CITY OF GROVE CITY, OHIO

COUNCIL MINUTES

December 08, 2022 | Finance Committee Meeting

The Finance Committee meeting of Council was called to order by Chair Holt at 6:07 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 4035 Broadway.

Roll was called and the following members were present:

Roby Schottke *Mark Sigrist* *Ted Berry* *Randy Holt* *Christine Houk*

1. Mr. Holt stated that the 2023 Budget proposal was published several weeks ago and shared that this meeting provides Council with the opportunity for questions and commentary. He recognized the Mayor for an overview of the 2023 Budget.

   Mayor Stage referenced the Cover Letter that accompanied the 2023 budget proposal. He said we want to have the best quality of life we can achieve and Safety is also a high priority. He noted that the anticipated income is 12 – 13% better than 2021. He said they try to budget so we have a vertical approach, meaning everything that can be identified as an income source and expense source, we try to keep in that vertical way of accounting. He said one of the top sources is income tax. As a formality, general fund expenses should never exceed income tax collection. Right now, we are in the best position we have been in, in many years. He said Capital Improvements are incredible. This year there is budgeted $13,500,000.00 and there is still plenty of liquidity. He said they try to keep three months of liquidity in reserve. This year, we have almost six months in reserve and noted that it has been since 2017 that we have has such low expenses to revenue. He said this is the one and only time that the Mayor cannot veto any amendments made. It is a good check and balance system.

2. Council reviewed each Fund with the Administrative Staff and the following items were highlighted and comments made:

   Mr. Schottke asked about the increase in part-time personnel throughout the departments. Mr. Turner, Dir. of Finance, stated that the number shown is just a guide of about how many it could support. It is the actual amount of money that counts.

   Under Police Fund: Mr. Berry asked if the two additional police officers is enough, noting that if they are not asking for what they need it will come back on them. He said he thinks they need more and knows everyone on Council supports the Safety Division, but he will defer to the professionals. Mr. Teaford, Dir. of Safety, commented that he appreciates the support. He said the Mayor promised last year that a staff study would be done and that was completed. He said it was done using validated protocols adopted by the International Association of Police Chiefs and the Ohio Police Chiefs Association. He said the study shows they are right on target. Mr. Berry asked how many would be retiring next year. Chief Fambro said it is hard to know. They looked comprehensively at staffing and he believes they are in good shape. He said there are great plans in place and is proud of the Department. He said they have two or three officers in the retirement window, but it is hard to say when they may decide to do so. The Civil Service list will be active if there is a need to hire more than the two new officers shown in the budget. Mr. Teaford said they are also looking into lateral transfers to help consolidate the process and not have to send those officers through the Academy. Mr. Schottke said he feels training is essential. If they find the need for more training money, please come back to Council.

   Under Lands/Building: Ms. Fitzpatrick, Dir. of Service, explained the four new full-time positions were for – Urban Forestry; Service Technician – Street Maintenance; Facility Maintenance – one in maintenance and one custodian.

Mr. Berry asked if there is a need for additional funding to improve the ditch along Southwest Blvd. Mr. Boso said he believes they have the funds in the budget to be able to look at those improvements. He said this area is in a floodway and will need to be reviewed to determine how it can be improved. Ms. Fitzpatrick noted that this area has been under construction for two years and will continue to see construction for the out-parcel. She said her Dept. maintains the ditch and once the construction is complete in the area, they can monitor it better and offer opportunities to beautify it. Mr. Berry said he is concerned with the area from the bike path to the curb and it needs significant change.

Mr. Berry moved to add $50,000.00 to the Lands/Building Fund, pg. 48, for Southwest Boulevard Ditch Rehabilitation; seconded by Mr. Schottke.

Mr. Schottke	Yes
Mr. Sigrist	Yes
Mr. Berry	Yes
Mr. Holt	Yes
Ms. Houk	No

Under General Government: Discussion took place over the COTA Plus program. Mr. Sigrist asked about weekend service. Mr. Boso said it would cost another $200,000+, but they can certainly look into it. Mr. Berry said that he feels COTA needs to use their marketing dollars to help get the word out about the Grove City program. He also asked for a count of the number of seniors who use the program. He said ridership cost was less when the City had its own busses and would like to see what we can do to decrease the cost for the seniors. Mr. Walters said they can check into that request.

Mr. Holt stated on page 61, under Professional Services, he would like to see a line item for plans to be completed on the Old Library site. Now that the City has acquired more ground, he feels an updated, overall design for the area to get behind and implement.

