Council Discussion Meeting November 16, 2021

Meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm in the Manchester room

Moment of silence and Pledge of Allegiance

Roll call taken by Shannon Ulishney

Council present: Councilmember Cardiff, Councilmember Deabner, Councilmember Perovich, Councilmember Peters, Councilmember Shoub

Council not present: Councilmember Cole, Councilmember Corrales

Other staff present: Borough Manager Ashley Stack and Mayor Llewellyn arrived at 6:59pm

Discussion of Topics:

- Update on First St. paving – Borough manager Ashley Stack received a call from the borough engineer to see when the water company was coming back out to fix First St after the water main break, and the damage it caused under the roadway. Liberoni will be in the borough tomorrow to mill and re-pave the road curb to curb. If any further updates come up this will be forwarded to council.

2022 BUDGET SUMMARY

Revenue Increases

- Fund Balance for Debt Service (temporarily due to bond refinance, after 2023 there will no longer be a surplus as the Debt Principal will drastically increase), 271.00
    1. This was due to the bond refinance- borough did not change the millage- there is a surplus after payoff of debt principal and interest
    2. Once we get to 2023 our debt principal will drastically increase

- General Fund surplus (American Rescue Plan Funding), 289.40

1. Received half of the funding this year, and the other half will come next year- borough tries to have a large surplus so they do not need a loan in the beginning of the year until the borough starts receiving tax money
2. The American Rescue Plan grant came from the federal government

- Real Estate Transfer Tax, 310.10

1. Large increase due to strong housing market- Ashley does not want to make this budget too high incase housing market dips, so it is at a budget borough feels comfortable with sustaining through market changes

- Street Opening Permits, 322.50
    1. There has been an increase in the street opening permits due to Adam pushing the utility companies, and Ashley Stack sent a letter to the 5 utility companies regarding the street opening ordinance

- Rent of Buildings - Manchester Room, 342.20
    1. Last year the budget was low due to covid, but this year it is projected at a normal year, so funding was increased. The Manchester room brings in over 10k a year. This fluctuates year to year with weddings etc. Pavilion rentals went up a lot due to people wanting to hold events outside this past year due to covid-19

- American Rescue Plan Funding, 351.00
    1. This is covid money from the Federal government- the money carried over from last year- $159,044 was given in 2021, and $159,044 will be given in 2022
    2. Councilmember Perovich asks a question on the line item 350.00- he wanted to know if the budgeted amount was for school resource officers only. Ashley Stack answered yes, budgeted amount was $45,000 in 2021, and $47,000 in 2022- the chief of police had communicated the 2k increase to Dr. Harris at Penn Trafford schools

- Pavilion Rental Fees, 367.14
    1. Revenue went up to pre-covid numbers

Revenue Decreases

- Liquid Fuels surplus, 289.20
    1. Viaduct Way project was very costly, and this made the budget decrease. 2021 budget was 105,000 and 2022 is 76,000 (-29,000 difference)

- Violations of Ordinance (due to current Code situation), 331.12
    1. Ashley contributes the decrease due to not having a code officer in the office to do the work during the day, so this fund has been decreased since they do not have enough help with code complaints. Adam was so good at what he was doing when he was working with the borough, but without him full time this account has decreased for revenue, as they do not have someone going around town issuing citations during the day.
    2. People's Gas gave the borough a check for about 2k for permits, but since they are repaving all of the sidewalks the borough is not trying to get more permit money out of the gas company because they are helping the property owners and the borough with all the newly paved streets and sidewalks.

Expenditure Decreases

- Buildings (PW roof repaired), 409.373
    1. The big difference here in the budget from 2021 to 2022 is due to the public works garage roof repair in 2021, so now that the work is complete there is a decrease in the budgeted amount from $10,500 in 2021 to $2,500 in 2022

- Capital Construction, 409.610
    1. A large portion of this decrease was from grant money that was used last year making the 2021 budgeted amount $67,000. 2022 amount is $30,000

- Capital Purchases Machinery (no street sweeper), 409.740
    1. This was budgeted for the street sweeper in 2021 for the first payment, but borough did not get the street sweeper, so this was removed from 2022 budget

- PD pension (police will again be paying a 1% contribution for 2022 per their CBA), 410.197
    1. Because a full-time police officer was hired the borough is receiving more credit from the state
    2. Pension plan is doing really well in the current plan it is in- They were in a more aggressive plan in the past, but now in a moderate plan

