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Finance, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

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Agency: [Cleveland City Council](#)

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Summary

- The council is supportive of promoting arts and culture.
- Council is interested in how state legislation will affect educational institutions in the city.
- Casino revenue funds will be allowed to support a wider range of projects *[Editor's note: Learn more about [the changes](#) to council's use of these funds, and read about the [bureaucratic "black hole"](#) that traps much of the money and keeps neighborhood groups waiting for their promised money for months and sometimes years].*

Follow-Up Questions

- How are the events planned by the Downtown Cleveland Alliance promoted to all 17 wards?
- Who will define "proper public purpose" regarding council's use of casino revenue funds, and when?
- Do council members work with department chairs and other stakeholders to map a process for implementing legislation before passage?

Notes

Finance, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee



[Blaine A. Griffin](#)

[Kerry McCormack](#)

[Kevin L. Bishop](#)

[Kevin Conwell](#)

[Anthony T. Hairston](#)



Brian Kazy

Michael D. Polensek

Jasmin Santana

Jenny Spencer

The meeting was opened on time with all committee members present except Kevin Bishop, who joined later, and Kerry McCormack. Also attending were Council Members Richard Starr and Joseph Jones.

The [agenda](#) was followed as posted. Three [emergency ordinances](#) and two [resolutions](#) were presented for reading at council's full meeting later this evening. The order of presentation was switched to accommodate the presenters. The items were presented as follows:

[Emergency Ordinance 35-2023](#) was moved by the committee to be heard by council to renew the contract with Downtown Cleveland Alliance to provide multiple services for North Coast Harbor. John Hoose, Port Control, and Michael Deemer from the Downtown Cleveland Alliance presented.

Council member comments

Griffin asked for areas that the Downtown Cleveland Alliance is responsible for maintaining. Jones asked for a map of those areas and the type of programming that the organization provides.

The presenters responded that Voinovich Park is the main area for programming. Some events mentioned were IceFest, fireworks and fishing with Cleveland police officers. Deemer said these are not big events, and they are family friendly.

Griffin clarified that the maintenance area does not include the water, only the docks, pier, marina and walking area between the Great Lakes Science Center and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

Deemer said the services have been contracted for 12 years. He said that the Clean and Safe Ambassadors program for North Coast Harbor is funded through this contract.

[Emergency Ordinance 31-2023](#) was moved by the committee to be heard by council to

“apply and accept” a grant from the Cleveland Foundation Arts, Culture and Creative Economy Grant Program in the amount of \$250,000. Joyce Pan Huang, director of City Planning, explained that the grant dollars would be used to pay salaries.

President Griffin said that this request was also heard by the Development, Planning & Sustainability Committee. He asked that all council members be added as co-sponsors of the legislation.

Council member comments

Council Member Anthony Hairston asked about the timeframe for funding the project. He said that the project was presented for three years, but the grant would be for two years.

Huang responded that fundraising would be necessary for the third year of the project. Assistant Director of Law Kevin Roberts responded that there is not a timeframe specified that would require any change to the legislation as written.

Hairston also asked how the position would be advertised. Huang said that the job(s) will be posted on www.governmentjobs.com. She added that an individual, not an organization, will be hired for the consultant position. This individual will determine the proper use of [American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\)](#) funds for the arts.

Hairston recommended that Council Member Conwell be on the selection committee. Council Member Jones also asked to be on the committee.

[Emergency Ordinance 133-2023](#) was moved by the committee to be heard by council to amend portions of Ordinance No. 869-13 regarding how council members may spend casino revenue funds.

Council member comments

Council Member Richard Starr explained that the amendment will allow for council members to use the casino revenue funds to support activities such as youth sports teams. He also asked why the casino revenue funds are not a separate line item from the [General Fund](#).

President Griffin reminded the council members: “There are guardrails.” He also said that “proper public purpose” must be defined.

Council Member Spencer asked when the changes would go into effect. Griffin said the legislation would take effect no later than 30 days after council passes it. Spencer also

asked if there would be more collaboration with city departments regarding the city's contracting process. Several council members expressed concern about how legislation is implemented once it is passed. Griffin said a plan for that collaboration -- which he called process mapping -- is in the works and would be shared with council members.

It was clarified that this amendment only addresses the use of funds and not the percentage of funds that council members receive. Some council members expressed support for additional legislation to increase the amount of casino revenue funds allocated to council members.

[Resolution 189-2023](#) was moved by the committee to be heard by council in support of Universal Healthcare and Medicare for All.

[Resolution 205-2023](#) was moved by the committee to be heard by the council opposing Ohio Senate Bill 1. This bill would give the governor duties currently held by the elected members of the State Board of Education. Griffin asked that all council members be added as supporters of the resolution.

Council member comments

Starr said, "I think it is an attack on public education.... It will be detrimental to the city." He said he and Council Member Conwell plan to attend the hearing tomorrow in Columbus.

Conwell said this "takes the voice of the people out." He said that lobbyists may have more power to direct funding. Jones agreed with Conwell that the citizens elect school board members, saying this is "theft of democracy." Jones also said that politicians, citizens and corporate America are all at fault for the state of education in Ohio [*Editor's note: the Cleveland mayor appoints school board members, unlike every other municipal school board in Ohio.* [Signal Cleveland's Paul Rochford breaks down that history](#)].

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