



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Borough of Chambersburg

A full service municipality in Franklin County celebrating over 65 years of consumer owned natural gas service over 120 years of community electric and a regional wastewater, water, storm sewer and municipal solid waste utility

CHAMBERSBURG APPROVES AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT PROJECT LIST

Chambersburg, Pennsylvania – Chambersburg Town Council met on Monday, October 11, 2021, and approved a list of projects to utilize the Borough’s share of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF). According to Deputy Borough Manager Phil Wolgemuth, the Borough of Chambersburg received an allocation of \$7,763,037, with half of that money already received by the Borough from the U.S. Treasury Department. As he explained, the Borough needed to undertake a public process where Council could approve the project list. The approval followed advertisement, a public hearing, and public input to determine whether the draft list of projects becomes the final list.

Borough Manager Jeffrey Stonehill explained that the Federal government has adopted some very precise rules for the use of the money. “Working together with the Council Finance Committee, staff has developed a proposed project list, which both meets the strict rules established for use of the grant funds as well as a series of ten criteria established by Town Council for the use of the money.”

The grant funds must be expended by 2026 and each quarter the Borough must report on the project list and progress made towards expending the funds.

Mr. Wolgemuth added, “In the last fiscal recovery the key term was ‘Shovel Ready’. In this fiscal recovery, the Federal government is seeking ‘Transformational Projects’, which are intended to provide support to the Borough in responding to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Town Council’s efforts to address its economic fallout, and to lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.”

Sam Wiser, from the Borough Solicitor’s Office, explained to Council, “The Interim Final Rule from the U.S. Department of the Treasury lays out a general, two-part eligibility test for uses of the funds. A recipient should first consider whether an economic harm exists and whether this harm was caused or made worse by the COVID-19 public health emergency. The use of the money must address this economic harm.”

Town Council is responsible for allocating funds to transformational projects in Qualified Census Tracts, revenue replacement projects, water, sanitary sewer, or storm sewer infrastructure projects and/or to support households or small businesses. Qualified Census Tracts are those in which at least 50% of the households have an income less than 60% of the Area Median Gross Income, as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Chambersburg has two Qualified Census Tracts.

While some communities are stymied by the Federal guidelines, Chambersburg Council approved a very simple list of internal parameters to make these project decisions.

Funds cannot be used for the following: Principal or interest payments on existing debt, replenishing or creating reserve funds, paying settlements or judgments, or extraordinary payments to pension obligations.

Conclusion

Chambersburg Council met on October 11, 2021, and approved the full ARPA funding plan.

(MORE DETAILS)

Final Project List

Audit and Administration	\$47,280
Use of Revenue Replacement to Fund Reimbursement Retail Food License Expenses	\$50,000
Use of Revenue Replacement to Fund Reimbursement Residential Rental Inspection Expenses	\$70,000
Supplemental Funds for Project H.E.A.T.	\$144,000
Use of Revenue Replacement for Chambersburg Aquatic Center	\$380,000
Sewer and Water Capital Improvements (Acquire 1332 S. Fourth St.)	\$234,900
Sewer and Water Capital Improvements (Acquire 1335 S. Fourth St.)	\$685,000
Chesapeake Bay Pollutant Reduction Plan Projects	\$2,000,000
Southgate Shopping Center Acquisition (Redevelopment Initiative)	\$4,151,857
TOTAL	\$7,763,037

Key Projects to Highlight:

1 of 3: Cold Storage Building on S. Fourth Street: In a transformational project for the neighborhood, the Chambersburg Water and Sewer Department will purchase the old abandoned cold storage building on S. Fourth Street. If approved, this derelict and blighted structure will eventually be demolished and the land incorporated into the new site of the Borough's future public works facility. The ARPA grant will provide sufficient funding to secure the building, plan for and perhaps help pay for its demolition, and clearing of the site. Additionally, this location may also collocate future storm water facilities to alleviate chronic and repeated flooding on S. Fourth Street. Finally, the site may also provide a part of a future pedestrian trailhead connected to the Borough's Rail Trail, which now terminates at S. Main Street.



