

Fair Employment Wage Board

January 23, 2026 -- 9 AM

1910 Carnegie Avenue (3rd Floor Conference Room)

In attendance:

Matt Ashton, Chair; Bishop Ward, Vice Chair; Helen Qin, Camilo Villa, and John Hodge.
Guest: Cleveland Councilman Shaw, Lewis Smoot, Cleveland Law Department and John Ryan.

Matt called the meeting to order at 9:09, thanking everyone for working for progress on the three ordinances.

(M/S/P) (Ward/Villa) To Approve for the December 12, 2025 meeting minutes.

Unfinished Business:

- a. Matt thanked to Bishop Ward, Helen Qin, and former member, Councilman Kelly for their direct participation the day of the Board's first enforcement event last month. It was an energetic event, and the Cleveland AFL-CIO is following up on the remaining recreation centers that we missed during January. We have worked out with the City of Cleveland to do a social on enforcement of the law and what it means for lower wage workers to receive a bit more in their paychecks thanks to the Fair Employment Wage ordinance. Good news is the workers at recreation centers are all paid according to the law.
- b. Lewis provided an update. The complaint form will go live this afternoon. Cleveland's IT is also providing a short link and will have direct link on other sites. John said that Kate Warren is working to have her 211 staff be able to fill out the form for the complainants. There was discussion about how workers often afraid when complaining about their boss and tactics to deal with fears.

New Business

- a. Matt report that he, Bishop Ward, and John Ryan will meet with the county on having them pass a fair employment wage law and discuss supporting workers right in conjunction with our Board.
- b. Matt asked for volunteers on a 2026 plan for the Board for a small working group. Bishop Ward and Villa agreed to serve on the working group.
- c. Matt checked with board members on accessing the emails from the city; everyone has a city email address in order to be able to receive complaints. Helen volunteered to help set up social platforms.
- d. The Mayor's office will work on the Board 2025 report. John Hodge volunteered to assist John.

- e. The city has moved with the new Board Manager position quickly with a wage level that the Board has requested. The city has received over 150 candidates. The city has allowed a board member to participate in the hiring process. Bishop Ward has volunteered and met with the OEO Director.
- f. As agreed by the Board, an email has been sent to the NEON CEO and Bishop Ward called and left a message. There was considerable discussion on how to help the workers. Depending on what happens in the next week, a delegation will be formed for early February with Bishop Ward leading the group.
- g. M/S/P (Hodge/Bishop Ward) To send correspondence to Conn-Selmer Company who are planning to close their plant in Eastlake.
- h. Matt reported that Bishop, Ryan and he got together to review progress and discuss a 2026 plan. He suggested that there be a planning meeting in March or April, hopefully after the city staffer is hired.
- i. M/S/P (Villa/Hodge) To investigate the matter of an architectural firm that had a complaint that the employer did not post a wage range but the position might be in Cleveland or Columbus. We are figuring out how many employees are working. There was a discussion about next steps; Matt said we will have this topic on the February agenda.
- j. Matt said he is meeting with Kate Warren next week to have 311 calls handle complaints.
- k. Lewis mentioned that terms need to be re-upped. John gave update.

There was no public participation.

Adjourn (John/Helen)

Respectfully recorded,

John W. Ryan