

August 02, 2021

Members present: Daniels, Schaber, Meade

With a quorum present, Daniels called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**Minutes**

**Old Business:**

**New Business**

**Item 1. tempORD 2021-59: ORDINANCE MAKING AN ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION IN VARIOUS FUNDS FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2021 (Chaffin)**

Mayor Schertzer provided handouts to the committee. Appendix 1 lays out the qualifiable expenses under ARPA. This is a starting point in his mind. If council members have idea, they need to discuss them. From his experience working with federal grant programs, they should go after the qualifiable expenses first. He also provided a list of 7 items from Neff and Fosnaugh of project ideas. While he agrees with the ideas, he does not believe that any of them are qualifiable expenses (per handout).

List of items submitted by Fosnaugh/Neff;

1. Exhaust systems for Fire Station 2 and 3
2. Clearance of every structurally unsound home in the city that we can take action on.
3. Consultation services for Station 1 replacement (site location, size, features, cost)
4. Targeted housing program to arrest blight
5. Sewer improvements to target flooding
6. Small business relief
7. Station 1 replacement

Schertzer explained history of land bank and demotion projects. The cost continues to rise because of EPA and ODH. The city program was transitioned to the county land bank several years ago and that is how demolition takes place. It is administered by Regional Planning. There are many steps prior to a demolition, including due process. The county land bank is sitting on a half a million dollars. They have not torn down a residence this year. They have an expedited foreclosure process with attorneys on retainer but have not done it. Schertzer sits on the board but is only one vote.

A fire station would take all of the ARPA money plus another \$2 million. A levy would almost need to be passed for this.

Schertzer said that there are new funds being released through a competitive grant opportunity -- Investing in Ohio's Future Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Grant. They are exploring that and others. There is a bill pending before the US Senate that will

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result in billions of dollars for infrastructure improvements. There is a bill in the US House of Representatives to address state flooding mitigation.

There are state and federal programs directed towards small business relief.

ARPA is specifically for the political subdivisions. It is his opinion that they should go with the qualifiable expenses first. To do that, an appropriation must be done. Qualifiable expenses are often a reimbursement and will open up other money.

Schertzer distinguished between direct and indirect expenditures. This appropriation will help them to start moving forward on qualifiable expenses that many times are a reimbursement and may open up opportunities for "indirect" expenditures.

Mrs. Fosnaugh (5<sup>th</sup> Ward City Council) said she has talked with Regional Planning. She believes that demolition should be a qualifiable expense under infrastructure. Schertzer said that is not their infrastructure. The city does not own them. Schertzer invited Council Members to attend the County Land Bank meetings. Fosnaugh asked what they need to do to get some action, if the city is contributing financially. Schertzer explained that the money is received for Land Bank went directly to the Land Bank, not from the City. Only commissioners can expand board.

Fosnaugh stated that there are 129 abandoned homes on the land bank list. 118 are in the city. She wants to know how this money can be used for properties on our land. Schertzer again encouraged council members to come to Land Bank meeting and provide input.

She calculated \$2,000 legal to put in foreclosure; \$20,000 demolition costs. That totals \$936,000 for every home in the city. The Land Bank only has a half million. She thinks they should give money to the land bank as a goodwill gesture to move forward. Schertzer encouraged her to come to the meetings to understand the process. Not every abandoned home meets the criteria to be demolished by the Land Bank. Most of those homes are behind in taxes and should have been tax foreclosed on years ago. These issues has been raised multiple time over multiple years. The total unpaid taxes was as much as \$9 million and then it decreased. If homes are demolished, they will not collect the taxes but they will remove the blight. Fosnaugh said that her numbers only include 35 homes demolished.

Mr. Daniels said that he agreed with the Mayor on most of these things. He does not think that these are qualifiable expenses. He thinks that there might be some options for affordable housing (presumed allowable use of the funds). County Land Banks are positioned to spend ARPA cash. He was citing a web site from a Columbus Law Firm. He thinks there may be option under remediation of lead.

