

CITY OF GROVE CITY, OHIO
COUNCIL MINUTES

November 29, 2021

Finance Committee Meeting

The Finance Committee meeting of Council was called to order by Chair Holt at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 4035 Broadway.

Roll was called and the following members were present:

Roby Schottke Aaron Schlabach Christine Houk Randy Holt Ted Berry

1. Mr. Holt recognized the Mayor for an overview of the 2021 Budget.

Mayor Stage referenced the Cover Letter that accompanied the 2022 budget proposal. He explained the process of the budget, per the City Charter. He highlighted some of the items, including: income tax receipts; the request for six new positions; the projected ending balance, which will provide four months of operation in reserve.

2. Mr. Berry explained that per Section 4 of the Appropriation Ordinance, the Clerks salary is set. He moved to amend this section and set the salary for the Clerk of Council for 2021 at \$94,692.00; seconded by Mr. Schottke.

Mr. Schottke	Yes
Mr. Schlabach	Yes
Ms. Houk	Yes
Mr. Holt	Yes
Mr. Berry	Yes

Mr. Berry moved to amend Section 4 to set the Clerk of Council's salary for 2022 at \$97,533.00; seconded by Mr. Schlabach.

Mr. Schlabach	Yes
Ms. Houk	Yes
Mr. Holt	Yes
Mr. Berry	Yes
Mr. Schottke	Yes

3. Chair Holt explained that tonight is a high level overview of the proposed budget. Over the next two hours, they will have Department overviews, focusing on significant changes from year to year, and end with a review of the Capital Improvement budget items. He stated that he reviewed the entire budget and noted some of the significant changes and other items that he believes Council is interested in, such as: Income Tax Collections, six (6) new full-time positions; this budget is up \$7.3 million from last year; and the General Fund will hold four (4) months in reserve.

Mr. Holt then noted the new provision in Section 5 of the Appropriation Ordinance concerning Visitor's and Conventions Bureaus (VCB) which is in response to the ordinance Council passed at their last meeting.

Mr. Berry mentioned there is \$65,000 in the budget twice for Town Center, Inc. and moved to remove it from Section 5 of the ordinance. Motion died due to the lack of a second. Mr. Holt said he would like to have discussion first.

Mr. Holt then asked each entity for information on VCB budget money.

Ms. Amanda Davis, Director of Visit Grove City, provided information to each Council Member. Mr. Schottke said he knows they have a CD of \$100,000 and asked if this was used for the lean times. Ms. Davis said they were able to save some monies in 2020/2021 but diverted payments for those obligations to next year. So, they will have two payments to make for certain services and for past rent. Mayor Stage asked how much the VCB had in reserve. Ms. Davis explained there was about \$200,000 in savings. Mr. Berry commented that he feels as if a fuller conversation and educational meeting is needed to discuss this. Mayor Stage explained that the appropriation ordinance provides for a disbursement of \$450,000. Any additional hotel/motel tax dollars that are received next year will go to Visit Grove City, as they always have.

Mr. Schottke asked the Little Theater Off Broadway about their budget needs. He said he understands there have been challenges with the building. Ms. Lisa Napier-Garcia, Director, explained that due to the pandemic, LTOB was completely shut down and had no income for 18 months. She said their letter shows their urgent needs, as requested. Ms. Napier-Garcia explained that the business survived on savings and grant money. She said they have a commitment costing \$50,000, of which they have \$30,000 and need to come up with \$20,000 more.

Ms. Houk said if Council could agree on dollar amounts for each, she would suggest funding half in Section 5 of the appropriation ordinance and the other half from the Community Development Fund, which is where the Town Center Inc. is shown. She said she encourages further conversation and dialogue in order to assess people's needs for further funding during the coming year.

Mr. Berry feels Section 5 should be removed until they know exactly what each organization needs and there is an itemized budget of those needs. Mayor Stage said these numbers are somewhat arbitrary, but it is a place to start. He said this is turning point, in that we can now pick more than one Convention Bureau and share the wealth with those organizations who promote the community and drive visitors to it. Mr. Holt said it was time to move on to the next items.

Mr. Berry moved to remove Town Center Inc. and the \$65,000.00 from Section 5 of the appropriation ordinance; seconded by Mr. Holt.

Mr. Schottke said he looks at this as a way to provide better marketing for Town Center, Inc. The other expense is for operating and marketing. He feels this will give them an opportunity to expand their marketing/advertising.

