

**MINUTES**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**(via Zoom webinar)**

**June 16, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER:** 7:03 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Committee Members: Vahey Chairman-Winegrad Vice  
Chairman-Luker-Myers-Carswell

**OTHERS:** Finance Director Hermann  
Township Manager Manfredi  
Community Development Director Strother

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Commissioner Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Luker to approve the minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of May 19, 2020.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

**PRESENTATIONS:** None.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Investments for the month of May 2020:

Finance Committee reviewed May investments.

Item FC-01-070920 – Consider a motion to approve expenditures, salaries and wages for May 2020:

Commissioner Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Myers to approve the May 2020 expenditures in the amount of \$4,681,750.36 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$1,967,927.49 and authorize proper Township officials to sign vouchers in payment of bills and contracts as they mature through the month of August 2020.

Commissioner Winegrad questioned voucher #2339 – Principal Sewer Payment.

Ms. Hermann replied that is a 2013 bond payment.

Commissioner Winegrad said since the 2013 bond has been paid, what about any new bonds.

Manager Manfredi replied as soon as we have a better understanding of the financial markets as well as what the impact will be due to delayed payment of taxes, which we should know by August, we can then determine whether to refinance bonds going forward.

Commissioner Myers asked about two large payments from Campbell, Durant P.C. Labor Attorney.

Manager Manfredi replied he will look into it and report back.

Commissioner Myers asked about Solicitor's fee for Switchville Crossing development.

Manager Manfredi replied legal expenses are paid through escrow from the developer.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0. Commissioner Carswell temporarily left the meeting.

Item FC-02-070920 – Consider a motion to approve the Clearing Fund activity, Deferred Revenue/Expense activity and Petty Cash disbursements for May 2020:

Commissioner Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Luker to approve the Clearing Fund, the Deferred Revenue/Expense activity and Petty Cash balances for the month of May 2020. Clearing fund receipts and disbursements for the month of May 2020 were \$19,871.71 and (\$21,572.60), respectively. Deferred Revenue/Expense receipts and disbursements for the month of May 2020 were \$0.00 and (\$27.00), respectively.

Commissioner Winegrad referred to the CDBG item listed in the report and clarified that there is a separate account for those funds. Is that correct?

Mr. Strother replied that is correct.

Ms. Hermann added that a separate account for CDBG funds is a requirement of the Federal government.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0. Commissioner Carswell temporarily left the meeting.

Item FC-03-070920 – Consider a motion to approve Training and Conference Expenditures, May 2020:

Commissioner Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Luker to approve the Travel Expense activity for May 2020. Travel Expenses were (\$3,160.00) and five-month expenses totaled \$11,018.80.

Manager Manfredi said conferences were canceled or held virtually.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0. Commissioner Carswell temporarily left the meeting.

**STATEMENT OF CONDITIONS -VARIOUS FUNDS:**

Finance Committee reviewed Statement of Conditions for various funds.

Commissioner Winegrad clarified that the Township has put a freeze on any nonessential capital expenditures. Is that correct?

Manager Manfredi replied not only capital, but operating as well. However, we are permitting some part-time employees to return to work to prepare for reopening in various departments.

Commissioner Carswell reentered the meeting.

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

**CONTINGENCY EXPENSE REPORTS:**

Finance Committee reviewed Contingency Expense reports.

Commissioner Vahey asked for any public comments.

Lora Lehmann asked about \$150,000 contingency item from last year and this year's \$485,000 contingency item.

Commissioner Vahey replied he will respond in writing regarding the \$150,000 contingency item and the \$485,000 is a budget line item of the general fund.

Discussion – Proposed FFY 2020 CDBG Budget:

Mr. Van Strother, Community Development Director, said this presentation is on the proposed use of FFY 2020 CDBG funds. Allocation to the Township is \$781,251.00 and FFY begins October 1, 2020 until September 30, 2021. There are a series of steps that need to be taken to get this award and failure to meet requirements would result in loss of allocation. Timeline; announcement of Federal funds was made on May 25, 2020 and it was published in the Times Chronicle that Abington Township has an allocation of funds, and if anyone has any comments on how it should be used, the Township has a scheduled public meeting on June 11, 2020. Following that meeting, there will be a 30-day comment period to receive comments from the public. At the end of that 30-day period, the Township will provide a suggestion on how to use the allocation. There will be another advertisement in the newspaper on how the Township plans to use the funds and the public has 30-days to make comments.

Due to the Consolidated Plan as well as Impediments of Fair Housing; a second public meeting is required for public comment before moving onto finalizing the five-year plan and the impediments of fair housing. There is a deadline of August 13, 2020 for the proposed use to be presented to the governing body for final approval and then it will be submitted to the Federal government the following day. Posting of proposed budget has to be sent to the newspaper by Monday, July 6, 2020 for publication on July 13, 2020. Project needs to be shovel-ready and not dependent on any approvals or conditions and also needs to meet the timeliness test by the Federal government.

The first virtual public meeting was held on Wednesday, June 11, 2020 at 10 a.m. and there was a total of seven participants with three nonprofit organizations represented; the Willow Grove Community Development Corporation; Interfaith Housing Alliance representing the food cupboard operating from the Living Word Church and the Salem Senior Center. The Township received three written and oral requests for funding for fiscal year 2020 as prescribed in the public notice and one verbal request.

