

BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT – JULY 12, 2021

Members: Ressler, Chairman; Richard, Member; Zimmerman, Alternate; Thompson, Bartow, Staff

Attendees: Ressler, Chairman; Richard, Member; Zimmerman, Alternate; Council President Rowe; Martin, Barr, Council; Thompson, Bartow, Staff; 2 Guests

The Budget & Finance Committee met on June 28, 2021, and discussed the following:

Action Items:

1. None

Discussion Items:

1. Ms. Bartow updated the Committee on disconnection statistics as of June 24, 2021. There were 53 accounts (an improvement of 98 accounts from the prior month) that are subject to disconnections totaling \$37,482. Of that amount \$17,002 is for 27 units that are tenant occupied and \$20,480 is for 26 owner-occupied units. This balance is primarily for Group 3, which is scheduled for June 29th disconnects. Groups 1 and 2, which had disconnections on June 10th and June 17th, respectively, have 3 customers remaining disconnected. There are 16 Emergency Rental Assistant Program (ERAP) applications filed as of this date, with 7 being approved and 9 pending. No further action is required.
2. The Committee reviewed the Maher Duessel 2020 audit report, which resulted in an unmodified opinion stating “the financial statements.... present fairly in all material respects... the financial position.” As is customary, with the completion of the 2020 audit, the website has been updated with the 2021 Budget. Work for the 2022 Budget has also commenced; Capital Projects and Personnel Allocations will be worked on in July, followed by Operating Budget requests in August. Management suggestions for American Rescue Plan funds will be reviewed in coordination with the Budget process. No further action is required.
3. The Committee discussed discontinuing customer payments at Ephrata National Bank branches due primarily to low utilization. The Committee was supportive of this suggestion. Timing will be in the Fall and will be announced to customers in a flyer regarding “ways to pay,” which will be coordinated with movement of the Borough office drop-box, etc. No further action is required.
4. The Committee discussed adding “Prime” to its PLGIT portfolio to increase allowable investment options. This is in alignment with the Borough’s Investment Policy that establishes preservation of principal as its primary goal while providing slightly higher yields. Ms. Bartow will follow up with the required authorizations.
5. Staff provided a report on a solicitor’s invoice. The first was a summary page and the second report is the detailed invoice. No further action is required.
6. Staff provided the Check and ACH registers to the Committee for June to date. No further action is required.

Old Business Items:

1. Staff provided the Committee with an updated American Rescue Plan Act funding amount of \$1,450,924.62. Initial discussion of Management suggestions is expected at the August meeting, and as aforementioned will also coordinated with the 2022-2024 Budget Processes. Funds need to be spent by December 31, 2024.
2. Staff updated the Committee on the status of the credit card fee matter. Migration to the Cloud version of the Springbrook software is anticipated to occur by calendar year end. Due diligence as to the functional status of the bridge between the software and the AMI electric meters is necessary to ensure a successful transition.
3. Staff reported conversations regarding potential Borough Parking with leadership of the Ephrata Pioneer Fire Company are pending their response.
4. Regarding potential revenue sources, Staff discussed the issues regarding Storm Water Usage Fees, which are not currently plausible unless an Authority is established. However, Staff also relayed that an increase of Grants applications to offset expenditures. The request letters for Payments in Lieu of Taxes had not been issued during the pandemic; Staff will revisit as timing allows.