

**Cuyahoga Falls City Council
Minutes of the Community Development Committee**

May 8, 2023

Will Members: Brian Ashton, Chair
Michael Brillhart
Adam Miller

Mr. Ashton called the meeting to order at 6:46 p.m. All members were present.

The minutes of the March 20, 2023 Community Development Committee were approved as written.

Legislation Discussed:

Temp. Res. B-47

Discussion:

Temp. Res. B-47

A resolution in support of the development of a Welcoming Workforce Coalition in the City of Cuyahoga Falls, and declaring an emergency.

Ms. Diana Colavecchio, Community Development Committee, and Tanya Butler, founder of Rise Together, presented Temporary Ordinance B-28 to Council. It is predicted that by the year 2030, there will be a national labor shortage of 80.1 million jobs due to retirement, career change, and individuals choosing to leave the labor market. The United States is experiencing a decline in population growth that will make it difficult to fill these predicted labor shortages. The Fund for our Economic Future has predicted that Northeast Ohio will experience a labor shortage that is 13% higher than the national average. International newcomers have and will continue to be the main source of population growth across the country and throughout the State of Ohio.

The City of Cuyahoga Falls recognizes the importance of attracting and retaining international newcomers to its community and creating a strategic plan to provide them with the resources and support necessary to become engaged members of its local workforce. Council previously authorized funding for the City of Cuyahoga Falls to hire Rise Together, LLC as a consultant to develop a creative strategic plan to address the City's workforce issues. As a result and with the consultant's assistance, the City of Cuyahoga Falls has developed a Welcoming Workforce Coalition comprised of business leaders, elected officials, faith community members, international newcomers, nonprofit organizations, and young professionals that will develop the strategic plan that will both create a sense of belonging for its international newcomer population and propose systematic changes to the workforce designed to attract and retain international newcomers.

Ms. Butler stated that, by 2030, the country's current workforce will fall short by 80,000 people to fill the jobs that are need to keep the economy healthy. Rise Together is a coalition of public, private, and nonprofit members of the community that will assist international newcomers in

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Cuyahoga Falls with resources and education in order to provide employers in the area with workers. Mr. Mick Jendrisak, President of Pilot Plastics, and Mr. Andrew Harant, Director of the Cuyahoga Falls Library also addressed Council.

Mr. Miller asked if this process include individuals in the program who become naturalized. Ms. Butler stated that, in short, yes, as folks who come in as refugees will have an opportunity to get a green card and become naturalized. They will be using the library as a gateway to naturalization. Mr. Miller asked if their organization is going to be working with State Department on Special Visas. Ms. Butler stated that they work closely with resettlement and state agencies.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes thanked Ms. Butler and the volunteers that are in the community. She stated that this is a sincere group of people that want to help. She feels that Cuyahoga Falls is the place to be and a place to find people who want to work on challenges and produce solutions.

Mr. Tom Sullivan, 447 Tallmadge Road, Cuyahoga Falls, stated that they have picked a great city to do this in. What they are doing originated in the 50's and 60's with places like Ruether Mold, Akromold who came here from Europe after the war and brought a lot of talent to the area. At that time, he was one of six people out of 150 working there that was born in the United States. Cuyahoga Falls is the right place to do this because it has already worked once.

Mr. Mark Wilkerson, 2467 6th Street, Cuyahoga Falls, asked if they going to make sure that these people are legal in the country and not illegal. Ms. Butler stated that there are many statuses in which once can legally reside in the United States that people do not know about. When people see the word "immigrant," they think of folks that do not have legal documentation. That is a small fraction. There are 17,000 refugees living in Northeast Ohio. They are from the United Nations. They come from the Federal Government. They are over 8,000 international students. They have many pathways for people to legally work here. Mr. Wilkerson stated that his family came here a long time ago. They need people to come in and work, but they need to come in legally. Ms. Butler stated that she would challenge people to talk to the international newcomer community. The Federal Government has recognized an opportunity for them to be better as a country because they have a huge worker shortage and they have folks that want to work. There are new sponsorship programs. There are legal pathways that they are encouraging people to use.

Mr. Stams congratulated Ms. Butler on her program and her endeavor. It is a very admirable. His grandparents were immigrants. Cuyahoga Falls has a strong history of welcoming immigrants, and he is proud of that and proud of being from Cuyahoga Falls.

Mr. Siegferth moved to bring out Temp. Res. B-47 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. Miller. Motion passed (3-0).

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.