

MINUTES

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

November 18, 2021

CALL TO ORDER: 7:08 p.m.

PRESENT: Committee Members: Chairman Vahey, Vice Chairman Winegrad-Carswell-Hecker
Excused: Commissioner Myers

OTHERS: Finance Director Hermann
Township Manager Manfredi
Manager of Financial Services Embery

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Hecker to approve the minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of October 21, 2021.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

PRESENTATIONS:

Fire Projects Discussion:

Mr. McAneney said regarding the Abington Fire Department as a whole; certain fire companies have completed several projects with some currently in the pipeline to begin that were delayed due to COVID. McKinley Fire Company had a roof repair over the lobby part of their firehouse, and they are in the process of having its HVAC system worked on and it is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Weldon Fire Company has regraded and repaved the parking lot and the apparatus ramp as well as installed sidewalks in the front including doing some drain work; also, interior of the engine bays were repainted, and the apparatus bay floors were refinished with nonskid coating. They also installed new gear racks for hanging bunker gear and the installation of a diesel vehicle exhaust system will be delayed until January.

Edge Hill Fire Company has completed replacement of the HVAC system for the apparatus bays, offices and meeting room; also, they had a key fab system installed for the exterior and interior doors of the firehouse as well as a video security system for inside/outside of the firehouse; replaced the air compressor that provides compressed air for the breaking system of the apparatus, and they are in the process of redoing the lavatories, which will involve the bidding process and that will be done in the first quarter of 2022.

Roslyn Fire Company has done a major refit of the inside of their firehouse renovating the kitchen, crew room, first and second floor bathrooms; repurposed unused office space on the second floor to create bunk rooms for overnight staff particularly during snowstorms as well as installed a security system.

The Abington Fire Company has held off any renovations as they are waiting to see what the final plan will be for the Township's municipal complex.

Over the past several years, the radio replacement project was completed as the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety & Communications upgraded their portable radio systems with digital encrypted radios for the police, fire, and EMS departments. Also, in 2020, there was a major renovation to the fire training burn building.

Commissioner Vahey asked what projects were completed using funds from the 2019 fire tax increase?

Mr. McAneney replied that a major portion of the tax increase had to do with projects for the fire companies, and although the radio upgrade predates the 2019 tax increase, some monies from that tax increase were allotted to the radio project as well as for the burn building upgrade.

Ms. Hermann added that the fire tax covers both fire capital and fire operating expenses, and in the operating budget, there is a transfer to capital and all funds come from fire tax revenue, so the fire tax was increased to assist with capital projects.

Commissioner Vahey clarified that he only sees the transfers to the Fire Department and not what the money was actually used for, and he wants an itemization on how that money is being spent; also, he would like to get a sense of what the next five years looks like to plan appropriately, and if that could be put together, it would be helpful.

Mr. McAneney replied we are just now ending our most recent five-year strategic plan in which he will provide further background information, and he will also send an itemization of capital items. Also, the new five-year strategic planning cycle begins in 2022.

Ms. Hermann added that the capital reports include fire capital line items for the current year's activity; also, the five-year strategic plan denotes all capital projects, which is in the back of the budget book under the capital section.

Manager Manfredi noted that the 2019 fire tax increase was specific to fund the five-year strategic plan.

Ms. Hermann said the capital fund showing the fire department's line items begins with the account number 091.

Commissioner Vahey clarified that all line items beginning with 091 account number were funded by the 2019 tax increase. Is that correct? Also, are the vouchers listed in the report?

Ms. Hermann replied yes, all line items relate to the 2019 tax increase and all paid bills are listed in the voucher list.

Commissioner Carswell questioned whether the projects that were delayed due to COVID will be postponed further.

Mr. McAneney replied now that we have begun coming out of the pandemic a lot of the projects will begin moving forward.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Finance Committee reviewed financial reports from October 2021 including Investments, Clearing Fund; Deferred Revenue/Expense Activity; Petty Cash Balances; Travel Expenses and Statement of Conditions.

Item FC-01-120921:

Commissioner Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Winegrad to approve the October 2021 expenditures in the amount of \$4,286,771.90 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$1,973,404.78 and authorize the proper officials to sign vouchers in payment of bills and contracts as they mature through the month of January 2022.

Commissioner Vahey asked for further clarification on the State's allocation to the fire department.

Ms. Embery replied that is fire tax money the Township receives from the State that must be distributed equally to each of the five fire companies by September.

Commissioner Vahey clarified that each fire company received approximately \$69,000. Is that correct?

Ms. Embery replied that is correct.

Commissioner Vahey asked for a copy of the audits for the fire companies.

Commissioner Vahey asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

Commissioner Vahey asked for any public comments. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

Item FC-02-120921:

Commissioner Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Hecker to authorize the Budget Transfers and supplemental appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2021.

Commissioner Vahey asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

Commissioner Vahey asked for any public comments. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

Item FC-03-120921:

Commissioner Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Winegrad to authorize an expenditure from Unallocated General Fund Balance (Account #01-00-000-5999) in the amount of \$45,855.00 (2021 allotment) to be distributed equally (\$9,171.00) among the five volunteer fire companies serving Abington Township.

Commissioner Vahey clarified that this is payment in-lieu-of taxes in which a portion is being distributed to the fire companies and it is not from the general fund balance. Is that correct?

Ms. Hermann replied that is correct. This is LOSAP (Length of Service Award Program) funding that is put into a revenue account and then the appropriate portions are paid out to the fire companies.

