

April 5, 2010

## Budget Beginnings

It is outrageous that the Council should be put in the position of doing the mayor's job. However, it is either through administrative incompetence, arrogance, and/or stupidity that has brought us to this point.

Even this process of each Councilmember bringing suggested solutions to the table is incomplete and a patchwork at best. We are also handicapped by only recently receiving the report from the limited audit that we have just commissioned. Although the report that we received will only be a guide, it is important to compare that information to historical spending.

**Note: We need to review of dollar cuts since passing the last budget.**

When addressing the budget crisis, it is important to first identify the mistakes and deceptions that have plagued this city for at least the last 18 months. This is not comfortable, but it is essential in order to begin the correction process.

- City Center building was a million dollar cost before occupancy. The mayor failed to admit his very costly mistake, and should have pursued mitigation of the long, expensive lease rather than further spending on it. It should not be overlooked that the original justification (the need for an expanded courthouse) still exists.

- Wasting \$28,000 on an unnecessary ULP because of the mayor's actions during the union negotiations.

- The waste of money on a former employee directly under the supervision and responsibility of the mayor that did not perform nor show up for work.

- Although it may seem like a small financial item, the branding exercise is representative of the financial spending that has gone on while totally ignoring our financial troubles.

- The expansion of City Hall is a case study in bait and switch. During the initial "first touch" presentation, the Council was sold on a very low cost, yet effective, addition to the building. The project incrementally grew to the point that it at least doubled the city's contribution to the project.

- Although a beautiful project, the pool expansion was ill advised and certainly could not have been at a worst time. Additionally, once built it will cost the City an ADDITIONAL \$250,000 per year.

-The \$50,000 settlement by the mayor for creating a hostile work environment with his own personal assistant.

## Solutions

- **Use all the listed reserves instead of raising taxes. We must cut back expenses, and especially capital improvements, until we get our spending under control and can rebuild our reserves.**
- **Eliminate the position of Assistant to the Mayor**  
Although a pleasant alternative to the mayor's personality and 60s management style, it is not possible to justify this position during the current financial disaster while other employees are being considered for layoffs and/or cut backs. As a former councilmember said several times, "We should not be paying for two mayors".
- **Cut back Dept. of Neighborhoods to one and cut the single employee back to the 2008 pay range.**  
It is my hope that this can become a vibrant, financially justified department in the future. My initial thoughts were to roll it into another department. However, after careful consideration and reflection, I have concerns over how easily it would be to rekindle the department when the economy becomes more vibrant. Additionally, I believe that it is important to have the director (and sole employee of the department) on the same level as other directors. I can picture scenarios where folding the department into others would lose its effectiveness.
- **Delete the Assistant Parks and Recreation position that was added a couple years ago**  
With the recreation center closed, and cutbacks necessary in all departments, we are top heavy in Parks and Recreation. Cutting that position would save two or more lower positions that actually work with the public.
- **Cut back 4-5 aquatics positions until the rec center is built**
- **Close the weight room and secure a short term agreement with a local fitness center**  
It is frustrating to know that creative solutions have not been exhausted. Although we cannot simply give tickets to our clients, an agreement could be worked out that would allow our regular customers access for a reduced rate for the next year or so.

- **Cancel any 50<sup>th</sup> celebration that have a remaining budget or expenditures**
- **One day per week City Hall closure during the summer**  
Close the City Office every Friday from July 2 through September 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- **Review the workload of planning since building has slowed down**  
Our economy and especially the building/development world is at a near standstill. Related personnel should be decreased. Electrical inspections were added as a financial positive. They should be eliminated if no longer the case.
- **Decrease the mayor's binding authority to \$20,000.**
- **The mayor should resign his position and then the Council should drastically decrease the salary of that position.**
- **Do not presently fill the position of Financial Director**
- **Do not presently fill the position of Human Resources**

**The citizens should not be penalized with additional taxes because of the incompetence and malfeasance of the administration.**

-In the last for years taxes that have directly, or indirectly, been raised and a cost to the Lynnwood Citizens include:

- Telephone tax
- Garbage tax
- Library Tax
- Real Estate Excise tax
- Property taxes
- Sales tax

**It has been suggested that taxes may have to be raised to support the required funding of water.**

Several taxes have been raised in the last four years.

**Fill the empty buildings in Lynnwood.**