2 of 3: Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy: In a transformational project, the Borough of Chambersburg will make significant and long-term capital improvements to a variety of sites impacted by flooding, or water quality issues, and previously identified in the Borough's approved Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy Plan. As many as five to seven different storm water projects including, but not limited to, flooding on S. Fourth Street, the storm water channel adjacent to S. Main Street, Pioneer Court in Downtown Chambersburg, Stevens Elementary School site, and Wolf Avenue/Rail Trail outfalls, may be improved by these funds. Further, these capital improvements may each be supplemented by matching funds from other stormwater grant programs. Avoiding increasing fees for pollution control and storm sewer management, the use of ARPA funding will improve this key infrastructure of the Borough without necessary fee hikes for Borough property owners. Finally, the Borough is required to make such improvements over the next few years and designating this funding will help bring these important projects to reality and meet the Borough's compliance with the terms of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection permits for the storm sewer system (MS4).

3 of 3: Southgate Shopping Center Redevelopment Project: In a transformational project, the Borough of Chambersburg, in collaboration with the Elm Street Advisory Council (ESAC) and the Chambersburg Area Municipal Authority, is embarking on a proposed long-term initiative to reclaim and redevelop the Southgate Shopping Center into a mixed-use residential neighborhood. The project's goal is to pay respect to the families that were displaced in 1962, when the shopping center was built, by creating a new sustainable neighborhood that promotes a mixture of uses to include housing, employment, retail and business services into the Elm Street Neighborhood. The Elm Street Neighborhood's ongoing involvement in the Southgate redevelopment process is vitally important to the success of this community development initiative.

A conceptual master plan developed after a dozen public meetings and workshops as well as hundreds of survey questionnaires, was recently approved by Town Council, which integrates the existing community and weaves a series of spaces that entice walkability. The plan also addresses the blocks that faces E. Queen Street by creating a new plaza and mix of buildings that serves as a termination view and welcome gateway into the city environment.

The plan is the mix of uses in the same block. This allows for a mixture of offering to the residents and creates vitality that is important to retail and specialty restaurants and supermarkets. Important to the plan is integrating open spaces. These spaces are of different scale and types including water, landscape and plazas that allows public gathering.

Link to Southgate Redevelopment Project Website:

http://www.borough.chambersburg.pa.us/government/southgate_english.html

Redevelopment Process



According to Phil Wolgemuth, “The ARPA funding would provide seed money for property acquisition and begin the redevelopment process. The eventual replacement of the shopping center with a new mixed-use neighborhood, as envisioned by the community developed and council approved plan would include the contracting with a third-party private developer or developers who would buy the site and manage the redevelopment of the property.”

Borough Manager Jeffrey Stonehill added, “A zoning overlay district would be approved by Town Council to guide the redevelopment by the private developers and ensure both community input into their designs as well as Council’s rules for bringing this new neighborhood onto the tax rolls and revitalizing an approximately 14 acre tract in the center of our community.”



Please submit questions or comments via email to Phil Wolgemuth, Deputy Borough Manager at pwolgemuth@chambersburgpa.gov.

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Chambersburg is a unique community. Chambersburg supplies more services than any other municipality in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In addition to typical town functions, Chambersburg is Pennsylvania's only municipality supplying electric and gas. Chambersburg is 1 of 35 Boroughs to operate a municipal non-profit electric utility. Chambersburg is the largest municipal electric utility in the State, twice as large as the second largest, Ephrata, Lancaster County; and, the only one to operate generation stations. Chambersburg is 1 of 2 municipalities in PA to operate a natural gas utility. The other is Philadelphia, which does not operate an electric utility. Nationally, Chambersburg is 1 of 2,000 communities to have its own electric system and 1 of 800 communities to have a natural gas system but 1 of only about 50 to operate both. Chambersburg manages a regional water system, a regional sanitary sewer system (not through an independent Authority), and a new storm sewer utility; one of the first storm sewer utilities to form under the new Federal mandate to regulate stormwater.

Chambersburg currently has 20,508 residents (2013).