

Dear Community Members,

On March 25th, the City Manager presented Mayor and Council with the framework of a proposed FY'15 budget. What we saw was a realistic reflection of our current fiscal condition, projections for how things may develop over time, and recommendations that will get us to a balanced budget. Reductions in staffing, support of outside agencies, civic events, and other community services were included in the proposal.

Many of the groups whose funding is proposed to be impacted have contacted me or my office asking for private meetings in which to make a pitch for their individual causes. Some of our neighborhood association leaders have also called and/or written asking for assurances that services would not suffer. We're a community, not a series of silos each operating independently from each other. Most of us wear multiple hats, and so it's to be expected that many will be advocating for more than one cause. The final budget cannot be arrived at as a function of a series of separate conversations, each making a plea for support without having also heard and considered the impact being felt by others.

Each service we've been funding has value. If that weren't true, we wouldn't have been providing the funding. But none operates in a vacuum from any of the others. We have one budget and one community. I believe we all need to sit together and hear from one another on what we feel our group or agency either brings to the table or needs as core services from the City.

With that in mind, I am asking our City Manager to lend us his finance folks to come and give an overview of our current, and forecasted fiscal condition. Following that, I'll invite people to share with the larger group their perspective on both what they heard in the presentation, what they feel their group brings as a part of the overall solution, and what they need from the City in order to make that happen. The key though is to allow each group to hear the others' input, and the hope is that the groups will self-select ways they can work together and achieve community goals by a collaborative approach, reducing the overall cost to the City but by offering suggestions that through a combined approach we can minimize the impact that is reflected in the initial City Manager's proposed budget.

We have a budget calendar that is driving an urgency into this conversation. We'll receive the input you provide but will need time to digest it and see how it might fit into the final budget plan. To meet those goals I've asked Mr. Miranda to free up his staff on **Tuesday, April 15th** from 5:30 until 8pm for a Budget Roundtable here at the Ward 6 Council Office (3202 E 1st Street). We'll plan on spending the first 30 minutes hearing from staff, and then open the floor for your input.

The City Manager and our finance people correctly note that we're facing a 'new normal' in how we fund the City organization and how we provide services to you. That means each of us has to bring creative input to this meeting. Decisions have not been made, and the purpose of the roundtable is not to lock down on any one approach. It's to gain input and to encourage the various groups to look across the room, and find ways you can work together so our service delivery is maintained at levels we all want to see. Please come with that in mind.

Sincerely,
Steve Kozachik



Council Member, Ward 6
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