

MINUTES

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING **(via Zoom webinar)**

February 17, 2022

CALL TO ORDER: 7:03 p.m.

PRESENT: Committee Members: Commissioners Chairman WINEGRAD,
Vice Chairwoman CARSWELL, VAHEY, BOLE,
SPIEGELMAN

OTHERS: Finance Director Hermann
Manager of Financial Services Embury
Township Engineer Hassan
Manager of Projects & Grants Platt

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve the minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of January 20, 2022.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Item FC-01-031022:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Vahey to approve the January 2022 expenditures in the amount of \$2,248,166.81 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$2,421,171.81 and authorize the proper officials to sign vouchers in payment of bills and contracts as they mature through the month of April 2022.

Commissioner Winegrad asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Vahey said he was expecting to see different reports from the new OpenGov software as well as money being dispersed through various funds. Has that been implemented, and if not, what is the status?

Ms. Hermann replied we were able to do the budget in the new OpenGov system, although there is still a lot of work to be done to set up all the other modules such as accounts payable, payroll, utility billing, etc., and then we will be able to provide those reports through that transparent platform. We anticipate by the summertime for most of the modules to be completed; however, there will be additional modules for budgeting and utility billing that will be done closer to the end of the year.

Commissioner Spiegelman questioned whether it has been a smooth process integrating all the modules.

Ms. Hermann replied that it has been a great experience working with various teams who are all very helpful.

Commissioner Winegrad commented that he would like to see how the ARPA funds are being spent; is that something we can review in the OpenGov system?

Ms. Hermann replied the ARPA funds are segregated into their own program. Funds are being spent on projects and those expenditures are listed in the voucher report, although possibly a separate report could be put together.

Commissioner Winegrad asked for any public comment.

Lora Lehmann commented that she would like to see ARPA fund expenditures and provide input; also, she asked whether there could be links from the voucher list document to an interactive chart.

Ms. Hermann replied we selected the OpenGov system as it has interactive capability; however, she is not certain about providing details of this report.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Item FC-02-031022:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bole to adopt Resolution No. 22-XXX designating Republic Bank as the official depository for Abington Township funds for a term of two (2) years with an option to renew the agreement at the sole discretion of Abington Township at two-year intervals at the time of reorganization of the Board of Commissioners.

Ms. Hermann said in 2011, the Township had selected Republic Bank as its banking depository for all standard accounts and there was an agreement in place that expired. RFPs were sent out to 15 banks along with posting on Township website and we received four responses. There are many banks that do not have a government-banking division offering services that the Township needs nor the required collateralization under Act 72. So, after review of the responses, Republic Bank stood out offering higher interest rate; a complete no-fee model; online banking services; and a coin counting machine for the Township's parking meter, etc., so the recommendation is for the Township to continue its relationship with Republic Bank.

Commissioner Winegrad asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Bole questioned whether there is language to protect the Township if there may be a consolidation where Republic Bank is subsumed into another bank.

Ms. Hermann replied the proposal included a question as to whether Republic Bank would be acquired or is working on being acquired by another banking institute and Republic Bank indicated they are not at this time. And by law, all Township funds need to be collateralized under Act 72, so every dollar is protected, and a collateralization report is issued every month, and that will continue.

Commissioner Winegrad clarified that anything under a two-year contract timeframe would be problematic. Is that correct?

Ms. Hermann replied yes.

Commissioner Winegrad asked for any public comment.

Lora Lehmann asked about taxes being held and then deposited into this bank and is there a statement from that account for public viewing?

Ms. Hermann replied that the Tax Office also holds its accounts with Republic Bank, and the taxes are directly deposited into Township's bank account from the Tax Office. All funds are reported through the general ledger and that information is readily available.

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION to AMEND the MOTION to adopt Resolution No. 22-XXX designating Republic Bank as the official depository for Abington Township funds for a term expiring January 10, 2024, with an option to renew the agreement at the sole discretion of Abington Township at two-year intervals at the time of reorganization of the Board of Commissioners, seconded by Commissioner Vahey.

