

A matter of priorities

The Bethlehem Gadfly Budget October 9, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on the City Budget* 

It would be true to say that the prime responsibility of City Council is how our money is spent.

That said, there was a very interesting 30-minute conversation at Council on Tuesday regarding just that.

On the agenda was approval of a grant (so, different from our specific tax dollars. to be sure) of \$125,000 to the golf course (which is supposed to be self-supporting).

Councilwoman Van Wirt demurred, asking if that money benefited the City as a whole, and asking Council to consider the need for citywide broadband access as a higher priority.

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Business administrator Evans explained that the broadband need was a bigger issue, more complicated, was being worked on, and there was not enough time to get a new grant proposal together.

Councilman Reynolds agreed with PVW “100%” about the need for broadband and the need for the City to get a study going, the need to put broadband access on the same footing as the Climate Action Plan and Northside 2027, that is, out of the talking stage and into the concrete planning stage. Though he recognized the City had a lot “on its plate” and was not suggesting disapproving this grant.

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Councilman Callahan, known to be a supporter of the golf course, asked if money already designated last year for the pedestrian bridge study (cumulative \$100,000-\$150,000 range), known to be supported by Councilwoman Van Wirt, could be shifted to a broadband study since PVW saw it as a high priority.

What a move. Reminding Gadfly that he could never be a politician.

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President Waldron firmly exercised his verbal gavel.

The resolution to approve the money for the golf course went to vote.

And was approved 5-2, Councilwomen Van Wirt and Negron naying.

But a point or two was made, thinks the Gadfly.