Commissioner Vahey asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

Commissioner Vahey asked for any public comments. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

Item FC-04-120921:

Mr. Mike Filmyer with Atlas Technical Consultants (formally BCM Engineers), said we performed the site inspection of the project, and the applicant posted an escrow prior to the start of the project in the amount of \$223,047.55, and the applicant is currently requesting a partial withdrawal of \$190,267.00 and there is still \$17,880.05 held for public improvements.

Atlas Technical Consultants recommends that the site work and stormwater facilities be accepted by the Township, and the requested escrow release of \$190,267.00 to be approved.

Commissioner Vahey asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Winegrad asked about the process of holding escrow.

Manager Manfredi replied that a release for escrow first goes through his office and then the engineering department performs an inspection to determine whether the work that was completed was done appropriately, and then the Board of Commissioners considers approving the request for release of escrow at a public meeting.

Commissioner Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Winegrad to approve partial release of escrow in the amount of \$190,267.00 for Abington Memorial Hospital Woodland Road Garage Project.

Commissioner Vahey asked for any public comments. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

Item FC-05-120921:

Ms. Allison Lee, Pennoni Associates, said that the land development project has been satisfactorily completed for Abington High School's addition and renovation project and there is a request for partial release of escrow #1 in the amount of \$1,299,577.03 and recommendation of approval for the release is noted in Pennoni's letter dated October 7, 2021.

Commissioner Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Winegrad to approve release of escrow #1 in the amount of \$1,299,577.03 for the Abington Senior High School project.

Commissioner Vahey asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

Commissioner Vahey asked for any public comments. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

Item FC-06-120921:

Manager Manfredi explained that previously, there was an RFP process in which Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. was selected, and they are requesting a change order for effort outside the scope of the original contract with Abington Township to complete the Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan, despite challenges to the project during 2020, with a commitment to complete the project in 2021. The estimated change order and revised schedules for the remaining portion of Task 2- Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan were presented in Tables 1 and 2 as provided to the Finance Committee.

Township staff, along with Pennoni Associates met with reps of Wood to verify that all tasks were being worked on to complete the Stormwater Management Plan and to evaluate whether their request for a change order for additional costs makes sense warranting the change order.

Before the Finance Committee this evening is authorization to approve the change order in the amount as listed for the Stormwater Management Plan to be completed.

Ms. Allison Lee added that proposal from Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. was \$146,300.00 and there were invoices paid with some outstanding, but overall, they are willing to complete the Stormwater Management Plan with the amount of money in the change order in addition to being paid what is outstanding.

Commissioner Vahey asked where will the funds come from?

Manager Manfredi replied there is money available in this year's budget for this project.

Ms. Hermann added that there are funds available in the 2021 budget as well as funds were budgeted for 2022 to get this plan completed.

Commissioner Vahey commented that he is not in favor of this at all.

Ms. Lee said the Township does need to have a Stormwater Management Plan to comply with demands by DEP. This project is to identify existing infrastructure within the Township as well as determine what is needed to manage stormwater as there are a lot of drainage and flooding issues, and the projects could be done in phases. The study is necessary to evaluate and plan.

Manager Manfredi said when the Board decided the Township needed to have a Stormwater Management Plan, we budgeted for a study to be done to evaluate areas where there are stormwater management issues within the Township, and if we do not move forward, we will not have a completed study.

Mr. Filmyer added that the Township has an MS4 (Municipal Storm Sewer System) permit with the PA DEP to discharge its stormwater into the stream and the permit is renewed every five years. The latest permit application is dated 2018, and DEP has looked at all the streams in the State and has decided whether the streams are impaired or not, and in Abington Township, every stream is in impaired.

For the MS4 permit, DEP has enacted TMDL's (Total Maximum Daily Load) that a stream can take, and in Abington, there is the Wissahickon and Sandy Run Creeks, but for the other two drainage sheds in the Township, they have pollution control plans where they want 10% reduction in solids and nutrients in the streams in those watersheds. The project that the Township has been funding since 2003 has concentrated on the Wissahickon Creek, which is the priority with the TMDL; however, the TMDL report written in 2018 for the permit application has permits throughout the Township. Part of the Stormwater Management Plan is to consider looking at funding measures such as a stormwater management fee or a Stormwater Management Authority.

Manager Manfredi continued that all measures taken with respect to stormwater management need to relate to the Stormwater Management Plan, and every year, Mr. Filmyer updates the Township's MS4 plan that is submitted to DEP.

Commissioner Vahey asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Carswell said once the Stormwater Management Plan is completed, how will the Township stay focused on the projects that need to be done?

Manager Manfredi replied when the Stormwater Management Plan is completed, it will first be sent to the Infrastructure Committee to consider how that plan fits in with the infrastructure plan and how will it be implemented over time.

Commissioner Vahey said he would like to meet with the Manager to discuss this further as he is very skeptical about paying more for this plan.

Commissioner Carswell suggested that this could be passed onto the full Board without recommendation to provide more time for further review.

Commissioner Winegrad clarified that the change order request is for additional \$36,029 over and above what was originally budgeted. Is that correct?

Manager Manfredi replied yes.

Commissioner Winegrad said, although the plan has not been completed, could part of it be used?

Manager Manfredi replied yes, but we cannot use it to get permits approved because it will be incomplete.

Commissioner Hecker questioned whether the Board needs to approve this in December for the planning process to continue or could it be put off until January.

Manager Manfredi replied that it should not be put off because we will lose time on the various projects that we have aligned, and he will discuss this further with Commissioner Vahey as well as provide more information in advance of the December Board meeting.

Commissioner Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Carswell to advance Item FC-06-120921 onto the Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting in December without recommendation.

Commissioner Vahey asked for any public comments. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary