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Akron City Council Meeting

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Agency: Akron City Council

Date: Jan. 22, 2024

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Summary

- Resolution designating Jan. 22-26 as Gun Violence Survivors Week passed unanimously
- Resolution adopting the 2024 Capital Investment and Community Development Program faced public scrutiny. Discussion will continue on Jan. 29; officials expect the budget to be finalized by Feb. 15. [See budget details here.](#)
- At 2:30 p.m. next Monday, the Summa Health System CEO will present details concerning the system's proposed buyout.

Follow-Up Questions

- What actions can council take in order to gather public feedback regarding the Capital Investment Budget?
- What can be done to decrease the rate of rising gun violence in our community?

Meeting roundup

Akronites trudged through snow-covered streets and braved chilly temperatures to attend this City Council Meeting. Throughout the meeting, citizens voiced opposition to new public comment rules. Periodically throughout the meeting, citizens voiced opinions about everything from gun violence prevention to budget reform.

Several citizens also expressed concerns regarding the Capital Investment Budget.

Perhaps the most urgent issue to our community is the pending [acquisition](#) of Summa Health Care System by venture capitalists HATCo. Council Member James Hardy shared an emotional testimony of the devastating impact cancer had on his family. His father passed away from cancer first leaving his grieving mother with mounting medical debt only to pass away of lung and breast cancer. He detailed how community based models, like Summa, are legally required to provide charity care and ultimately support the needs of the communities they serve.

Hardy expressed opposition regarding the sale of Summa Healthcare System, currently a non-profit hospital, to the venture capitalist firm HATCo. "Healthcare is a public good not a market commodity," he said. He also "morally objects to the use of Summa's staff and patients as 'guinea pigs' for venture capitalists." Universal healthcare or a county system similar to Cuyahoga County's MetroHealth were a couple of the solutions Hardy offered. He requested that the buyout be paused, saying "Summa owes Akron a transparent process." As his comments passionately came to a close he urged citizens to reflect on the fact that the decisions of today impact the next seven generations.

Council Member Linda F.R. Omobien offered additional details regarding a meeting that will be held Monday at 2:30 p.m. with the Summa Health System CEO. He will present details regarding the acquisition to council.

Additionally, Chief of Strategy, Nannette Pitt share Mayor Shammias Malik's belief in Summa Health System's board. She also expressed the mayor's desire to serve as a "conversation partner" for community members during this time.

Notes

- [Agenda can be seen here.](#)
- Roll call began at 6:30 p.m. All council members were present.
- Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance
- Public comments:
 - Resident 1 – Gun Violence Survivor Week request for observance and call to action to support victims and their families as well as emotional, mental and healthcare needs
 - Resident 2 – Call to action to council to stop passing vague resolutions and hear the voices of people in light of the new [public comment rules](#).
 - Citizen 3 –Angela Dodson, a mother, in support of a gun sense initiative
 - Citizen 4 – Support for Palestine.

FIRST READING AND REFERRED: UP FOR PUBLIC HEARING JAN. 22

RESOLUTION approving the renewal application of Evelia Ramos to have agricultural property at 1080 St. Michaels Ave. placed in an “agricultural district” pursuant to Revised Code Section 929.01, et seq.; and declaring an emergency. (1/8/2024)

- Passed 12-0
- Public hearing comment regarding projects for low-income and non-European citizens

RESOLUTION approving, with modification, the renewal application of Donald E. and Carol A. Bessemer to have agricultural property on 1543 Collier Road placed in an “agricultural district” pursuant to Revised Code Section 929.01, et seq.; and declaring an emergency. (1/8/2024)

- Passed 12-0
- Public hearing comment – requested more education and opportunities for non-Europeans
- Ward 4 Council Member Jan Davis said that the Bessemer family helped take care of her family as well as the neighborhood.

RESOLUTION adopting the 2024 Capital Investment and Community Development Program, also known as the Capital Investment Budget; and declaring an emergency. (1/8/2024)

- Referred until Jan. 29
 - Deadline for passage is Feb. 15.
- Proposal of funds to be used for Patterson Park, new vehicles for Akron Police and Fire Departments , East Exchange Street construction
- Public hearing comments – Resident wanted to know where and how funds have been distributed and requested that money be put back into the community. A request was also made by Fran Wilson {Editor’s note: Wilson is an Akron Documenter} to schedule a town hall meeting to review highlights of the 33-page budget. Another person asked council to prioritize how, when, and where things are being done.

