

CITY OF GROVE CITY, OHIO

COUNCIL MINUTES

August 24, 2020

Special Finance Committee Meeting

The special meeting of the Council Finance Committee was called to order by Mr. Holt at 6:40 p.m. in the Virtual Webex meeting, per the Governor's Emergency Order.

Roll was called and the following members were present:

Roby Schottke Aaron Schlabach Christine Houk Randy Holt Ted Berry

1. Mr. Holt welcomed everyone and stated that this is the second meeting in preparation for the 2021 Budget. He explained that the public may submit questions in the Q&A box as we go through the meeting.
2. Chair Holt recognized Shawn Ballinger, Chair of the Citizens Financial Review Task Force, and members Christina Radi-Temple & Jason Moore. They shared the recommendations of the Committee, one of which was keeping up with infrastructure. Mr. Ballinger noted that Council took action on the sanitary lines at the last meeting and they believe that addressing the flooding issues should be a priority now. Another recommendation dealt with a community center. They stated that in light of the current pandemic they believe it may not be the best recommendation to increase the partnership with the YMCA. Ms. Temple said they realize this is not a priority right now, but with the challenges the YMCA has had, they feel it may be better to consider a City run center instead of a partnership, whereby monies are not controlled by the City and could be spent elsewhere. Mr. Ballinger pointed out that one of the recommendations was to create a Stormwater Management Utility to add revenue to the sewer maintenance fund. An additional revenue source would be to increase the Income Tax by 0.5%. Mr. Ballinger said this would put us in line with many other surrounding communities and 80% of the increase would come from those who do not live in the city. They thanked all the staff members who came to meetings and provided information/assistance to the Committee.

President Houk and all members thanked the Citizens Financial Review Task Force for all their hard work. President Houk walked through the income tax increase. She said the Committee felt good about where the city is, but said if we wanted to do more, the tax increase needed to be explored. Mr. Ballinger confirmed this and stated that if we want to compete with surrounding communities, he feels we should implement the income tax increase. He said the metrics bear out that this will be on those who do not live here. As for the YMCA, he said it would be better to be on our own than to be beholden to the Y and how they use money across Central Ohio.

Mayor Stage thanked the Committee for all their work and asked if they would be willing to reboot themselves to look at the Township. He said the last time the city increased taxes, there was a list of items that the money would be used for. He said as we consider raising the income tax, it is important to have a priority list of items.

3. Mr. Holt recognized Mr. Turner, Dir. of Finance, who shared spreadsheets to show the current balance as of July. He shared Fund balances for the General Fund; Community Development Fund; and General Recreation Fund. He said revenues have come in better than anticipated and expenses have been lower. He said the new projection for the end of the year is \$10,000,000.00 instead of \$8,500,000.00. He believes next year's budget cycle will have \$7 million without capital improvements. He believes our expenses will go up in 2021, but our revenue will remain at 2019 levels. He anticipates struggling through, and picking up slowly, in 2021.

Mr. Schottke asked if COVID monies will help. Mr. Turner said they are not sure.

Mr. Berry asked if we are recouping any tax dollars from those working at home. Mr. Turner said no. The State passed legislation to allow companies to declare their business address for all their employees. This is being discussed at the State level now. Mayor Stage commented that HB 352 would rescind that legislation, but this is a slippery slope and it should be sorted out after the pandemic is over. Mr. Berry stated that he feels many employees will continue to work from home after the pandemic is done. He said where taxes are collected needs addressed soon, because the needs of our residents are going to change if they remain at home and the city will need those tax dollars to address them. Ms. Houk stated that when the pandemic ends, employees will have to withhold in the place where work is performed.

Mr. Turner shared the Community Development Fund balances. He said it is looking better than it was at the last meeting and they estimate an ending balance of \$263,000.00. He said it is not a major concern now. He then shared the General Recreation Fund balances, which are struggling due to classes and sports not coming back on line as anticipated. In addition, school is all virtual this year and that affects the before and after school programs.

3. Mr. Holt moved to Capital Improvements.

Mr. Turner provided an overview of all the capital improvement projects that are funded; ongoing; and anticipated. Mr. Holt asked each Council Member if they had a list of items for 2021 to be considered.

Mr. Berry said he would like to see: the acquisition of property for a natural park; trees for Beulah Park; Bike Path connectivity to Columbus and Scioto Darby; flooding and modeling; a natural/sustainable industrial park.

Mr. Schottke said he feels we need to live within our budget; keep carryover to maintain the city; complete existing projects; create whole concept for Town Center Plaza/Park.

Ms. Houk agreed with Mr. Schottke about completing existing projects and roadways.

Mr. Schlachach said he agrees with living within our means; focus on flooding issues; complete existing projects; necessities; and focus on new projects in 2022.

Mr. Holt said he would like to see the development of a multi-year stormwater improvement plan; sidewalk program; Pickleball lights; and stated he did not feel a subsidy for the Fire Department was warranted.

Mayor State said the only Fire Department assistance that has been explored is using Pinnacle TIF funds for equipment.

4. After closing comments, a motion to adjourn was approved by unanimous consent.

Council adjourned at 8:23 p.m.


Fami K. Kelly, MMC
Clerk of Council


Randy Holt
Committee Chair