



TCC Minutes

Committee: Finance, Debt & Budget Oversight

Date + Time: 1/28/26, 4pm

Location: City Council Chambers

Attendees: Chair Sarantou, Vice Chair Driscoll, Gadus, Jones, Hobbs, Martinez

Absentees:

Also Present: John Rivalsky

Presenters: Megan Robson, Doug Stephens, Melanie Campbell, John Zawisza, Natalie Bronaugh, Tom Buckley

Public Attendance: 8

Legislative Aide Facilitating: Evan Snapp

Topics...

1. DPU- Collections on Delinquent Bills
2. December 2025 Financials
3. City Auditor Update

Discussion...

Sarantou: Welcome to our monthly Finance meeting. First, we have a presentation from Director Stephens.

Stephens: Thanks for inviting me to present. Since July, we have had about 2700 people enroll for a payment plan for unpaid bills. We expect to collect about 6 million from ongoing payment plans. There are about 4850 total payment plan accounts. We focused on a lot of the very large balances leftover from last year. About 42% of people that received discontinue notices then paid their bill. 79 disconnections, 40 re-connections upon payment. Those accounts are for commercial buildings. We will now start to send notice of disconnections to the largest unpaid residential bills. We will take care as we deal with those residents. By the end of February, we will be able to start putting out those notices.

Driscoll: I'm curious, do we project in the new budget- the 6 million in expected payments?

Stephens: Yes, that is in future budgets. In our current rates, we have projected that 3% of revenue is non-collectable. We account for that expected loss. We essentially account for full revenue vs the cash receipts we get back. That forms our revenue budgeting. On the water side, it's been 5 years of the 7-year rate plan. The actual revenue has been very closely in line with how we account as part of the rate plan. Most of the expected collections are residential.



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Driscoll: The concern I have about landlords is that some residential turnoffs may affect renters or multi-unit buildings.

Gadus: By referral, can we get the names and zip codes of non-paying commercial or residential buildings. Thank you. Also, do you share information with 211 for our residents that may call in for rent assistance?

Stephens: I would have to answer that by referral. We do have an outreach officer who would know.

Jones: Regarding the delinquent businesses, do you cross-reference their information to see if they have declared bankruptcy or closure?

Stephens: We don't. Our system is automated to send notices to those commercial properties that haven't paid up and there are a few touchpoints to see if they have sent in payment in between notices.

Sarantou: Let me get this right- about 10.75 million has been collected, was that your expectation when it was announced there was about 60 million to collect?

Stephens: Based on those accounts we have targeted so far, and how much more we expect, I believe we're on the right track. A majority of our customer base is on a payment plan, which is encouraging too.

Sarantou: Do you know how this amount of uncollected fees compares to other Ohio cities?

Stephens: In Detroit, I think they're at a much higher rate of uncollectability, but there is more research we could do to find out where the other cities are at. It's my understanding that Columbus doesn't even do payment plans, so I will give us credit for increasing the customer-friendliness of our program.

Martinez: My question is- the outstanding debt we have is from how long? (5-year period) Ok, so do we have a plan for longer-term debt?

Stephens: We have been working with Law to improve our debt collections, seeing what we can do. Older debts are still being collected, we're just not including that info in what we've already presented today. We can get an idea of the percentages of what is owed by commercial businesses/ industrial buildings.

Martinez: I would like a more comprehensive strategy for these collections and how we treat businesses as opposed to residential. Ultimately, we want to avoid dead properties and keep tenants wherever possible.

Sarantou: What effect would increased collections have on sewer rates?

Stephens: It won't have an effect. All of the rates are projected out into the future and won't change, even if we can afford to because of strong debt collections.



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Sarantou: I'm concerned that the issue of sewer rates related to the loss of winter averaging is not over, that many residents will come back to us again this summer complaining about the unfairness of that pricing system. Law should come back to me soon with an opinion on whether we can pay for separate meters that track outflow to the sewers, I think that is the fair option. We appreciate your time here today. Next, we will hear from finance.

Campbell: Good afternoon, I'm joined by team here to present our December financials. We are, however, still going through our year-end processes, so we expect some small changes to the data we're presenting.

Zawisza: Withholding was down in December, but high in November, they balance out. Year-to-year, we show being up 4.8% from 2024 in income tax withholding.

Campbell: An update on general fund revenues, as we get into February, our projections for 2025 will get closer to actual as the final returns come in. We are at 95% for charges for services for the year. Investment earnings exceeded the 2025 estimate. In other revenue categories, we had a PFAS-related earning driving that category.

Gadus: Can we get a list of which license fees fall into the Group A or Group B listed here? By referral.

Sarantou: On the EMS/ BLS transport, do you expect additional '25 revenue to come in since that merger with the county?

Campbell: I don't think so, but I will need to check.

Sarantou: How many findings did we have in last year's audit? (Only one) and I guess that was a minor finding.

Campbell: It was essentially a clerical error that was quickly fixed. Now to expenditures, we are still closing out these 2025 accounts, so there will be some changes and unexpended funds.

Campbell: Pages 7 and 8 detail the 'All Funds' which again we should expect some small adjustments as the final information comes in. I also want to add that we provided the ARPA update and CIP funds update to you. Our quarterly ARPA report to the Treasury is due at the end of this month.

Sarantou: The interest that we earn on ARPA monies- was that deposited in the General Fund?

Campbell: We programmed that interest into the GF budget, it was approximately one million dollars.

Driscoll: On that note, is that money obligated to anything? (Yes, GF) I believe there is a misunderstanding that budget amendments we're proposing can come from that money, but it will ultimately be rainy day fund. I don't think it's your responsibility to correct us, but I know it



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is coming up. I also think the ARPA data summary you've provided lacks sufficient detail, which I will send in referrals about.

Sarantou: Our auditor approached me with some information about unspent ARPA funds, I'll let him explain.

Rivalsky: According to Treasury guidance, unspent ARPA dollars could be reallocated to an already obligated project. This could be useful going forward.

Gadus: Perhaps we could host a special meeting to be able to ask questions to the groups that received ARPA funds, further diving into the complexity of how and where this money is getting spent. We want to have accountability for these projects, since there are some that have clearly not been spent. There may be both success stories and problems we're not aware of yet.

Sarantou: I think that's a great idea that we can talk more about. A progress report of sorts would be important.

Campbell: I believe any potential reallocations would need to match the original intents.

Sarantou: We will proceed to the City Auditor's report.

Rivalsky: I've been working on investment reviews, the grass cutting audit, and council's budget-related questions. Any questions?

Sarantou: Seeing none, and seeing no further business, we stand adjourned.