Grants vital to Pottstown

As Pottstown Council debated ways to cut the budget last week, Interim Borough Manager Justin Keller pointed out that grants provide funding for infrastructure improvements that otherwise would not happen.

In the last 15 years, the borough has received nearly $22 million in federal, state, county, and private grant funding for such projects as financial incentives for homeowners in Pottstown to fix up their houses; improvements to the Pottstown Airport; the renovation of the Security Trust Building; improvements to Memorial Park and other parks; the Carousel at Pottstown; and the operation of Pottstown Area Rapid Transit (PART) bus service, including the construction of a bus canopy to create an intermodal transit center at the site of the former Reading Railroad passenger station.

Sometimes, grants have been turned back because the borough declined to provide a match, such as for a proposed borough-wide LED street light conversion project, or constructing 40 new airplane hangers at the Pottstown Airport.

Most grants are a godsend, but we need to consider how much each proposal adds to our quality of life versus how much each one will cost to administer and maintain. We’ll discuss that on Thursday.

Meanwhile, a complete list of all grant applications going back to 2002 can be found on our website, www.pottstowncitizens.org.

Click on Pottstown Borough and scroll down the page to Grants.

GRANT-FUNDED PROJECTS — Among Pottstown’s grant-funded projects are the pedestrian underpass connecting the community college’s north and south buildings, left, shown before and after construction; the Steel River Performing Arts Center, below right; and the spray park at Memorial Park, bottom.