

Hello, Portage residents, your Mayor John Cannon here.

We have been having brief week-by-week conversations on the current state of your City in an effort to have an open and transparent dialog with residents of our Great City. Residents such as yourself enjoy the conversations and have been asking if we could dive deeper into specific subjects. The truth is, there are some subjects you and I both find important, but the details behind the subject can be confusing. I'll be the first to say, "That's the government for you!" I'd like to break it down a little. This week we will have three short conversations about informational subjects.

Today we will speak about the FOUR buckets of money used within our City's budget. I will explain where money from each bucket can be spent and also where the source comes from. The City of Portage, like many other municipalities in Indiana, operate their budget under restricted uses dictated by state statute - or state law.

There are 4 buckets of money. This money is sometimes referred to as "Funding." Expenses and Funding of each bucket is dictated by state law, and can only be spent on certain things.

Money from one bucket cannot be moved to the other. Each bucket has different sources where their funding comes from. So the first bucket is sanitation. The second is storm water. Third is redevelopment commission. Fourth the general City fund.

We'll start off with sanitation. The sanitation department is located along the south side of 80/94, and can be best seen when traveling eastbound. All of our wastewater goes to that plant. Wastewater is water that goes down the drains of our homes, business and even industrial employers. This includes water that goes down your kitchen sink, your washing machine, and your toilet.

The water flows through sanitation sewers to the sanitation plant. Solids are treated, separated and then put out to dry out, and then a farmer south of here picks it up to use as fertilizer.

That's a very broad overview of what the sanitation does, but what can the money be used for? It can be used for the maintenance of that plant, and it can be used to maintain our sewer system which runs under many roads.

The second bucket of money is stormwater. Now that one has been controversial over the last couple years. There's something called the impervious surface fee. That is when water hits pavement and runs into our stormwater sewer system, and then there's just regular old rainwater that soaks in the grass, and that's what we'd prefer; but because of the concrete and asphalt in our City and the growth in buildings with large roofs and parking lots, such as commercial, retail and industry, we've had to implement a fee called the impervious surface fee. See, when stormwater can't soak into the grass, it has to be diverted into our stormwater management system.

The rainwater is guttered through stormwater inlet grates into a system of creeks, inlets. It's called an un-natural waterway. The more surfaces we have, the more volume of water our creeks and inlets.

Without the management of these, roads would be flooded. Water must be channeled from parking lots, roads, and buildings with very large roofs. The stormwater fee that you see on each of your bill - That can be used to maintain our stormwater system and to maintain our streets.

The third bucket of money is the redevelopment commission. Some parts of our state are blighted. Hence the City of Portage is no different. The blighted areas are areas that need redeveloped. The redevelopment commission spends money on those redevelopment areas.

The fourth bucket of money is the general fund which pays for salaries of City workers, for police officers, police cars, fire department personnel, fire department equipment as well as our streets and sanitation department. Our garbage pickup is spent out of the general fund.

In closing, these four buckets of monies are important to our City; at the same time, they are extremely limited on their uses.

Now hopefully today I have explained the uses for those monies, to escape from all the confusion and discussions of these buckets of money. More updates are coming like this about the specifics of our city. Stay tuned.