Mayor Stage said they showed Town Center, Inc. in the Community Development Fund as a placeholder. He said it wasn't to double up. There are other things that need to be done out of Community Development if the Town Center, Inc. is funded under Section 5.

There being no further discussion, the vote was taken on the motion.

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

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

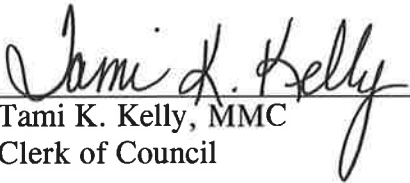
1. On page 4, there is an outline of full-time employee increases per Department. Mr. Holt noted that the Big Splash now shows -0- employees and that is because it is now outsourced to a contracted company.
2. Page 29 – Police. Mr. Holt questioned if more officers are warranted due to the increase in population. He noted that we have had the same number for five years. Mr. Berry suggested adding four additional officers. He said nothing is more important to him than the safety and well-being of our community. He said crime is on the rise in Columbus and will eventually drift into the suburbs. The Mayor said that it sounds easy to add four officers, but they just hired a new Safety Director and Mr. Teaford to report. Mr. Teaford said they would like to look at the efficiency of the Division and then determine if more officers are needed. He said they have four people in the bullpen now, waiting for training. This new position will add another officer on the street. He provided some details about the operations of the Division. Mr. Holt stated that he does not want to be behind in staffing. He said for many years, Council has approved more officers than have been staffed. He said for him that means we need to hire faster. He said with growth and the current climate with police activity, he doesn't want to see the same numbers of officers on the street that we had in 2017. Ms. Houk said she would like to separate the discussion of budgeting from goal setting. She said it isn't just population that determines the number of officers. She said they all want the Police Division to have what they need. There is one additional officer in the budget and that is good to see. Mr. Berry said in 2018 there were 70 officers. In 2022, there will be 71. He said we have more issues today and while we have excellent officers, even the officers say there needs to be more. Mayor Stage said this is why we have a full-time Safety Director. He said it is not fair to say don't go do an analysis before we add more officers. He said we should have him come back and provide an update. He said there are a lot of mechanics in running a police division. Mr. Schottke said he looks at overtime as one indicator of the need for additional staffing. He said it seems that Council is having a discussion without understanding the best use of staffing. Mayor Stage and Mr. Teaford requested time for further evaluation before adding additional officers. Mr. Schottke asked if we got a second police dog. Mr. Teaford said they have not added the second dog, but were able to replace Max. Mr. Holt asked if Mr. Teaford was aware of any retirements that would drive the number down next year. Mr. Teaford said he is unaware at this time. He knows that there are some senior ranking officers eligible, but haven't been told if any will be retiring. Mr. Boso, City Admin., explained the process to hire and train an officer, which takes 6 – 7 months to get someone on the street.
3. Page 45 - Lands & Building: Mr. Schottke asked what electric bicycles would be used for. Mr. Mike Boso, Chief Bldg. & Zoning Official, stated that currently, they borrow a bike from the Police. He said they see more and interact better with the public. He said this would be used for property maintenance and possibly inspections for more mobility around the City.
4. Page 59 - General Government: Mr. Holt noted that the COTA Plus Program shows an increase from \$290,000.00 in 2021 to \$445,000.00 in 2022. Mr. Vedra explained that the COTA program has grown substantially, where they now have 20,000 riders with monthly increases and expect more riders next year.
5. Mr. Holt moved through Information Systems and Street Maintenance, with each having one new full time employee in the budget.
6. Page 108 - Capital Improvements: Mr. Holt highlighted many of the projects listed. He asked about Discovery Frontier. Mr. Boso said this playground at Fryer Park is in terrible shape. They want to make it usable for all children and hope to acquire half the amount through State funding.
7. Mr. Holt asked if there were any other items.

Mr. Schottke asked about Rebranding on page 95. Mr. Walters, Community Relations, explained that he wants to hire a 3rd party to help the City get more marketing and communication interactions from residents.

Mr. Boso noted that the conversation tonight has been focused on the General Funds, but there are 29 other item funds in the budget that account for \$40 million of the total budget. He encouraged everyone to call if there are any further questions.

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

Council adjourned at 7:43 p.m.


Tami K. Kelly, MMC
Clerk of Council


Randy Holt
Finance Chair