

May 29, 2009

The framework for the 2009-2010 Budget is in place!!

At Wednesday's special Study Session on the Budget, Mayor & Council came to unanimous approval of the basics of next year's budget, which takes effect July 1st. Critical in this agreement, for me, is that there will be NO Renter's Tax. I had objected to that approach for two reasons. First, it's a very regressive form of taxation. Second, it asked 45% of the population to balance the budget for the rest of us ... and many of those are most 'on the edge' in this difficult economy.

The Utility Tax is something all of us will pay, sharing the load.

Please do keep in mind, that while we are increasing - and of equal importance, diversifying - our revenue sources, we have also been cutting the size of City government.

- There are 400 fewer City employee positions now than one year ago.
- Every department [except police and fire] has taken a 7.5% cut.
- Every City employee [except commissioned public safety personnel] will take 5 furlough days. [While that will be painful for many, it is better than additional layoffs and/or lowering their salaries. This way, when the economy bounces back, they'll be at their same salary level, not having to 'work their way' back up.]
- Travel expenses have been virtually eliminated.

Now a bit of background on some of the budget details we worked on:

In my last Perspectives! I mentioned I'd laid out one budget approach - very much a draft - as a starting point for conversation. Well, considerable conversation ensued ~ during Study Sessions, via emails from constituents, letters, phone calls, and more. And I'm so glad!

I learned so much from the dozens of people who wrote thoughtful letters and reached out with additional information or new approaches - or the personal impact of possible cuts.

Wednesday, I presented the 4th iteration of that approach, and it differed in significant ways from the first draft. It better reflected my initial philosophy of first providing those services that are the City's primary and sole responsibility: Public Safety, Transportation, Parks, Water, and Environmental Services while supporting those agencies that provide crisis services, protecting those most vulnerable, from

children to the elderly, and maintaining some level of support for the arts that provide so much for our quality of life. All these elements are important to who and what we are as a community. We must emerge from this economic downturn still Tucson.

While I am pleased with the overall balance we've achieved and will support the final budget, barring unforeseens, I did disagree with my colleagues about how the remaining Outside Agency cuts should be apportioned. I believe the severity of this financial challenge, coupled with the fact that next year we'll be confronted with at least the same challenge, make it imperative that we use this as an opportunity to cut funding to a few agencies that simply don't fall within our priorities and that we establish logical criteria for what kind of agency should get how much of a cut.

The majority of my colleagues preferred an across-the-board cut of 15%, considering all agencies equal in stature and role in our community.

And now, on to the rest of the business of the City! I'll stay in touch on things as they happen, but for now, please check out these wonderful events taking place in Ward VI this weekend and beyond!

Events:

Join the Southern Arizona Roadrunners Saturday night for a fast and fun 5k that winds through Downtown neighborhoods.

Saturday, May 30, 2009, 6:30 pm at La Placita Village
110 Church Street, at the SW corner of Church and Broadway.

- Free ticket to the Fox Theater post-race movie: Without Limits, the Steve Prefontaine story
- The El Camino Royales will be rockin' the house before, during and after the race
- Got kids? Then stick around and enjoy The Wizard of Oz, presented by Cinema La Placita (one of the event beneficiaries) starting at about 8:00pm
- Two-for-one beverages at the Hotel Congress after the race
- For more information visit:

<http://www.azroadrunners.org/events/downtown.html>

Up with People to headline special benefit concert

Just back from a tour of Taiwan, Up with People's Cast A 2009 was to have headed into Mexico for a five-week tour when the H1N1 Flu hit.

The result will be a special evening of multi-cultural entertainment entitled, "Up with Tucson" to be held

Friday, May 29 at 7:30 p.m. at the Fox Theater which will feature special selections from the 2009 Up with People Show with special guest performances by some of Tucson's best cultural groups including Viva Arizona, Batucaxé, Ballet Folklórico Arizona, Sticks & Fingers, plus others.

As a special bonus, Up with People will also perform their full two-hour production on Sunday, May 31st at the Fox at 2:00 p.m

For Tickets: Fox Theater Box Office (520) 547-3040 or online at www.foxtucsontheatre.org
For more information contact: [Mia Hansen at \(520\) 370-0588 cell](mailto:Mia.Hansen@foxtucsontheatre.org)

Meet Me at Maynard's
SOCIAL RUN/ WALK...AND DOWNTOWN TUCSON EXPERIENCE

Maynard's Market at the Old Train Depot
400 North Toole
Every Monday 5:45 PM

Informal, non-competitive run/ walk...3 miles with shorter options
Not a runner/ walker yet? Give it a try! Bring the family.
Exercise, socialize, network...
stay downtown and enjoy exclusive restaurant specials.

More Info? Go to <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=72720286918>

Beowulf Alley Theatre Company's
ActingKids@the Alley Presents....
Summer Programs for Youth Ages 9-12 and 13-16

Space is still available for Session 1 of the Beowulf Alley ActingKids@the Alley Summer Program beginning on June 1 and running through June 19. Receptions for prospective parents and students for Sessions 2 and 3 will be held at Beowulf Alley Theatre, 11 South 6th Avenue, Tucson, 85701 on Thursday, June 11 at 6:30 p.m. and Saturday, June 13 at 10:30 a.m.

The remaining two 3-week sessions are June 22-July 10 and July 13-31. All classes will be from 9:30 a.m.-3:30 pm., Monday through Friday. Classes will explore the creativity of each child, teach fundamentals of performance and playwriting, teach methods of critical thinking and the etiquette of theatre.

Fees are: 9-12 years old-\$300 and 13-16 years old-\$375.

For more information go to Beowulf Alley's website, www.beowulfalley.org, call the theatre at (520) 622-4460 or e-mail theatre@beowulfalley.org.

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