



Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina
Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 2, 2021

A Finance Committee Meeting of Town Council was held on the above date at 8:30 a.m., all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied.

Present were: Patrick M. O'Neil, Mayor
Bachman Smith, IV, Mayor Pro-Tem
Scott Millimet, Councilmember (Chair)
Greg Hammond, Councilmember
Kaye Smith, Councilmember
Justin Novak, Councilmember

- I. Chair Millimet called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and stated the press and public had been notified in accordance with State Law. Staff members present were: Andy Benke, Jason Blanton, Mandy Hawver, Fire Chief Anthony Stith, Police Chief Chris Griffin, Captain Chris Wallace and Bridget Welch. There was one (1) members of the public present, with no members of the media present. The purpose of the Finance Committee meeting was to discuss the American Rescue Plan funds and identify remaining available funds and begin prioritizing use of those funds.

- II. **American Rescue Plan** – Funds of approximately \$958,000 have been granted to Sullivan's Island and must be used for infrastructure projects. Mr. Benke discussed two areas that have been identified as particularly bad stormwater issues, Station 18-19 and Station 28 ½. The DOT identified Station 28 ½, starting at Brownell Street, going across Jasper and the outfall at the marsh as having very bad flooding issues. The Town has applied for a FEMA grant, but Station 28 ½ does not currently have any funds allocated to it. The DOT is unable to help fund the full maintenance but can assist if the Town begins the project.

Mayor Pro-Tem Bachman Smith recommended to perhaps move the stormwater ordinance under the Water and Sewer department, as they have more knowledge about these issues.

Mr. Benke mentioned there is a requirement for the Town to have the stormwater permit NPDESII, which has some requirements. Currently, Charleston County does the work to fulfill the requirements, like construction inspections.

Mr. Benke also talked about the BRIC grant of \$185,000 from FEMA that would be used to have an Island-wide study to identify all the stormwater issues.

Motion was made by Mayor O’Neil, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Bachman Smith, for the allocation of the funds from the American Rescue Plans to study and improve the stormwater collection system Station 28 ½ and Brownell to the stormwater outfall, carried unanimously.

- III.** Identify Remaining Available Funds from previously issued Revenue Bonds – Chair Millimet explained there is an allocated balance of approximately \$7M remaining from revenue bonds issued in 2018 and 2019 and are unable to be refinanced. Current projects include improvements to the water basins at Station 28 ½ and Stations 18-19. Other ideas have included burying power lines and setting up maintenance funds for the Town cemeteries. Chair Millimet feels decisions need to be made about priorities, taking costs into considerations.

Mr. Benke explained the funds must be used for capital improvement projects. Mayor Pro-Tem Bachman Smith feels the Old Fishing Pier needs improvements soon due to severe erosion. He also thinks it is necessary to continue with an Island-wide study on how to improve stormwater issues.

Councilmember Kaye Smith feels taking care of drainage issues in the park is a priority, as well as updating and improving the parks. The Recreation Committee would also like to put some money towards adding some pickleball courts, and possibly looking into different options for the Sand Dunes Club. Councilmember Hammond agreed and believes there will be some visuals to present at Council workshop.

Councilmember Novak stated his priorities are resolving stormwater issues, as well improving the park.

Mayor Pro-Tem Bachman Smith mentioned some historic structures that need improvement include the two historic well pumps, as well as most of the Batteries. He feels the Batteries would need more than just a clean-up but improving them for public use. Battery Gadsden could potentially become more of a green and/or gathering space.

Other projects mentioned were improvements to the Old Bridge and landscaping and ongoing upkeep to the cemeteries. It was noted that some residents around the cemeteries were historically not in favor of landscaping done there, but that the good of the community should be considered.

Chair Millimet suggested that a good place to start would be an engineering study done for the entire Island to get more specifics on how to best tackle the stormwater issues.

There was discussion about if the Island-wide study would focus solely on the stormwater issues or if the scope would be broader to include improvements to general livability on the Island, which could involve projects in the commercial district, parks, historical structures, etc.

Councilmember Hammond asked that Council consider moving ahead with park improvements sooner rather than waiting for the study to be completed.

Councilmember Novak suggested keeping some money in reserve for unplanned events.

Mr. Blanton confirmed there are about \$3M dollars in excess reserves in the general fund and about \$1.4M for emergency reserves.

- IV. Chair Millimet discussed the current debt capacity of the Town and the issuance of additional general obligation bonds with the potential to acquire an interest rate lower than the current rate of inflation. There was discussion of acquiring additional bonds through a referendum and how the issuance of additional bonds would affect the Town's current bond rating.
- V. **Motion was made by Mayor O'Neil, seconded by Councilmember Hammond, to adjourn the meeting at 9:34 a.m., carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,



Bridget Welch