Daniels said that they need to decide what is agreeable to council members and prioritize to decide what is a priority. There are two payments of ARPA money.

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Schertzer said that administration is interested in direct qualifiable expenses then go to indirect. One qualifiable expense is law enforcement. They cannot do anything until money is appropriated. They cannot move on to indirect costs. He suggests that they work with the County Land Bank, because the city no longer has a land bank structure. Fosnaugh wondered if they could designate money specifically for structures in the city. It was believed that they could. Schertzer again encouraged council members to come to land bank meetings. Schertzer said they needed to figure out how much money is coming to land banks directly. There may be no need for additional money if they knew that information. They expect them to get another half a million dollars direct. Schertzer said that lost revenues are qualifiable expenses, i.e. Senior Center and Aquatics Center.

Schertzer stated that the next county land bank meeting will be held 08/12/2021 at 10AM in Commissioners' chambers.

Tara Dyer (N. Grand Ave.) is against duplicating action. Regional Planning has hired someone specifically devoted to these issues. She is concerned about what happens with the vacant lots after a house is torn down. She encouraged people to participate in the process.

Mayor Schertzer explained that they had to hold title to a property before they could tear it down, under the city's land bank. Under the last grant, the county land bank has to go through the process to hold title to the property. There is due process. They are also looking at options where a property may be able to be rehabilitated.

Mike Neff (City Council At Large) said that he understands the qualifiable expenses. He asked what they need to do for later so that money can be allocated to structurally unsafe homes. They got \$80,000 from CDBG (for next year). Regional Planning provided a list of houses to him. He believes that these properties are a drain to resources and a drain to the property values.

Daniels agreed with Neff that many of these houses are not able to be rehabbed due to extensive structural damage once it has been abandoned for a period of time.

Mayor Schertzer requested that the appropriation be approved and that they move forward on qualifiable expenditures. Investments in parks and outdoor activities are qualifiable expenses.

Neff asked what they would need to do while waiting for indirect expenditures to become available. His number one concern is the ventilation systems for the fire stations. Schertzer said that they will work towards identifying the current estimate. He believes that the savings from direct expenses from the fire department may offset this cost of the systems.

Schaber clarified that the legislation that they are moving forward with the legislation exactly as it was a week ago. Schertzer affirmed.

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Schaber made a motion to recommend to Council; Meade 2nd; Roll Call: Ayes – Daniels, Schaber, Meade; Nays – none.

**tempORD 2021-59 Recommended to Council (3-0)**

**Item 2. Discussion Only tentative language tempRES 2021-21: AN EMERGENCY RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE ONE OHIO MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (Mayor)**

Schertzer explained that RES 2020-10 passed on 02/24/2020. However, the AG called and said they were not on the list. So, they are submitting this. They are awaiting a template for the new resolution. They do not know when they will get the money or how much it will be. The State has a plan in place – One Ohio – to deal with this money. 55% goes to a foundation that deals directly with opioid related issue. A board will be appointed. The state will be divided by regions. Regions will have to submit plans to apply to qualify for the money. 30% goes to political subdivisions. Remainder goes to state and is more discretionary. This may need to be passed on the first reading because a lot of time may not be available.

Russell explained that this is like a class action settlement. This is an option to suing the companies on our own. This affirms that we will not do that. They need to reach a 95% of participating subdivisions. There are various due dates that have been identified, so they are targeting the earliest date.

Schaber made a motion to recommend to Council with the understanding that it will be amended; Meade 2nd; Roll Call: Ayes – Daniels, Schaber, Meade; Nays – none.

**tempRES 2021-21 Recommended to Council (3-0)**

**Other Matters**

**Adjourn**

With no other business, Daniels adjourned the meeting at 7:32 PM.

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Chairman Daniels

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Clerk of Council