

The City of Springfield, Ohio
City Commission Budget and Legislative Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 17, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.
City Hall Forum

The special budget and legislative meeting was called to order by President Copeland. Roll call was answered by Mrs. Chilton, Dr. Estrop, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Rue, and Mr. Copeland.

2021 BUDGET DISCUSSION, continued

130-20 Finance Director Beckdahl began the second night of budget discussions reviewing the Permanent Improvement (PI) Fund as budgeted in 2020 and projected for 2021 and reminded Commissioners that 90 percent of Income Tax revenues go to the General Fund and 10 percent goes to the PI Fund. Expected revenues from Income Tax is \$3,995,000. Combined with other revenue sources, the total PI Fund revenues for 2021 is expected to be \$7,530,000. Total expenditures are projected at \$8,882,850 and includes \$300,000 for neighborhood streets and \$1.15 million for debt service related to the hospital loan and fire equipment leases. With the existing fund balance, the estimated fund balance at the end of 2021 is \$548,967.

Mr. Beckdahl reviewed the proposed capital expenditures broken out with 34 percent for Neighborhood Streets Paving, 15 percent for Public Works projects, 13 percent for Debt Service, 19 percent for Public Safety projects, 2 percent for National Trail Parks and Recreation projects, 9 percent for Engineering projects, and 8 percent for all other projects combined.

Mr. Beckdahl further discussed the capital projects for Engineering, Airport (including FAA funding), IT projects, and NTRPD.

Service Director Moore spoke on various planned street and sidewalk projects along with equipment needs. There are several facility upgrade projects planned for 2021 including a new chiller for City Hall's air conditioning system and a new roof for the Public Safety Building. A new battery backup system for traffic signals in major intersections is included.

Mr. Beckdahl spoke on Street Fund revenue which includes permissive tax generated by vehicle license fees and gasoline tax.

Mr. Moore discussed expenditures from the Street Fund which include rock salt and paving small portions of streets following street projects. Discussion included replacement of water and sewer lines downtown that date back to the late 1800s and early 1900s along with discussion of the emergency snow plan which may be presented at a future work session. Mr. Heck thanked the Street Maintenance crews for their paving and pothole repair efforts.

Mr. Beckdahl spoke on the Water Fund projections for 2021. Total revenues are expected to be \$9.3 million and operating expenditures are expected at \$7.6 million.

Dr. Estrop asked about delinquent utility billing accounts. Mr. Beckdahl stated the delinquent utility bills totaled about \$475,000 in early 2020, but escalated to \$800,000 by August and back down to \$700,000 in September. Staff is working with customers for payments and directing those in need to partner agencies for assistance. Mr. Heck added that CARES funding cannot be used to benefit a municipality with utilities, but assistance through agencies such as OIC of Clark County can provide rent and utility assistance using CARES funding. Further discussion centered on utility assistance and distributing information to tenants and landlords.

Mr. Moore spoke on 32 positions filled in the past year including 19 in Utility Maintenance. Crews stopped entering residences for several months but resumed water meter repair in October. Mr. Moore noted 2.8 percent less water is used by customers due to water efficiency efforts, but citizens are finding higher bills as many people are working from home and students are attending school from home.

Mr. Moore noted \$9 million budgeted in 2021 for the Eastern Pressure District Water Upgrades Phase III. This project phase will go out for bid in November 2020 and is expected to be completed during the summer of 2022. A new booster station located behind Clark County's Springview Center will aid in the redundant water supply for the eastern side of Springfield and the Prime Ohio Corporate Park. Other water line replacement projects and the Master Plan to look at automation and technology were discussed.

Mr. Beckdahl reviewed the Sewer Fund which includes \$3 million for a High Rate Clarifier at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and a \$5.8 million debt service expenditure for the Erie Interceptor Express Sewer project.

Mr. Moore spoke on several sewer projects including \$90,000 for the combined sewer replacement projects and several replacement sewers in local neighborhoods. One project includes a cooperative effort with Clark County to construct the booster station behind the Springview Center. In exchange, the City will take over and make improvements to the utilities in the nearby Garden Acres neighborhood. Additional projects include upgrades and a new storage facility for sludge storage at the Wastewater Plant. Mr. Moore also spoke on virtual meetings with the Ohio EPA to meet clean water requirements.