Expenditure Increases

- Wages (CBAs/COLA – Admin, Public Works, and Police)
    1. Cost of living increase for borough manager, secretary and collective bargaining agreements with public works and police.
    2. Shannon, borough secretary, completes probationary period Dec 1st, so she will get bumped up to $22/hr at that time

- Capital Purchases (cameras, server, and computers), 406.750
    1. Borough needs new computers for secretary and police
    2. Borough needs a new sever, received one quote, and waiting on a second quote
    3. Very costly, this will cost borough approx. 40k to do it right
    4. Cameras are not installed with the company we purchase from (it includes 21-22 cameras within the Borough at parks (2 at BY, Westmoreland park, Memorial park) and a handful of intersections police would like cameras

installed, 4 in the building, outside the building, and at public works garage. This will get voted on in 2022 at one of the meetings.

5. American rescue funds could be used for funding for some of these costs because it falls under broadband
6. Councilwoman Peters has read an article for a grant, and she is going to look into this, and pass along to council as another means of funding.
7. Councilmember Perovich asks if the panic button for the secretary would be in the proposed budget, and Ashley Stack said no that is separate, but they are working on this as well, as council agrees it is necessary to have for safety. This is approx. $500 up front, and then $40/month
8. Patty in the audience asks if online payments are part of the technology upgrade. Ashley responds this is in the works with x-press pay. Irwin borough uses Elevon and x-press pay as well, and if all goes well this could be up and running within 2-week timeframe. Right now, the borough will not charge the customer to use the online payment. They will revisit next year once they see how this goes, and then they can add to the fee schedule. This online payment system will cover everything from permits to sewage bills to police fines. Council President Cardiff would like to have this up and running by the next round of sewage billing

- Engineering Services (per current rate of inflation), 408.313
    1. This is for Glenn Engineering, and this is the current rate of inflation, he has been busy on projects. 2021 budget was $38,000, and 2022 is $50,000
- Ambulance/Rescue (call volume in borough), 412.00

1. This is for Penn Township Ambulance. They are requesting an increase from 6k to 10k- a letter was sent from Ed Grant stating the following:

Dear Ms. Stack,

Penn Township Ambulance is requesting an increase in our 2022 allocation. To keep from a degradation in providing the exceptional Emergency Medical Services to the residents, visitors, and students in the borough. We must maintain a competitive wage to retain and recruit credentialed personnel. With a reduced available labor force of certified EMS candidates, we are forced to increase salaries of our employees. Your continued investment in Penn Township Ambulance gives the borough a vital service. Our stake in the borough is equally met with a dedication of professional service to the lives that require life support. I am requesting an addition of $4,000.00. About 15% of our 911 responses are within the borough. Residential and business contributors to our State of Readiness plan is less than 25% within the borough. I have attached the latest Annual Income/Expense Report. I hope Council will consider and votes in favor of our request. I am available to meet to answer any questions or concerns. It is our mission to impact lives and use our resources to alter incidents that lead to positive outcomes. Your partnership with our agency enhances the quality of life to the residents.

2. A question was brought up by Councilmember Shoub asking if Penn Township Ambulance would consider transporting 302 patients. Currently, they will not transport and have police do this service, however, police feel like this a medical emergency and should be handled by the paramedics. They propose having a meeting with Ed Grant, Chief Disso, and council to see if this could be worked out.

Expenditure Increases (continued)

- Maintenance and Repairs (Meadow Street CDBG grant match, Hillcrest project, street paving on the Terrace), 438.00
    1. Drastically increasing 2021 $300,000 to 2022 $515,000
    2. Meadow St CDBG grant- working on easement, property owner has this now to sign and return. Glenn Engineering plans on sending bid out early after the first of the new year
    3. Hillcrest project has already been awarded, and this is slated for early spring. This project came in at almost $500,000- funds will come from American Rescue plan. The amount is higher than what was given by the federal government, however, the remaining will be taken out of our sewage fund.
    4. Money is also planned to pave on the Terrace

- Debt Principal, 471.20
    1. Bond Refinance- this will start to increase

- Computer Hardware (server and computer), 429.270 (Sewage Fund)
    1. Borough secretary needing a computer- money can come out of the sewage fund to account for this, and goes along with discussion before with all the technology needing updated in the borough

- Sewer (ALCOSAN rate increases), 429.364 (Sewage Fund)
    1. Council needs to pass a resolution at the December meeting on the new rates
    2. Rates are going up $9.73 per 1000 gallons
    3. Borough keeping rate the same at $6.00 per 1000 gallons
    4. Alcosan service fee is increasing to $20.45
    5. Minimum quarterly bill will now be $132.83 vs $127.71 that it was in 2021
    6. This is a 7% increase

