

Cuyahoga Falls City Council
Minutes of the Finance and Appropriations Committee Meeting

April 20, 2020

Members: Tim Gorbach, Chair
Drew Reilly
Jeff Iula

Mr. Gorbach called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. All members were present.

The minutes of the March 2, 2020 and March 16, 2020 Finance Committee meetings were approved as written.

Legislation Discussed

Temp. Ord. A-17

Temp. Ord. A-18

Temp. Ord. A-24

Discussion:

Temp. Ord. A-17

An ordinance amending Ordinance 562018 to include Portage Community Bank, as a depository for the active and interim funds of the City of Cuyahoga Falls, and declaring an emergency.

Mr. Bryan Hoffman, Finance Director, presented Temporary Ordinance A-17. The Portage Community Bank has properly submitted an application to hold active and interim deposits of the City as provided by law. Council would designate Portage Community Bank as an additional depository for active and interim funds for the five-year period which began on August 23, 2018 and will end on August 22, 2023. The Mayor and the Director of Finance will be authorized to sign and execute depository contracts with Portage Community Bank as provided by law.

Mr. Iula moved to bring out Temp. Ord. A-17 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. Reilly. Motion passed (3-0).

Temp. Ord. A-18

An ordinance amending section 141.02 of the Codified Ordinances, and declaring an emergency.

Ms. Sara Kline, Parks and Recreation Superintendent, presented Temporary Ordinance A-18. Section 141.02 was originally adopted on January 13, 1954. City budgeting practices should be aligned and adjusted to provide the greatest benefit to the residents whom the City serves requiring the Park and Recreation Board regulations to be amended to reflect the present-day needs for proper administration.

Mr. Gorbach ask Mr. Hoffman if he was in agreement with this ordinance. Mr. Hoffman stated that he was.

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Mr. Reilly moved to bring out Temp. Ord. A-18 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. Iula. Motion passed (3-0).

Temp. Ord. A-24

An ordinance authorizing the Director of Law to enter into a separation agreement and general and mutual release between the City of Cuyahoga Falls, the International Firefighters' Association Local 494, and Jeffrey Utzler in relation to a Fire Department personnel matter, making necessary appropriations for the same, and declaring an emergency.

Ms. Janet Ciotola, Law Director, stated that she had nothing further to add to what was discussed in Executive Session.

Mr. Reilly moved to bring out Temp. Ord. A-24 with a favorable recommendation, second by Mr. Iula.

Mr. Gorbach asked Mr. Hoffman if he would give Council an update as to how the COV-19 pandemic would affect the City. Mr. Hoffman stated that they do not believe this will affect the City of Cuyahoga Falls in terms of finances. As far as RITA, the City has not seen an impact. It is going to be a lagging indicator. They will look at the May numbers to be able to get an idea of the effect on the income tax. RITA has given some projections. What they sent was an eight to eight-and-a-half-percent drop in income taxes that the City may be losing out on this fiscal year, which will affect the City greatly. One of the City's largest employers, GoJo, is doing very well. Hopefully, that will help with some of the numbers coming up in income tax. They will be following it very closely and keeping Council updated.

Mr. Hoffman stated that the Community Development Department has done a great job. They developed a small business grant program for some of the City's businesses that were closed down. They have done almost \$200,000 worth of grants in the community, at \$5,000 apiece, to help some of the local small business weather the storm. They are also participating in the county program with some CDBG dollars to help other Cuyahoga Falls businesses. Hopefully, with the Federal Stimulus Program, they will see a lot of money put into the economy. The Mayor has been in touch with local officials at the Congress level. He has done a great job to keep up to speed. Luckily, in the State of Ohio, the governor has taken some swift action and they have not had the numbers they were projected to have. There are some costs that have been incurred, and they are continuing to keep track of at the local level from available benefits side. The City laid off all part-time staff at this point in time to try to save costs. The vast majority of those were in Park and Recreation Departments, which are still shut down and cannot operate. As far as full-time employees, at this time, they have not done anything as far as cost-costing measures. They have not put anyone on paid administrative leave that he is aware, and they have been coordinating shifts and maintaining that social distancing, keeping our employees healthy.

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Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that the Downtown Partnership has really been a relationship-building organization. There has been a great effort on the part of businesses downtown to stick together and try to help one another. The City has done a good job in getting information to people and financially helping businesses so that they can all reopen someday. Mr. Brillhart stated that the City has done an absolutely wonderful job with keeping its employees safe. City buildings are cleaned and sanitized. In these times of uncertainty, The City has been a solid base for our citizens.

Mayor Walters stated that the first round that came out the stimulus bill, the money was only for added expenses for the COV-19, so the City did not receive any funds. He would ask Council to feel free to reach out to Congressman Ryan, Congresswoman Joyce and Senators Portman and Brown. The City needs funding for the revenue its losing in the income tax.

Mr. Miller stated that it is his understanding that the City is going to receive an additional \$394,000 in CDBG funds. He asked if there were any plans of where those funds would be allocated. Mr. Hoffman stated that they did receive a letter from the Federal Government letting the City know that it will be receiving those. Ms. Colavecchio, Community Development Director, stated that they have exhausted the funds that they have the ability to allocate to local \$5,000 grants and, in doing so, they were awarded about 30 of those small business grants. These were mom-and-pop types of establishments, one or two business owners, people that had to close their doors, who could not do what they do from home. That is criteria they award it on. HUD gave them a notice that they could use those funds as a grant and it does not have to have a matching grant. That worked out well for people who needed that money quickly. Those checks are already going out. They have been notified by HUD that they going to get an additional allocation this year. They do not know exactly when they are going to get this money. Once they receive it, they will have another loan and grant committee meeting to see how it is going to be allocated. In the interim, they are still accepting applications for local small business, but they have suspended approval until they have the money to fund those. They also gave a \$5,000 grant to the schools, so that they could purchase Chrome Books for students who did not have the ability to do the lessons from home. Mr. Miller thanked Ms. Colavecchio for the update and the work that her department is doing.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.