Mr. Beckdahl spoke on the Stormwater Fund which was established to fund the High Rate Treatment Facility. Revenue is used to fund leaf pickups, street sweeping, and park maintenance provided by the National Trail Parks and Recreation District. Other expenditures include \$250,000 for ditch maintenance.

Mr. Heck described the future outlook which included the impact of COVID-19 on our community. Some CARES funding must be expended by the end of 2020. Staff continues to monitor the impact on income tax collections, local economy and the local workforce. Mr. Heck spoke on the 0.4 percent tax levy which has allowed the City to fulfill

promises to repair streets and increase public safety forces. However, the levy expires at the end of 2022 and would need a renewal to continue those efforts.

Mr. Copeland spoke on the Ohio Mayors Alliance members discussing the possibility of income tax collection changes for remote workers who are no longer working in the city limits and paying income tax. Mr. Copeland noted the efforts made to bring businesses to the city with employees paying income tax.

Mrs. Chilton asked if any legislation had been developed that would eliminate tax incentives to businesses whose employees work from home. Mr. Heck indicated he was not aware of legislation directly related to remote workers.

Mr. Beckdahl estimated 30 percent of the collected income tax comes from commuters who live outside of the city but work for a local business. New housing in the city helps, but reduced collections would be impactful.

Commissioners thanked staff for the budget preparation efforts. Mr. Heck reminded commissioners of the budget public hearing scheduled for December 8th.



EMERGENCY ORDINANCES

The following emergency legislation was presented for the first time:

14-20 Emergency Ordinance No. 20-274: Providing for Supplemental Appropriations within various funds; and declaring an emergency therein.

On motion of Mr. Rue, seconded by Dr. Estrop, the ordinance passed.

Yeas, Mrs. Chilton, Dr. Estrop, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Rue, and Mr. Copeland.

Yeas 5, Nays 0.

209-20 Emergency Ordinance No. 20-275: Authorizing the City Manager to enter into Amendment No. 2 to the Subrecipient Funding Agreement (Norm's Place & Hartley House - 2020-2021) with Interfaith Hospitality Network, Inc. to increase Emergency Solutions Grant allocations in the amount of \$27,000.00, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$162,590.00; and declaring an emergency therein.

Mrs. Chilton asked for additional information on the proposed amendment. Community Development Director Meadows explained the additional allocations would be used by Interfaith Hospitality Network for emergency non-congregate shelter operations using hotels. Their congregate housing has been stopped since March due to the pandemic. The additional allocation is the last part of their entitlement. Expenses for the emergency shelter has been \$100,000 per month and is expected to continue for some time.

Dr. Estrop noted this expenditure and the next proposed ordinance were both unanimously approved by the Community Grant Advisory Board.

On motion of Dr. Estrop, seconded by Mr. Rue, the ordinance passed.

Yeas, Mrs. Chilton, Dr. Estrop, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Rue, and Mr. Copeland.

Yeas 5, Nays 0.

210-20 Emergency Ordinance No. 20-276: Authorizing the City Manager to enter into Amendment No. 1 to the Subrecipient Funding Agreement (Emergency Solutions Grant COVID-19 Relief Funding - 2020-2021) with Interfaith Hospitality Network, Inc. to increase Emergency Solutions Grant COVID-19 allocations in the amount of \$95,098.00, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$560,655.00; and declaring an emergency therein.

Mrs. Chilton asked for additional details, and Mrs. Meadows stated this ordinance also provides additional funding for homeless services using COVID-19 Relief Funding. Mrs. Meadows also reviewed the number of families and individuals using shelter services and the number on a waiting list. Additional discussion included rental and utility assistance providers and the moratorium on evictions expiring at the end of December 2020. There is a 750 percent increase in citizens requiring assistance and 350 percent increase in homelessness. Group shelters were ended in March due to the pandemic. The Emergency Operations Shelter Plan shifted assistance to hotels.

On motion of Dr. Estrop, seconded by Mr. Rue, the ordinance passed.

Yeas, Mrs. Chilton, Dr. Estrop, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Rue, and Mr. Copeland.

Yeas 5, Nays 0.



There being no further business, on motion of Dr. Estrop, seconded by Mr. Rue, the meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Yeas, Mrs. Chilton, Dr. Estrop, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Rue, and Mr. Copeland.

Yeas 5, Nays 0.



PRESIDENT OF THE CITY COMMISSION



CLERK OF THE CITY COMMISSION