

Bob Mollette

3rd Ward Councilman

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Jim Kalb, Mayor
728 Second Street
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662

Re: 2008 Capital Improvement Budget for 2008

The proposed Capital Improvement Budget for 2008 was delivered for my review on Monday evening April 21, 2008. I was instantly concerned by the warning in your cover memo dated April 18, 2008, that informed some departments already have payments due. I suggest from this time forward a proposed budget be prepared and approved sooner and include a five (5) year CIP Budget for our future needs.

Again, I hope in the near future our City government will realize the advantages of planning. A five (5) year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is a necessity with limited or shrinking resources and increasing expenditures. A plan helps to improve our community by capturing threads of information to weave a uniform fabric to support our community. We must be committed to improving the quality of life for our citizens by creating development opportunities that will stimulate economic growth and sustain the community's infrastructure, while still providing cost-effective services in a safe and attractive community. A plan reflects our major projects, revenues, debt limit, enterprise funds, street infrastructure, and provides an opportunity for the public to be involved. Bottom line, rather than a snapshot for 2008 we should be comparing what was accomplished in 2007 and evaluating where we want to be in five (5) years.

City Council must properly evaluate the proposed future resources and approve a fiscally responsible budget. I equally stress the importance of providing the public an opportunity to become knowledgeable and offer suggestions from their perspective on the condition of our infrastructure and management prior to passage. The proposed ordinances associated with the 2008 CIP Budget received a first reading at the April 28, 2008 City Council Meeting with no discussions. Deliberation by Council members outside of public's view does not meet the intent of the Ohio Sunshine Laws. For your convenience I have prepared below a list to document my questions and comments for your review and future deliberations in a public forum.

1. The proposed 2008 CIP General Fund 301 Budget indicates a total expense of \$1,327,800. What is the total amount available this year including the total carryover from the 2007 CIP Budget? How much of this carryover is obligated to projects not completed last year and are these investments needed this year?
2. The approved 2007 CIP Legislative Department indicated a camera and recording equipment for \$1,500. What is the status of this purchase? Citizens have spoken of intolerable conditions during summer City Council Meetings as a result of securing the room air conditioning because of the background noise conflict with the speaker system. This ongoing issue should be resolved.

3. The Community Development Department is requesting an investment of \$25,000 for skate park planning and \$20,000 for a website; please provide a description with an estimated timeline for these investments.
4. The Engineering Department budget indicates \$110,000 for street resurfacing but per the Engineering Department an additional \$90,000 from the 2007 CIP will be utilized for a total of \$200,000. The 2007 CIP Budget proposed \$220,000 and based on the increased cost of petroleum products and degraded condition of our streets and alleys I believe resurfacing should be increased rather than decreased.
5. The Engineering Department requests an investment of \$275,000 for City WIFI, Grandview widening, and miscellaneous small projects; please provide a description with estimated timeline for these projects. Consider upgrading the City website (www.ci.portsmouth.oh.us/index.html) to include approved ordinances and evaluate the advantages of providing meeting minutes prior to April 23, 2001. Will the City WIFI provide a consistent electronic mail service for all City government rather than various service providers?
6. The Engineering Department requests \$49,500 (\$27,550 - 2007 CIP) for GIS equipment and services; \$33,700 Central computer/IT Services; \$15,000 Building repairs; \$65,000 Ameresco payment; \$29,500 Street light upgrade; please provide a description of these investments.
7. The Police Department requests \$48,000 for Cruisers for New Detective; provide a description with estimated timeline for investment and include any affects to the approved 2008 Operating Budget. What is the status and timeline of the proposed municipal court security?
8. The Police Department request of \$6,500 for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and AED equipment; describe program and implementation plan.
9. The Police Department request of \$5,000 for Laser (Speed Enforcement); provide description of investment. Evaluate the use of radar speed boards to assist enforcement of traffic safety laws in residential areas. The radar speed board may also be utilized by the street maintenance crews as needed. Evaluate recent technology on applicability of adhesive GPS darts to avoid high speed car chases in the City of Portsmouth.
10. Per the Auditor's Fund Report to Council members dated April 22, 2008 it appears the Mandatory Fines (Fund 223) indicates an estimated \$38,211.95 with year to date expenses of \$5,000 and Law Enforcement Trust (Fund 225) indicates an estimated \$181,645.08 with year to date expenses of \$19,411.33. Provide a description of the revenue generated and expenditures over the last twelve (12) months.
11. The Police Department is requesting \$5,000 for Video Surveillance Equipment. Based on the fact the Police Chief is currently video taping citizens at City Council Meetings the purchase of this equipment would be redundant to equipment approved within the 2007 CIP Budget (See Item 2). Describe the intended use for this video equipment.
12. The Fire Department requested \$10,000 for Concrete Replacement, \$24,000 for Station Improvements, \$31,000 for Miscellaneous Small Equipment, \$15,000 Safety Gear, \$10,000 for Water Rescue, and \$33,000 SCBA. Please provide a description for these investments.

13. The Public Service Department requested \$12,000 for a Tank Upgrade at the City Garage; describe this investment and timeline.
14. The Public Service Department requested \$21,200 for Ventrac Tractor for Grounds Maintenance; provide adequate information for equipment needs and timeline for purchase.
15. The Council Trust for Recreation is requesting \$70,000 Repair Pool, \$50,000 Construction of Basketball Courts, \$35,000 Cyndee Secrest/Mound Park (tennis court lights and repairs), \$20,000 for Miscellaneous Small Projects; provide description of projects and timeline for these investments. I recognize the City may have more requests for Parks and Recreation projects than budgeted money but it would be helpful to list our City Parks needs with estimated costs to avoid losing sight of those needs. I am aware of citizens requesting improvements at Rose Park in Sciotoville; provide status. What is the status of any investments to Spartan Stadium and Branch Rickey Park?
16. The proposed Wastewater Budget is requesting a total of \$150,000 for Enterprise Fund 621, \$60,000 for Fund 622, and \$52,000 for Fund 623; provide a description and timeline for these investments. City correspondence dated December 22, 2005 submitted to the OhioEPA suggested the City's Long Term Control Plan for Combined Sewer Overflows will address basement flooding and reported a meeting would be held with the Southern Ohio Medical Center to discuss drainage issues believed to contribute to basement flooding. Provide an update on this issue and provide related correspondence for status with estimated timeline for implementation of the City's Long Term Control Plan for Combined Sewer Overflows.
17. The proposed Flood Defense Budget Fund 265 indicated various purchases for a total amount of \$280,000; provide a brief description of the needs and a timeline for these investments.
18. The proposed Waterworks Fund 606 indicated various purchases for a total amount of \$300,000; provide a brief description of the needs and a timeline for these investments.

Again, the bottom line is rather than a evaluating a snapshot for 2008, we should be comparing what the Capital Improvements Budget accomplished in 2007 and plan where we want to be in five (5) years.

If you should need further clarification contact me.

Respectfully,



Bob Mollette, 3rd Ward Advocate and Representative on City Council

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cc: Honorable Council Members
Trent Williams, Auditor
Michael Jones, Solicitor
Jo Ann Aeh, Clerk (Record)