

MINUTES

MUNICIPAL FINANCIAL RECOVERY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE CITY OF CHESTER

June 8, 2021

1:00 p.m.

**Chester City Hall
Council Chambers
1 Fourth Street, 2nd Floor
Chester, PA 19013
And VIA ZOOM**

Present: Michael T. Doweary, Receiver
Kelly Diaz, County of Delaware, Office of the Controller, Sr. Accountant
Mayor Thaddeus Kirkland
William Jacobs, City Councilman
Vijay Kapoor, Chief of Staff to the Receiver
Cody Deal, Executive Assistant

Absent: Kim Bracey, DCED, Executive Director for the Governor's Center for Local Government Services

The Municipal Financial Recovery Advisory Committee meeting began at 1:01 p.m. The meeting was streamed on the Chester City's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/cityofchester/>.

Minutes of May 25 MFRAC Meetings

The Receiver asked if there were any changes or addendums to the May 25, 2021 Municipal Financial Recovery Advisory Committee meeting minutes.

Hearing none, the Receiver asked for a motion to accept the minutes of May 25th.

It was moved by Ms. Diaz and seconded by Councilman Jacobs that:

"The May 25, 2021 minutes of the Municipal Financial Recovery Advisory Committee be accepted as written."

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Reports

The Receiver opened the floor to Mr. Kapoor to provide a progress update for the Receiver's team.

Mr. Kapoor began with the news that Judge Crompton has approved the amended recovery plan filed in April. This will now be the controlling recovery plan for the City of Chester. He mentioned that they were able to resolve the outstanding issues between the City and the Receiver and he

is happy to be moving forward with implementation and then preparation of the next amended recovery plan with that behind us.

He then discussed the MMO payments that are made by the city for the various pension funds, specifically the MMO vs. the True MMO. Mr. Kapoor stated they are having the actuary run the numbers and are anticipating an answer on what the true MMO payment needs to be within the week.

He stated his team is continuing to work on multiple fronts from public works to engagement within the city, and mentioned he will save more details for upcoming meetings as he has a lengthy presentation for public works for this committee meeting.

Mr. Kapoor passed it back to the Receiver who opened the floor for questions, which there were none.

Receiver Update

The Receiver gave a brief update on the Act 47 hearing that occurred last month and stated that it may be a lengthy process for approval, possibly going into the beginning of August.

He then gave the date for an upcoming "Breakfast with the Receiver" event occurring on Saturday, July 17th. This will be an open session for the Receiver to meet with representatives from the community and answer any questions that may exist within the public. There will need to be a registration for this event, with more details coming out over the next few weeks.

The Receiver then promoted two community clean ups happening this Saturday. The first is being held by Chester City Sweeps at Columbus Elementary School, working within that targeted neighborhood. The second is sponsored by the County and Keep PA Beautiful with more information available on the receivership website. The event will be held at Crozer park with a water cleanup being the focus. This second clean up requires a registration.

The Receiver opened the floor for any further questions which there were none.

Public Works Presentation

The Receiver passed the floor to Mr. Kapoor, Mark Alexander the Streets and Highway Supervisor, and Richard Knox the Recycling Coordinator, and Interim COO Cyrise Dixon for their Public Works Presentation, which can be found on the receivership website – www.chesterreceivership.com.

The presentation centered around Grass Cutting issues and the various challenges/progress being made by the City's Public Work's department, as well as a plan for more progress to be made moving forward to ensure a better living environment for the citizens of Chester.

After the presentation, Mr. Kapoor opened the floor for any questions from the Committee. The Receiver also thanked the presenters for their presentation and again opened the floor for questions.

Councilman Jacobs thanked them for the presentation as well, and then asked about the pension payment issue that the city has been facing and was mentioned again in the presentation. He wanted to know how the pension payments being made can be resolved since it is essentially the only thing holding the city back from hiring more help within public works. Mr. Kapoor agreed and stated that this is something that will be a long-term problem that each recovery plan will continue to address, with Bankruptcy as a possible option, however it has not reached that point yet.

The Receiver passed the floor to Ms. Diaz who also thanked them for the presentation. She stated her desire to review everything presented today and would share something in the future with possible options for help that the County can provide. She also had two questions: are there fees for bulk pick up of trash within the city, and who should be notified if a resident sees illegal dumping occurring. Mr. Knox stated that there were no fees for bulk pickup, and that if illegal dumping is seen they produce evidence including film if possible to help find these trucks, but they can call 610-447-7888 or email the city directly. Mr. Knox stated that many residents have the public works information on hand. Citizens can also notify the police.

The Receiver asked if for clarity if multiple bulk trash pickups after the first would require a fee, which Mr. Alexander explained that this ordinance was presented however has not yet been implemented by the city. The Receiver's second comment was about pension reform that has been spoken about. The retroactive changes made in 2017 will not be able to take place until the current retirees enter retirement. He stated that the comments made about payments the city cannot afford are only those to current retirees, passing it to Mr. Kapoor for a little more explanation. Mr. Kapoor stated that it would be very challenging to address these issues outside of court action. Typically, in places across the country where this has been addressed, bankruptcy was involved.

The Receiver passed it to Mayor Kirkland for any closing comments as the meeting was ending its allotted amount of time. He spoke to the Receiver's question about fees for multiple pick-ups, stating that it has not yet been implemented out of concern that the dumping needs would increase.

He commented to those who gave the public works presentation that areas that are cleaned should have photos taken as well to document that the debris is eliminated from the city but also reaccumulates quickly and should be seen by the city.

Public Comments

The Receiver noted 2 comments received multiple times, both pertaining to the Chester Water authority, which the Receiver's position has not changed since it is still in Commonwealth Court. He also mentioned that there were additional comments that came in, however there is a cutoff of the Thursday before the committee meetings and that the comments received after will be shared at the following meeting. He shared the address to share comments, which is info@chesterreceivership.com

Member Comments

The Receiver opened the floor for any other closing comments, which there were none.

There being no further business to discuss, the Receiver adjourned the meeting at 2:25 p.m.

The next Municipal Financial Recovery Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 25th at 1:00 p.m. at Chester City Hall, City Council Chambers, 1 Fourth Street, 2nd Floor, Chester, PA 19013, and streamed VIA ZOOM through the City's Facebook page.

Approved this 25th Day of June 2021.

Michael T. Doweary
Receiver for the City of Chester

Secretary – Cody Deal