussion on what the funds can be used for. Representative Greenspan asks that cities have a Council Resolution to support the use of funds for sanitizing purposes, for auditing. Renee Mahoney asked if she should be applying for Cares Act, which can be used for teleworking, or for FEMA funds. Representative Greenspan noted additional funds still need to be appropriated. Michelle Pomerantz added that the CARES Act fund can be used to offset funds received from FEMA. Renee mentioned CARES & FEMA funds can only be used on PPE, not on wages. It is easier to apply for CARES Act funds. Mayor Cooney added Tim Cosgrove is looking at loosening up of CARES Act funds that can be used for the Public Safety forces. Dave Greenspan mentioned a letter sent to the Treasury asking for a broader use of the CARES Act dollars. Mayor Bobst added that in Rocky River there are significant losses across every department, in just 4 months' time.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Representative Greenspan talked about the Capital budget. In January he met with the Chair of the Finance Committee to go through projects already submitted. Capital Projects were submitted, then Covid hit when they were ready to move the bill. Now the Speaker is reluctant to move forward on the capital budget because it is supported by issuance of debt. The Senate took a different approach. Re-appropriated funds for projects already approved in our area were able to be resecured. He will be speaking to the House Speaker soon about the Capital Budget. Mayor Bobst added that these projects spur growth and add to the local economy.

Dave Greenspan spoke about legislation. From January to June they were active legislatively. They are currently on summer recess and are due back after Labor Day. He mentioned that when Covid hit everything slowed down. They may be going back before September.

Rep. Greenspan introduced a Land Bank bill, however there are no funds available at this time for the Land Bank.

Education funding has been cut by the Governor by \$300 million. Rep. Greenspan and Senator Dolan were able to restore funding, so no district loses more than 6%

Representative Greenspan responded to Mayor Koomar's question about the close of the fiscal year, ending June 30th, stating that the impact on the state operating budget was less than first anticipated, as up until COVID-19 hit revenues were stronger than expected. The financial impact for the next cycle has the state projecting a deficit and use of the Rainy Day fund is expected. The Governor is requesting a 20% reduction in current costs. Representative Greenspan noted that 90% of the budget goes to education, incarceration, and Medicaid. The economy is coming back. Currently unemployment is at 10%, down from 26%. Getting it back to 4% will be a challenge. Revenues are coming back stronger and the governor is trying to control expenses. Dave spoke about opportunities to bring jobs back to Ohio and efforts with Jobs Ohio.

Mayor Bobst thanked Dave Greenspan for his leadership. The group all expressed appreciation for his efforts on behalf of our area.

Michelle Pomerantz, Director, Department of Regional Collaboration, Cuyahoga County, talked about the county working to respond to the pandemic. They are gathering and distributing PPE. Putting together loan programs, assisting small businesses, rental assistance, and dealing with businesses not in compliance with the mask directive. They're trying to determine what the CARES Act dollars can and cannot be spent on. Working to keep arts and entertainment here once Covid ends. She is working as the liaison with county council, which is on break until September 15th, to support digital learning for districts within the county, working on hot spots and Wi-Fi access. They are working with Rep. Greenspan, the Governor, and the Ohio House & Senate regarding election opportunities to ensure a safe and fair election in November.

On the state level they are supporting the LEEDCO wind turbine project in Lake Erie.

On the Federal level they had a call with Sen. Portman call regarding the Heroes Act.

County offices – some are open, some aren't. Many employees are working from home. The Fiscal Office is open with screening process in place, with employees working staggered shifts. The Courts are closed, as is the office for a concealed carry license. Some departments opened July 10th. Several mayors expressed concern that residents are unable to reach certain departments/offices to conduct business and there is no way to leave messages. Michele asked cities to email her if a specific resident request is made and she will assist. She also noted that email is the best way to reach a department at this time.

Rep. Greenspan mentioned that the BMV has extended its December 1 deadline for driver's licenses, E-checks and tags. He feels that the deadline may be extended further.

Michelle spoke about the Census numbers and distributed a chart showing local numbers as compared to the 2010 numbers. The Sept. 30th deadline (originally the end of July) is coming and she asked cities to remind their residents of the need to complete the 2020 Census. They are hoping to get the deadline extended until October 31st. The numbers affect monies distributed for FEMA, Bridges and roads, special education, & Medicaid. Currently Bay Village has the highest number of responses in the county at 86.5%. On August 25th there will be a Cuyahoga County Mayors & Managers summit on the Census. The county will be offering PPE, and materials if a community wants to do door knocking and canvassing. Let Michelle know if we need anything to assist. Because of the Census 2010 numbers Cuyahoga County qualified for some direct CARES Act funds.

Judith Weiss of the LWV asked how the county is working with the Board of Elections to ensure a safe election. Michelle Pomerantz spoke about HB680, which as originally written was not a good bill. The House improved the

legislation. There were 2 main changes that impact voters. First, the bill requires the Secretary of State to send out the mail-in ballot form (not requiring it to be requested). Ballot must be sent back 3 days prior to the election, otherwise the Postal Service cannot guarantee delivery. The date needs to be changed to 7 days before the election to give voters enough time to fill out & return. They are hoping to use CARES Act funds to pay return postage on ballots. They need to ensure PPE equipment and safety measures are in place at the polls. Working with Secretary of State Frank LaRose to make sure enough PPE & drop boxes are available. The County Council and County Executive agree there are not enough poll workers. County workers can work the polls on Election Day without any loss in pay. Dave Greenspan mentioned that the big issue for the March Primary, which changed the voting date to April, was that many poll workers called in sick the weekend before the Primary.

Michelle Pomerantz told the group she appreciates being invited to attend.

There being no further business, Mayor Koomar adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m., whereupon the Mayors convened into Executive Session to discuss personnel.

The next meeting of the Westshore COG is scheduled for Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. Meetings for the remainder of 2020 will be held in the Community Room at the Bay Village Police Station, 28000 Wolf Rd.