

HARTSVILLE/TROUSDALE COUNTY METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT

FINANCE COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 5, 2022 | 6:00PM | MAYOR'S OFFICE

MINUTES

Members Present: 4/5

Beverly Atwood
Will Dennis

Jerry Ford
Landon Gulley

Mayor Jack McCall
Amy Thomas, CCFO

Others in attendance: Wes Robertson – CTAS, Attorney Branden Bellar, Commissioner Chris Gregory, Commissioner David Thomas, Fire Chief Jay Woodard

Chairman Gulley called the meeting to order at 6pm and a quorum was determined with 4/5 members present.

Minutes from the November 1, 2022 meeting were presented and reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes made by Jerry Ford; seconded by Beverly Atwood.

Minutes Approved

Being early in the month, financial summaries for November were not available for this meeting.

Discussion Items

1. Review of Financial Position – Wes Robertson, CTAS

Robertson reviewed the screenshots from the Comptrollers office and did not note any major issues. The bigger expenses of the general fund are offset by Grants or one-time expenses. Fund balances are strong but not sustainable with growing expenses. His opinion is that a tax increase is inevitable.

Ambulance Services (Fund 118) – In speaking with the previous CTAS Emergency Services consultant, there has been a statewide if not national wide decrease in transports since Covid. He suggested looking at billing policies and collection policies to see if there needed to be an update or oversight. May consider outsourcing the collections. File claims against estates. Look at how write offs are determined.

Revenues

- Sales Tax: Robertson suggested an increase on sales tax. We are currently at 2.25% where the state max is 2.75%. Sales tax has been 2.25% since 1989. It was noted that an increase was on the ballot in 2020, but was voted down.
- Wheel Tax: Reimplementing a wheel tax would be a "fairer" tax. Commission could instate that by private act; however, citizens can petition for it to go to referendum. Dennis opined it would be better received if a wheel tax was directly attached to a project or a need. Gulley added that if the Commission were to go this route it needs to be well thought out.
- Admin Fees from CoreCivic: Currently contracted to receive \$300,000 annually. This revenue goes directly to the Capital Projects fund (Fund 171)
- Planning Fees: Commissioner Thomas stated that the Planning Commission is looking at fees for rezonings. The fees would offset the expenses of advertising and administrative work that goes into having a parcel rezoned. This may also aid to slow growth.
- County Services Fees: Will need to reevaluate Ambulance fees, false alarm calls, trash services expansion, Maintenance of Property fees and enforcement.

Mayor McCall asked for Robertson's insight on our new jail project. Current construction in other counties ranges from \$15mil to \$25mil with an interest rate of 4.0% - 4.6% at 20 yrs. Annual interest is \$1.9 million on those loans. Possible funding would be Litigation Taxes, Impact Fees, or wheel taxes. County could also inquire about a USDA 40yr loan. Sheriff is still looking at a 100-125 bed capacity. Need to start with the question "What can we afford?". Current state inmate board rate is \$41/day; cannot rely on state board income.

2. 2023 CDBG Food Instability Grant – Comm. Chris Gregory

C Gregory will present a more formal discussion at the January 2023 Commission work session and meeting. The local Backpack Program and Community Help Center wish to apply for the 2023 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for food insecurity. This funding is through the CARES Act and must be applied for by the local government. The nonprofits are requesting the County's partnership in

applying for the funding to add to the two programs. The amount that will be applied for is \$400,000 that will be used for supplies to build greenhouses and some equipment. They have also spoken with the UT Ag Extension agent and the Agricultural instructor; both are eager to assist in the projects. Deadline to apply is January 31, 2023. No direct funding would come from the County; County would be used as a passthrough.

3. Other Discussion

- Chief Woodard asked for the per diem rate to be given to the two volunteer firefighters taking the EMT classes. The training is not a requirement for the volunteer program. The cost would be 45 sessions at a \$30 per diem totaling \$315 for each volunteer. The committee was not in favor of approving this funding. It was asked that further discussion on the topic begin with the Emergency Services Committee to see if a policy could be adopted to allow for certification to be obtained through County funding.

Meeting adjourned at 7:23pm with a motion from Jerry Ford; second by Beverly Atwood.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 6pm in the Community Center.