

GOOD AFTERNOON.

I AM PLEASED TO COME BEFORE YOU TO PRESENT OUR PROPOSED 2020-2021 BUDGET. WE ARE DELIVERING A BALANCED BUDGET. WE ALSO HAVE PROPOSED UTILIZING A SMALL AMOUNT OF RESERVES FOR TARGETED INVESTMENTS.

WHAT YOU HAVE BEFORE YOU TODAY IS A SUBSTANTIVE PLAN TO ADDRESS SOME OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ISSUES THAT OUR COUNTY FACES.

I WANT TO SAY BEFORE I GET INTO SPECIFICS THAT THIS BUDGET COULD NOT HAVE COME TOGETHER WITHOUT THE GOOD WORK FROM MEMBERS OF MY STAFF AND FROM COUNCIL LEADERSHIP AND STAFF. WE HAVE WORKED DILIGENTLY AND COLLABORATIVELY TO COME UP WITH STRONG SOLUTIONS THAT WE BELIEVE WILL ADDRESS SOME LONG-STANDING ISSUES.

I'D LIKE TO THANK COUNCIL PRESIDENT DAN BRADY AND FINANCE AND BUDGETING CHAIR DALE MILLER FOR THEIR INPUT AND SUPPORT. I'D LIKE TO THANK CHIEF OF STAFF BILL MASON, OFFICE OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR MAGGIE KEENAN, AND OUR CHIEFS AND DIRECTORS FOR THEIR GREAT HELP.

A BUDGET SHOULD REFLECT OUR PRIORITIES. WHEN I LOOK AT A BUDGET FOR ANY CYCLE I ASK MYSELF – WHAT IS THE WORK THAT WE WANT TO DO, AND HAVE TO DO?

DESPITE CONSISTENTLY INCREASING COSTS, IN THIS BUDGET WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HOLD MOST OF OUR PROGRAMS AS IS. OUR PROGRAMS ARE WORKING, AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO FUND THEM.

TWO AREAS THOUGH, NEED EVEN MORE SUPPORT AND ATTENTION, EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE ALREADY DEVOTED MANY **MANY** RESOURCES TOWARDS THEM – THESE TWO ARE OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM, SPECIFICALLY OUR JAIL, AND SERVICES FOR PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN.

SO, LET'S START WITH CRIMINAL JUSTICE. I'VE SAID IT BEFORE, BUT IT BEARS REPEATING. WE ARE FULLY COMMITTED TO MAKING THE JAIL SAFE BOTH FOR THE INMATES AND FOR OUR STAFF. WE ARE MAKING VERY STRONG PROGRESS ON THIS FRONT. BUT WE NEED TO DO MORE, AND WE MUST DIRECT MORE FUNDS TO THESE EFFORTS.

OVERCROWDING IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST ISSUES WE FACE, AND WE ARE NOT ALONE IN THIS – JAILS ACROSS THE COUNTRY STRUGGLE WITH THIS.

OUR BUDGET INCREASES SUPPORT FOR STRATEGIES THAT WILL HELP REDUCE THE POPULATION.

I WILL SAY THAT WE HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS WITH THE JAIL POPULATION NUMBERS WHICH ARE NOW TRENDING BELOW 1900 CONSISTENTLY. JUST TODAY THEY ARE AT 1824 BUT WE HAVE TO DO MORE AND BETTER. WE ARE COMMITTED TO GETTING THE POPULATION DOWN TO ITS RATED CAPACITY OF 1765.

BUT IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT REDUCING THE NUMBERS. IT'S ABOUT KEEPING PEOPLE WHO SHOULDN'T BE IN OUR JAIL, OUT OF JAIL.

THIS BUDGET FUNDS A BAIL REFORM INITIATIVE THAT WILL REDUCE THE NUMBER OF INMATES IN THE COUNTY JAIL WHO HAVE BEEN KEPT IN JAIL SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY CANNOT PAY EVEN A SMALL BAIL BOND. PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT DANGEROUS AND ARE VERY LIKELY TO APPEAR AT THEIR COURT DATES

SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN THE COMMUNITY TO KEEP THEIR JOBS AND TO STAY CONNECTED WITH THEIR FAMILIES. THESE EFFORTS WILL INCLUDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR PRE-TRIAL SERVICES AND ELECTRONIC MONITORING.

THIS BUDGET ALSO INCLUDES FUNDS FOR DIVERSION PROGRAMMING. TOO MANY OF OUR INMATES STRUGGLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION ISSUES. IN FACT, THE JAIL HAS BECOME THE DEFAULT REPOSITORY FOR THOSE WHO ARE ADDICTED OR MENTALLY ILL. THAT'S NOT THE WAY IT SHOULD BE. THE JAIL IS NO PLACE FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS OR ADDICTION. SO, I AM PROPOSING FUNDING TO DIVERT MANY OF THESE INDIVIDUALS FROM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, SO THEY CAN GET THE TREATMENT AND SERVICES THEY NEED TO IMPROVE THEIR LIVES AND TO STOP THEM FROM CYCLING IN AND OUT OF THE JAIL.

OUR DRUG COURTS DO A GREAT JOB OF IDENTIFYING AND FINDING COMMUNITY SUPPORTS FOR DRUG-ADDICTED DEFENDANTS. THIS BUDGET ADDS SUPPORT FOR AN ADDITIONAL DRUG COURT.