FIRST READING AND REFERRED:

ORDINANCE authorizing the Director of Public Service or his designee to enter into the private developer agreement between Copley-Fairlawn City School District and the City of Akron to construct sanitary sewer improvements for Copley High School; and declaring an emergency.

- Passed 12-0

ORDINANCE authorizing the Director of Public Service or his designee to enter into a contract or contracts for construction management services for the Gorge Dam Removal – Bank Stabilization; and declaring an emergency.

- Put on the consent agenda

NEW LEGISLATION

PUBLIC SERVICE: Chair Donnie Kammer, Ward 7

ORDINANCE authorizing the Director of Public Service or his designee to enter into a contract or contracts with Ruhlin Co. for professional engineering services to provide construction management services for Water Capital projects; and declaring an emergency.

- Put on the consent agenda

ORDINANCE authorizing the Director of Public Service or his designee to enter into a consent agreement with the Ohio Director of Transportation for the signage replacement on various routes throughout Akron; and declaring an emergency.

- Put on the consent agenda

ORDINANCE authorizing the Director of Public Service or his designee to enter into a contract or contracts with the Ohio Director of Transportation to construct noise walls along I-77 from Waterloo Road to Lovers Lane in Akron; and declaring an emergency

- Put on the consent agenda

PUBLIC SAFETY: Chair Brad McKittrick, Ward 6

ORDINANCE authorizing the Mayor or his designee to enter into a contract, without the formality of publicly advertising for bids, with Summa Health to provide the education and training necessary for Fire Division employees to achieve the required paramedic certification; and declaring an emergency.

- Comments by McKittrick – will allow new paramedics to have training
- Passed 12-0

ORDINANCE authorizing the Mayor, or his designee, without the formality of advertising for bids, to enter into a contract or contracts with Cuyahoga Falls for the use of its training center and firing range by the Akron Police Department; and declaring an emergency.

- Comments by McKittrick – positive training for APD
- Passed 12-0

RESOLUTION recognizing Jan. 22 to Jan. 26 as Gun Violence Survivors Week;

and declaring an emergency.

- Comments by Council Member Eric Garrett Sr. - Community activist Angela Joyce reached out to him regarding the matter. Garrett's son was a gun violence victim, and he wanted to bring awareness to the 633 gun violence victims in Akron in 2023.
- Passed 12-0

COUNCIL MEMBER, ADMINISTRATION REMARKS

Ward 8 representative James Hardy spoke about the proposed sale of [Summa Health system](#):

- Both of his parents died from cancer
- His father passed away first, leaving his mother financially responsible for his remaining care costs
- "Healthcare should be a public good, not a market commodity," he said.
- He opposes the sale of Summa Healthcare System to HATCo on moral grounds
 - Patients and staff shouldn't be "venture capitalist guinea pigs," he said.
- "Private equity has exploited healthcare," he said, noting that such companies are "profit driven."
 - Shared example of other communities that have a similar profit-driven model
 - Changes are slow but reflect the pressure to return funds to investors
- He suggested possible solutions
 - Universal healthcare
 - County system like [MetroHealth](#) in Cuyahoga County
- Requested a pause on the buyout process
 - "Summa owes Akron a transparent process," he said
 - Decisions today impact the next seven generations, he said.

At-large Council Member Linda F.R. Omobien said that the Summa CEO will present buyout details to council Monday at 2:30 p.m.

Chief of Strategy [Nanette Pitt](#) share these thoughts:

- Mayor Shammass Malik commends APD Detective Larry Rhodabeck for

his heroism Jan. 12 while saving [a baby from an overdose](#). She also said that Malik trusts the Summa Health System board but wants to serve as a “conversation partner” for Akron.

Notes to reader: Unless quotation marks are used, all text is paraphrased. If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at documenters@signalakron.org with "Correction Request" in the subject line.