



January 21, 2022

Honorable Judge Gayle Williams-Byers
South Euclid Municipal Court
1349 South Green Road
South Euclid, Ohio 44121

Dear Judge Williams-Byers:

On January 24, 2022, South Euclid City Council will consider the attached resolution requesting that the Ohio State Legislature introduce legislation to consider regionalizing the South Euclid Municipal Court.

As with many of our other regional initiatives, consideration of this issue will require that we take the appropriate time necessary to further discuss and study the process. If the State Legislature decides to move forward and introduce legislation, we would then need to undertake a feasibility study to determine both the benefits and challenges involved in the process.

As you are aware, South Euclid City Council is responsible for managing the limited financial resources of the City, and as Council President I believe we have an obligation to look at the potential of regionalizing the Court given the City's continuing decline in population.

On October 20, 2021, following the Ward One Community Meeting, we had a conversation where we committed to work together to explore what is in the best interests of South Euclid, which included the possibility of regionalizing the court.

2022 affords us the advantage of setting a course of action for our branches of government to work together more effectively. I strongly believe that we have an obligation to our residents and taxpayers to find common ground. It is my sincerest hope that we are still on the same accord and that you will support City Council's efforts to move forward with the steps necessary to consider this issue.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth I. Gray". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Ruth I. Gray
President of City Council

CITY OF SOUTH EUCLID, OHIO

RESOLUTION NO.: 05-22

January 24, 2022

INTRODUCED BY: Gray

REQUESTED BY: Continenza, Elston, Frank, Gray, Hardy, Tisdale

A RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE OHIO STATE LEGISLATURE INTRODUCE AND PASS LEGISLATION TO MERGE THE SOUTH EUCLID MUNICIPAL COURT WITH A NEIGHBORING MUNICIPAL COURT AND REQUESTING THE OHIO SUPREME COURT TO ASSIST WITH SAID MERGER.

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of South Euclid is responsible for managing the financial resources of the City in the manner that best serves the residents of South Euclid while providing a fair and efficient system to adjudicate the enforcement of local laws and legal disputes; and

WHEREAS, between 1970 and 2020, the population of the City of South Euclid has decreased by over 8,000 residents, with a 2020 Census population of 21,572; and

WHEREAS, regional courts promote efficient sharing of costs and services by individual communities while administering justice in a timely manner to those utilizing the court; and

WHEREAS, the South Euclid Municipal Court serves one community with a population of 21,572; and

WHEREAS, the Shaker Heights Regional Municipal Court serves five neighboring communities with a total population of approximately 59,107; and

WHEREAS, the Lyndhurst Regional Municipal Court serves six neighboring communities with a total population of approximately 57,185; and

WHEREAS, the Bedford Municipal Court serves 14 communities with a total population of approximately 78,437; and

WHEREAS, the bordering single-community Municipal Courts serve communities with more than double the population of South Euclid including Cleveland Heights (44,159) and Euclid (47,572); and

WHEREAS, while nearby East Cleveland has a population of only 17,200 and their own municipal court, the City is a Federal HUD CDBG Entitlement Community and receives an annual direct financial allocation, which can help offset General Fund related expenses, while the City of South Euclid does not receive an annual HUD CDBG allocation; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of South Euclid is responsible for managing the financial resources of the City in the manner that best serves the residents of South Euclid while providing a fair and efficient system to adjudicate the enforcement of local laws and legal disputes; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of South Euclid recognizes the benefits of regionalization and the sharing of limited public resources; and

WHEREAS, in the last decade, the national economic recession, housing and foreclosure crisis and state cuts to local governments have created a "new normal" for our communities and our residents who provide their hard-earned tax dollars and expect efficient city services, even if they don't use them, which is often the case with municipal courts; and

WHEREAS, it is sensible and reasonable for the City to continue to look at ways to regionalize public services to maximize resources, reduce duplicative costs, and at the same time continue to provide our residents with excellent, efficient and critical government services; and

WHEREAS, the City of South Euclid has long been a proponent of and participant in the regionalization of services, including leading efforts to merge our South Euclid Emergency Dispatch Center, effectively consolidating personnel and services with several other cities; and

WHEREAS, in 2012 the City of South Euclid authored a successful grant application to look at the regional consolidation of our emergency dispatch center with neighboring communities. In 2016 the Heights Hillcrest Regional Dispatch Center commenced operations and in 2022 successfully merged with the Chagrin Valley Dispatch Center; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the Regional Dispatch merger, the City has promoted regionalization through South Euclid-Lyndhurst Recreation (SELREC), Northeast Ohio Risk Management Association (NORMA,) Eastside Departments Group Enforcement SWAT team (EDGE,) Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC) and many other partnerships; and

WHEREAS, these collaborations have proven to be both financially and operationally advantageous to the City and its residents and stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, due to continued and ongoing budgetary concerns, it would be fiscally and operationally prudent to consider merging with a neighboring municipal court, in order to reduce duplicative costs, maximize fiscal and personnel resources and benefit the citizens of South Euclid who have cases to be heard in civil, traffic, and criminal matters.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of South Euclid requests that the Ohio State Legislature introduce legislation to merge the South Euclid Municipal court with a neighboring municipal court and requesting the Supreme Court of the State of Ohio assist in this process, and that the merging of the South Euclid Municipal Court with a neighboring municipal court commence at the end of the South Euclid Municipal Court Judge's current term in office.


Section 1: That upon the introduction of legislation to merge the South Euclid Municipal Court by the Ohio State Legislature, the City of South Euclid will appropriate the necessary funds for the study of the feasibility of such a merger, and for the process of carrying out such procedures as are necessary to complete said merger.


Section 2: That the Council of the City of South Euclid hereby requests that the Clerk of Council forward a certified copy of this Resolution to the Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives, the Ohio Senate President, State Senator Kenny Yuko, State Representative Kent Smith and Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor.


Section 3: That it is hereby found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating to the passage of this Resolution were adopted in an open meeting of this Council, and that all deliberations of this Council and any of its committees on or after November 25, 1975, that resulted in such formal action were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements, including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

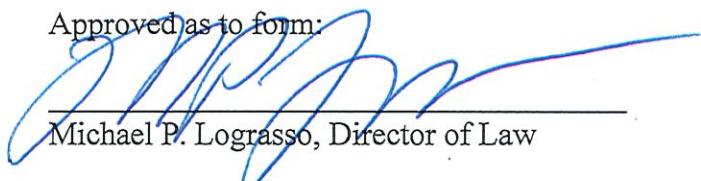
Section 4: Wherefore, this Resolution shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law and upon signature of the Mayor.

Passed this 24 day of January, 2022

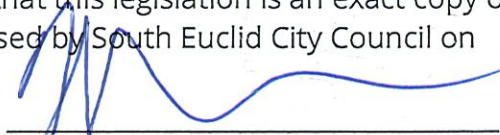

Ruth I. Gray, President of Council

Attest:

Keith A. Benjamin, Clerk of Council

Approved:

Georgine Welo, Mayor

Approved as to form:

Michael P. Lograsso, Director of Law

I, Keith A. Benjamin do hereby certify that this legislation is an exact copy of RESOLUTION OS-22 passed by South Euclid City Council on 24 JANUARY 2022.


Keith A. Benjamin, Clerk of Council