Mr. Holt moved to add $50,000.00, pg. 61, to Professional Services under General Government for a Plan for the overall Old Library site; seconded by Mr. Berry.

Ms. Houk commented that when we have not defined what it is that we are seeking to accomplish, just appropriating dollars is giving a blank check for something that is yet to be defined. We have had all year to have substantive discussion. There are very few things that Council controls. Appropriating dollars without having a real commitment with what is going to happen with them is almost meaningless.

Discussion took place of whether it is better to put dollars in the budget or do a supplemental ordinance during the year to fund these types of items. Mr. Berry noted that special meetings to discuss specific issues can take place during the year to make those decisions.

There being no additional questions on the motion on the floor; the vote was called.

Mr. Sigrist	Yes
Mr. Berry	Yes
Mr. Holt	Yes
Ms. Houk	No
Mr. Schottke	Yes

Mr. Schottke noted that the Park Board has been working on a proposal for a Recreation Center. He would like to have a line item for engineering, conceptual views and architectural drawings. He would like to see Pinnacle TIF dollars reserved for this.

Under Pinnacle TIFF, page 105, Mr. Schottke moved to add a line item for $1,000,000.00 for drawings and plans for a Community Center; seconded by Mr. Berry.

Mr. Sigrist said with long term park planning, the Park Board is also trying to identify park maturation and feels that the runways might be parallel for other things happening. He said he would like to have a placeholder or be able to come back to Council when they have a concrete sense of what they want to ask for dollars to get park maturation started.

Ms. Houk stated that this Appropriation Ordinance does not mean that Council cannot appropriate dollars for a project in the coming year. She said as we have called Department Heads forward to discuss their items in the budget, they are prepared and have information to substantiate those items. If you put the dollars in the budget, they can be spent and she feels they must clearly be defined before appropriating money in the budget.

Mr. Smith, Dir. of Law, said the Pinnacle TIFF is one of the funds that is restricted to items that directly benefit the Pinnacle area. Items listed in the budget have been defined as directly benefitting the Pinnacle TIFF. He said adding items in this budget area, without having a separate piece of legislation to establish an items as being of benefit, gives him hesitation.

Mr. Boso said taking a $1,000,000.00 from the Pinnacle TIFF may run the fund short. Mr. Schottke withdrew his motion and Mr. Berry withdrew his second.

Mr. Schottke moved that $8,500,000.00 allocated for the Holton Road project be removed from the Pinnacle TIF Fund, page 105; seconded by Mr. Berry.

Mayor Stage stated that the Holton Road project is ready to go and the monies will be used to complete that project if it remains. Mr. Holt asked if there was a sense of urgency. It was reiterated that this project is ready to be completed and if put off, inflation would play a part. Mr. Schottke said OPWC grant dollars could be obtained if it were delayed. It was explained that OPWC dollars are being awarded for 2025 -2026.

There being no additional questions, the vote was called on the motion to remove the Holton Road project from the Pinnacle TIFF.

Mr. Berry	Yes
Mr. Holt	Yes
Ms. Houk	No
Mr. Schottke	Yes
Mr. Sigrist	No

Mr. Schottke moved to add to the Pinnacle TIFF, page 105, $1,000,000.00 for drawings and plans for a Community Center; seconded by Mr. Holt.

Mr. Holt	Yes
Ms. Houk	No
Mr. Schottke	Yes
Mr. Sigrist	No
Mr. Berry	Yes

Under Capital Improvements, Mr. Schottke said he would like to see the Sidewalk Program amount doubled. Mr. Holt noted that there is more capacity to do more sidewalks. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that they will be doing two years' worth of sidewalks in 2023.

Under Water, Mr. Sigrist asked about the Fire Hydrant maintenance and relocation. Mayor Stage stated that he is working on the Sheldon Place fire hydrant with Jackson Township. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that her department will be taking over all the maintenance of the hydrants and have line items to handle it.

3. Mr. Holt asked if there were any other items. Mr. Schottke asked to go back to page two of the Appropriation Ordinance and review Section 5 which allocated funds for conventions bureaus. He asked if everyone is good with these appropriations. Mr. Holt, liaison to VCB, said Visit Grove City is not happy, but realizes that there is some carry-over and they are getting more than they did last year. He said they will be working to secure a possible long term agreement to make their funding be at less risk. He also noted that they have retracted their lawsuit.

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

Council adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Tami K. Kelly

Tami K. Kelly, MMC
Clerk of Council

Randy L Holt

Randy Holt
Finance Chair