IN ADDITION TO INCREASED FUNDING FOR BAIL REFORM AND DIVERSION PROGRAMMING DESIGNED TO REDUCE OUR JAIL POPULATION. THIS BUDGET ALSO ADDS FUNDS FOR ADDITIONAL CORRECTION OFFICERS AT THE JAIL, TO IMPROVE SAFETY FOR OUR INMATES AND STAFF, AND TO REDUCE THE USE OF RED-ZONING. WE MUST CONTINUE TO ENSURE ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR CORRECTIONS STAFF, MEDICAL CARE, AND STRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENTS AT THE JAIL. AND WE ARE ADDING FUNDS TO HIRE ADDITIONAL SHERIFF DEPUTIES TO PROVIDE INMATE TRANSPORTATION AS WELL AS JUSTICE CENTER SECURITY.

I SAID AT THE OUTSET THAT THERE WERE TWO PRIMARY AREAS RECEIVING EXTRA RESOURCES IN THE BUDGET. I'VE ADDRESSED THE FIRST; THE SECOND IS CHILDREN PROTECTIVE SERVICES. WE HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCING A HUGE INCREASE IN THE NUMBERS OF ABUSE, DEPENDENCY, AND NEGLECT FILINGS COMING TO THE COUNTY. THAT IN TURN INCREASES THE NEED FOR RESOURCES TO INVESTIGATE AND ADDRESS THESE CASES. THIS BUDGET PROVIDES ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR STAFF FOR OUR DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES. WE ARE ALSO SEEKING ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THE PROCESUTOR'S OFFICE, AND THE PUBLIC DEFENDER, TO ADD PERSONNEL TO RESPOND TO THESE INCREASING NUMBERS OF CHILD-RELATED CASES.

MANY OF YOU ARE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT WE HAVE RECORD NUMBERS OF CHILDREN IN OUR CUSTODY AND CARE. WE'RE UP TO ABOUT 2900, THE MOST IN A DECADE. AND THAT IS CAUSING OUR COSTS FOR BOARD AND CARE TO SKYROCKET. WE'RE CURRENTLY SPENDING MORE THAN \$54 MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR, AND WE'VE ADDED SIX MILLION DOLLARS TO THE BUDGET TO TAKE CARE OF THESE GROWING NUMBERS OF CHILDREN.

WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED ALL THIS, AND STILL PRESENTED A BALANCED BUDGET, BY CAREFUL AND RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT. WE'VE MADE A SMALL DRAW ON OUR RESERVES, BUT WE ARE STILL AT 29%, WELL ABOVE THE MANDATED 25%. THIS BUDGET WILL GET US THROUGH THE NEXT TWO YEARS IN GOOD SHAPE.

BUT I ALSO WANT TO BRIEFLY ADDRESS THE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES LEVY WHICH ENDS NEXT YEAR, AND WHICH RELATES TO OUR BUDGET AND PRIORITIES. THE 20-21 BUDGET IS BASED ON THE EXISTING MILLAGE FOR THE LEVY. BUT WE NEED TO EXAMINE THIS CRUCIAL SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF OUR COUNTY RESIDENTS. IN ORDER TO MAKE OUR HEALTH AND

HUMAN SERVICES BUDGET BALANCED WE CONTINUE TO HAVE TO DRAW DOWN RESERVES FROM THIS FUND, AND THAT IS NOT SUSTAINABLE. AS COSTS STEADILY RISE, THE CURRENT LEVEL OF FUNDING WE HAVE FOR HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SIMPLY IS NOT ENOUGH FOR THE INCREASING NEEDS WE HAVE AS A COUNTY.

I'LL GIVE YOU THREE EXAMPLES. FIRST, IF WE WANT TO CONTINUE FUNDING OUR UPK SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 3 AND 4 YEARS OLDS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY WHO OTHERWISE COULDN'T AFFORD A HIGH-QUALITY PRE-K EDUCATION, AN EDUCATION THAT WILL SET THEM UP FOR SUCCESS THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES, THEN WE WILL NEED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.

SECOND, AS I MENTIONED EARLIER, OUR COSTS FOR BOARD AND CARE FOR OUR RECORD NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM ARE THROUGH THE ROOF AND THEY CONTINUE TO GROW. WE CAN'T IGNORE THEM, WE HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF THEM. OUR CHILDREN DESERVE OUR SUPPORT. AND THAT WILL REQUIRE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.

THIRD, JUST AS WE ARE COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING OUR YOUNGEST, WE ARE ALSO COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING OUR ELDEST. OUR POPULATION, LIKE THE POPULATION ACROSS THE COUNTRY, IS AGING. WE ARE COMMITTED TO GIVING OUR ELDER ADULTS THE SUPPORT THEY NEED TO LIVE SAFELY AND INDEPENDENTLY, AND WE NEED MORE FUNDING TO SUPPORT THE INCREASED DEMAND HERE.

SO, WHILE THIS BUDGET THAT I AM PRESENTING TO YOU IS BALANCED, PLEASE KNOW THAT I BELIEVE, AND I KNOW COUNCIL ALSO BELIEVES, THAT WE WILL SOON NEED TO ADDRESS THE INCREASED HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE NEEDS OF OUR COUNTY.

FINALLY, I WANT TO SAY THIS. THE CHALLENGES OUR COUNTY FACES ARE LARGE, BUT THEY ARE NOT INSURMOUNTABLE. TOGETHER WE CAN HELP OUR RESIDENTS LIVE THEIR BEST POSSIBLE LIVES; TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE CUYAHOGA COUNTY A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE TO SUCCEED AND THRIVE NO MATTER THEIR ZIP CODE.

THANK YOU.