From the Commissioners; there were requests to support the food bank operated by Interfaith Housing Alliance; also for the area of Old Welsh Road and then the Township was informed that the County will be making improvements of handicap ramps at the intersection of Old Welsh Road, so if the Township proceeds with residential sidewalks, those improvements will already be made, and funds for that would not come from this allocation.

From the public; there were requests to expand existing senior center; food bank operation expansion; tenant rental assistance and an undeclared request not articulated from a member of the public. The Willow Grove Community Development Corporation requested tenant rental assistance because there has been a significant decrease in rental income due to tenants not working because of the economic impact of the pandemic.

As part of his due diligence, he toured the existing senior center, which needs renovating to serve the seniors of Eastern Montgomery County, and that would include expanding the operation from two to four-five days a week, and he recommended to continue supporting it as a multiyear project using CDBG funds.

Commissioner Carswell asked what services would be offered five-days a week?

Mr. Strother replied the goal would be to have a forward-thinking innovative full-service senior center located in a 6,600 sq. ft. building that would serve the seniors of the County, and seniors are deemed an income-eligible population.

Commissioner Vahey asked for clarification on which building would be improved.

Mr. Strother replied the Living Word Lutheran Church has a two-story building in the rear of the property that would be renovated for the senior center and that is where the food bank currently operates and the food bank would be relocated to a residential building, a parsonage on Easton Road owned by the same church.

Commissioner Vahey asked for an estimated cost on the multiyear project.

Mr. Strother replied approximately \$800,000-\$1 million dollars. Cost analysis would be performed with prevailing wage to be done in phases. Food bank would be relocated prior to any renovations to the senior center.

Commissioner Myers asked would Salem Baptist Church operate the senior center; what is the estimated cost of renovations and how many seniors would a 6,000 sq. ft. building accommodate comfortably?

Mr. Strother replied no, it is a separate entity contracted with the County. Schematic plans and cost estimate of renovations will be presented to the Finance Committee. It is a two-story facility with rooms for activities on the ground floor and a large gathering room upstairs for dining and activities serving approximately over 100 seniors.

Commissioner Luker asked how much would the County pay towards this project?

Mr. Strother replied he needs permission by Township Manager to find out more information from the County.

Commissioner Carswell asked for further clarification on the size of the building as well as the amount of parking spaces.

Mr. Strother replied the building is a total of 6,600 sq. ft. each floor 3,300 sq. ft. Core functions and activities would be held in the two-story building, but there can also be activities in the church facility.

Commissioner Luker suggested an onsite visit.

Mr. Strother replied it would not be a hardship to arrange a tour of the facility.

Finance Committee expressed their support of the senior center renovation project.

Commissioner Vahey asked for any public comments.

La Don Marsh, said he is Chairman of Department of Finance and he is on the line with Reverend Marshall Mitchell, and there are about 150 people currently in the senior program, although they have not met during the pandemic; however, they are anxiously waiting to get back to the facility. It was a two-day a week operation and we are looking to expand to four-five days a week. Some of the services offered were a computer lab and social services. First Fruits Program administers food for families in need and we would like to expand that. Touring the facility can be arranged, he just needs to know the date/time. The senior center can be accessed from the parking lot and access to the second floor would need some type of lift system as part of the renovation and a commercial kitchen is also needed.

Commissioner Myers questioned whether the senior center would be serving lunches as part of the service. Also, seniors may be in need of a food bank, which is accessible from both buildings, so it would be a multi-service area.

Mr. Marsh replied absolutely.

Commissioner Winegrad questioned whether purchase is under agreement.

Mr. Marsh replied yes, and due to close within the next 45-days.

Ms. Harriet Luker asked about the building being used for something other than a senior center.

Mr. Strother replied it has been solely used for seniors.

Ms. Harriet Luker questioned whether some of the funds could go to the church to enhance the senior center and some provided to another needy organization.

Mr. Strother replied he does not feel that would serve a broader population.

Ms. Harriet Luker questioned whether some of the funds could be spent elsewhere where it is needed.

Mr. Strother replied the beneficiary is the seniors in which there is a large population having access to it.

Ms. Harriet Luker questioned the County's role in this project.

Mr. Strother replied it is unknown.

Reverend Marshall Mitchell thanked the Finance Committee for their consideration of the project. This church is a "beehive" of activity in the community and the intension is to continue to be intergenerational. Living Word is meeting human need beyond just their faith and Salem married with Living Word could multiply its impact in particular to seniors as well as to those who are hungry. By acquiring the property, we would have a dedicated senior facility and a food bank on the same campus.

Lora Lehmann expressed concern about \$1 million dollars of public money to embellish a facility of the church.

Mr. Strother replied the beneficiaries will be the seniors and both churches are nonprofit charitable entities serving the community, and CDBG funds nationwide are used to support senior centers.

Commissioner Vahey questioned the timeline of the process.

Mr. Strother replied there is a deadline of July 6, 2020 that the proposed use needs to be sent for publication of the 2020 CDBG funds, so it is published on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 30-days prior to August 13<sup>th</sup> when the Board of Commissioners makes its final decision. He suggested prior to July 6<sup>th</sup> to have a tour of the facility.

Commissioner Vahey agreed to the scheduling of a tour for the entire Board of Commissioners, and he asked for the Finance Committee to review the budget for the project prior to publication.

Mr. Strother agreed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT – general matters of Finance.**

Lora Lehmann expressed concern that this is not an acceptable use of this money; also, about the amount for construction services.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary