

**Cuyahoga County Council
Health Human Services & Aging Committee**

Dan Brady, Chair
Yvonne Conwell, Vice Chair

Minutes

Thursday, April 7, 2011

1:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

- I. Call to Order – 1:05 p.m.
- II. Roll Call – Members Present: Dan Brady, Yvonne Conwell, Mike Gallagher; Pernel Jones, Jr. arrived at 1:15 p.m.
- III. Approval of Minutes of March 31: unanimously approved
- IV. Public Comment related to Agenda: none
- V. Presentations
 - a. Employment & Family Services – Jacquelon Ward, Interim Director – discussed EFS mission, core values, goals, and programs; Medicaid, Food Assistance (SNAP); Ohio Works First; Child Care; Prevention, Retention and Contingency Funds; 1 in 4 county residents receive some type of benefit from EFS; noted long-term mandates; department’s issues, opportunities and challenges
- VI. Public Comment: General
 - a. Nina McLellan – Help in Hard Times Task Force commented on the state budget and its impact on the county; the task force is an informal group – that speaks up for families who should receive cash assistance; the task force has specific concerns about the 3 year cutoff for funding.
 - b. Carmen Gray – A Peace of Mind – operates community advocacy service for people who need assistance navigating the health and human services system; concerns about people losing medical; lack of transportation; concern about voicemail access or not getting back in time; confidentiality concerns when public offices call out client’s names
 - c. Valerie Robinson – Help in Hard Times; Stop Targeting Ohio’s Poor – member of EFS community advisory board; she would like to serve on a Health and Human Services Advisory Board and expressed concerns about the percentage of children in Cuyahoga County (25%) and in Cleveland (50%) living in poverty

- VII. Rick Werner, Director of Health and Human Services addressed some of the comments
- a. length of time on cash assistance; feds set 5 year limit; states allowed to work limit; OGA set a initial 3 yr limit; counties did not have right to change; but county did set up how 2 year hardship extensions would be handled; recommends discussions take place in EFS community advisory board
 - b. inconsistent enforcement of timelines – trying to do level best to ensure consistent enforcement; do have customer service people; can be informal or formal – if there are issues we do have a list of people to contact; voicemail access – caseloads are bigger takes longer to; NFSC Managers – should be called if case workers are not getting back to people
 - c. Confidentiality – could consider going to numbering system; waiting rooms – some are large and some are compact
 - d. HHS Advisory Board – that was a transition recommendation; we are working on this; FCFC serves as proxy; structure and meetings serve as place
 - e. Child Poverty is an issue we do not raise enough; county executive has expressed concerns and set benchmarks he hopes to achieve
 - f. Issue of Mt. Pleasant closing is a function of decreasing revenues to neighborhood service centers; Mt. Pleasant lease is coming up; county has been there 10 years; offices throughout the community expanded in a time of more money; county can no longer sustain all offices
 - g. Posting of Department Directors of CFS, EFS, DSAS, CSEA, - hopefully confirm all by end of summer
- VIII. Miscellaneous Business: Council Member Jones – requested a tour of EFS. Mr. Werner indicated that the HHS staff would arrange for visits and tours by Council members for the major HHS offices; most likely to be scheduled this summer.
- IX. Adjournment – 2:45 p.m.