MOTION to AMEND the MOTION – PASSED 5-0.

MOTION as AMENDED – PASSED 5-0.

Consider and discuss a Montco 2040 Grant Application:

Mr. Khal Hassan, Township Engineer, said the Township is in the process of applying for a Montco 2040 grant offered by Montgomery County on a yearly basis intended to cover projects of local municipalities as they pertain to Walk Montco and Bike Montco involving trails, pathways, and sidewalk connections along with bike facilities among other improvements.

In this case, Abington Township is looking into a sidewalk project that fronts the Rydal Park project on Susquehanna Road. A plan was prepared back on January 2, 2019, last revised January 19, 2019, by Charles E. Shoemaker, Inc. showing sidewalk along the Rydal Park project from the entrance going west towards a pathway on the western end. This project was quantified estimating construction cost at \$83,515.30.

The Montco 2040 grant requires a 50% match, and the Township does not need to match it financially, they can match it with in-kind services in which Public Works Department would provide its services, and that would be considered the match. It is a competitive grant application for a total of \$2.5 million dollars available.

Proposed for the project is a five-foot-wide concrete sidewalk on the frontage of Susquehanna to provide access to the entrance of Rydal Park for pedestrian access through to the trail to Old York Road on the opposite side. Project includes tree removal and two ADA ramps; one on the eastern end and the other on the western end as well as sign relocation. Also, there will be permanent easement required from the HOA of Rydal Park.

Commissioner Winegrad added that when Rydal Waters was constructed, it included an interior walkway from Rydal Way, which is an access from Old York Road, and ultimately, that walkway just ends in the middle of Susquehanna Road. The proposal is that, instead of a walkway to nowhere, build a sidewalk going from that walkway down to The Fairway. He asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Spiegelman said it would be a connector to the existing sidewalk.

Commissioner Winegrad agreed, and it would be a safe walkway from the Abington Free Library all the way to The Fairway, and he would like to see it finished.

Mr. Hassan said the project as proposed would be covered under the grant noting that he would raise the sidewalk to act as a gutter line so that any stormwater runoff from Susquehanna will flow down towards a stormwater management facility at the entrance and no private property would be affected by stormwater runoff.

Ms. Patti Platt, Manager of Projects & Grants, clarified that the match required by the Township is 20% and there are various options, and this would be a great opportunity for the Township as well as a “game-changer” for that community as many use this trail.

Mr. Hassan added that a submission will need to be made to the County committing to the project and agreement to the required 20% match.

Commissioner Bole asked who would be responsible for snow removal and maintenance?

Mr. Hassan replied that every property owner is responsible for maintenance and upkeep along the frontage of their property.

Ms. Platt agreed that the abutting property owner is responsible for any maintenance.

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to recommend approval to the full Board of Commissioners to consider submitting an application for the Montco 2040 Grant for this project.

Commissioner Winegrad asked for any public comment.

Lora Lehmann expressed concern that Susquehanna Road is dangerous along Vinegar Hill and suggested that the trail not go out to the main road.

Gene Geld asked has it been estimated how many septuagenarians and octogenarians will use this walkway, and will Rydal Park have increased liability in clearing the walkway and are they willing to accept that liability?

Commissioner Winegrad replied he does not know how many septuagenarians and octogenarians use it; however, he has walked the interior walkway of Rydal Waters and has seen people of all ages.

Mr. Hassan added that there is a code requirement that property owners, after being notified by the municipality, have a certain amount of time to install sidewalk along the frontage of their property and are responsible for any future improvements as well as maintenance.

Commissioner Spiegelman said this area of sidewalk is very small relative to what Rydal Park already is responsible for clearing.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:

Lora Lehmann asked that the agenda list the participants of the meeting as well as note that public comment will be taken after each agenda item; also, she expressed concern about the tax increase.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary