

Moving forward ~

Our City Manager:

The challenges before us are formidable, but I am gratified that my colleagues supported my motion to make Acting City Manager Mike Letcher our official City Manager. I believe it was critically important for our community's stability, our staff's agility in continuing their good work, and our own ability as a Mayor and Council to focus on the budget and other critical matters before us that we remove the 'acting' label and give him a strong vote of confidence as our new City Manager, which we did by a 6-1 vote.

I believe Mr. Letcher is an excellent choice to provide continuity and rebuild community confidence. He has more than 30 years of experience in all levels of public administration, a demonstrated commitment to openness and community input, and an amazing scope of knowledge of our community. Please join me in welcoming him to his new position.

Budget Matters:

Now, on to the budget. Tuesday evening we'll hold a public meeting to hear your perspectives on the 2010 Budget as part of the evening Council session scheduled to begin at 5:30PM. Because we're anticipating hundreds of people will be in attendance, the meeting will be held in the TCC meeting rooms. The input we hear that evening, along with the hundreds of emails I'm receiving on all aspects of the budget, will help me formulate my approaches as we try to finalize the best possible balance.

At the beginning of this process, I talked about the importance of doing as little harm as possible on both sides of the ledger: proposed funding cuts and possible revenue generation. For example, I would have a very hard time supporting a 2% rental tax; a lower rate, maybe, but I'd much rather find other sources for the needed funds. I've several in mind that I'll be discussing on Tuesday. I will keep an open mind and will listen to the public's concerns ... and the staff rationale for this and other recommendations, but I also think we need to be open to exploring other options.

But there's another balance we must achieve: we must keep in mind funding for agencies and/or programs that generate additional monies for our community through matching grants. And we must also take into account cuts that, while seemingly necessary now, could in the long run prove short-sighted, either by killing a valuable nonprofit program or failing to invest in programs that could provide new jobs, additional tax revenue and other forms of economic development.

There will be no simple decisions ... and definitely no easy ones. I do hope you'll continue to provide input ... and that you'll trust that any decisions I do make will be

based on trying to find balance among the many sometimes conflicting needs and priorities for our community.

Get Involved / Make a Difference: I'm often asked what you – as individuals – can do. There is no simple answer, but I do hope you'll reach out: to your neighbors, your friends, or any agency that provides services about which you care. If ever there were a time to be a good neighbor, this is it. Several Ward VI Neighborhoods are involved in *Neighbors Who Care*. This program makes it easy for you to provide a helping hand to your friends and neighbors. That could mean providing transportation to an elderly neighbor, helping an overwhelmed single parent with shopping, pulling weeds for a neighbor who's ill or injured, or any of dozens of other possibilities. Please, keep an eye on one another. It is the most basic form of reaching out ... and something of which we're all capable. This may sound amorphous, but truly, this is a time when we do need to watch out for each other.

Monday Night: MMM is a Happening!

Meet Me at Maynard's! Every Monday evening, between 150 and 200 folks gather at Maynard's in the Historic Depot at about 5:30. Then at 6PM, they set out to run or walk through Downtown Tucson. You can see all the things happening close up, learn where the many wonderful restaurants and galleries are, and just plain enjoy being Downtown. It's a fabulous way to spend an hour every Monday evening. Here's their Facebook page, so you can check it out!

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=72720286918>

That's it for now! I'll be in touch next week with an update on our marathon Budget Session!

Thanks for staying in touch.

Nina

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