- Capital Construction (Hillcrest project), 429.650 (Sewage Fund)
    1. Sanitary portion of Hillcrest project falls

Other Discussion Topics

A. Regarding liability and workers comp, the borough broker was hoping to hear something today with numbers. Ashley will follow up tomorrow morning, but she will most likely increase the numbers for the budget because you never know what could come your way, so she will increase both the WC and Liability budget

B. President Cardiff poses a question asking when Alcosan may stop the increase of sewage rates. They do not see this happening in the foreseeable future
C. President Cardiff notes that the borough is not proposing any tax increase, no sewage increase on borough's end, and no tax anticipation loan. He would like to thank the borough admin staff on keeping the budget tight each year. He expresses his appreciation for staying in the budgeted limits.
D. Councilmember Perovich asks if Borough has the same health insurance for everyone in the borough. Ashley said that public works, admin, and police are all offered the same health plan, and this saves the borough a lot of money. Under UPMC for a family plan an average cost would be $3000, but borough only pays $1400 through Western PA Teamsters and Employer Welfare Fund. No choice in plans currently, single and family rate charged the same. The vision and dental are different though. Public works and Admin are through MEIT, but police dental and vision are through the union. The cost is split through general fund and sewage.
E. Councilwoman Peters poses a question asking how much of a cost of living raise are employees receiving.
    - Borough manager (a little over 3%)
    - Public works CBA states 2%
    - Actual cost of living based on consumer price index is 5.9%
F. George Klipa in the audience wants to thank council for coming through on suggestions that the community had regarding the fence being put up on Edgewood and the increase in police presence. He can notice a difference within the borough. He is grateful for how quickly everyone moved on the suggestions. He wants to thank Casey on all he did over the years, and congratulate all new council, and wish everyone a blessed 2022. He was happy to see the Bandy building being taken care of. At one time it was a nice building. Council President said he appreciates the thank you from George.
G. Lynwood Leeman would like to thank the borough and council for working hard, and he hopes the new council will work just as hard. George and Lynwood express thanks to the police and noted that other towns do not have a strong police force. President Cardiff is thankful that the discussion meetings turned out to be what they were created for, to address issues, and then take action. Mr. Klipa said public works is easy to pick on, but they are the same guys that are out plowing snow at 2:00 am, but due to small staff and little means the public works staff seem to be reactive vs proactive when getting stuff done. It would be nice to be more proactive.

H. Patty asks the council what is happening with 302 Duq Ave – Ashley Stack lets everyone know that the borough has tried to talk to the new property owner about backed taxes and sewage owed on the property in hopes he walks away so property can be razed. There was no lien check on property, it was sold as is. He listed this for sale last Friday and pulled off market Tuesday morning. He called Borough office Tuesday November 16, 2021 saying checks needed are on the way, and he has hired an engineer. No permits will be issued until he has paid the borough what was owed for sewage, and what they requested for demolition escrow. Borough can withhold permits under act 90. Councilmember Shoub says the lot would be worth more empty then with the house

on it currently. $15,000 is owed in backed taxes- the county is on this, but it is a slow process.

I. Lynwood Leeman has a question on opening of streets- Forth St has had 2 openings, and the gas company only patched the hole. Ashley said the public works foreman is going to be going around to compile a list of all items, and Ashley will address with contractor (water company or gas company). Gilmore is a special case because borough just paved the road, so when the gas company had to cut into the road again they did pave it instead of just patching it. People's Gas was cooperative in doing this street since borough just fixed Gilmore. Mr. Leeman also wanted to know why the borough does not take down the swings when it is cold because the kids just swing the swings around the posts. Borough has not taken the swings down in the past. They stay up all year round.

J. Councilmember Perovich asked if discussion meetings can be pushed up to 7:00 pm because he had some people say they cannot get to meetings due to working if it is so early. Council President Cardiff answers that the reasoning for the 6:00 meeting is so they do not run over until 9 or 10pm. He thinks leaving the time at 6 is good, but asks for input from other council. Mayor Llewellyn suggests a 6:30 start time for discussion meetings.

Council meetings will stay at 7:00pm, and discussion meetings will be 6:30 to bring to December meeting agenda

Adjournment – next regular council meeting will be Tuesday Dec 7th at 7pm in the council chambers.

Motion to adjourn- Councilmember Deabner

Second to adjourn- Councilwoman Peters

Meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm