

Ward 6 Staff



Steve Kozachik
Council Member



Ann Charles



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Ward 6 – Newsletter

A Message from Steve

APRIL 20, 2011

Most of the agenda items this week will be rather routine updates. And yet, the week has been anything but routine.

At council we'll get an update on some efforts by City Court to reduce our expenses related to incarcerations. We pay the County a fee for each person we imprison. It's \$200 for the first day, and \$82 for each day thereafter. With that in mind, it pays for us to find alternatives to incarceration and that's just what the City Court staff has been doing. We have implemented a review processes whereby people who have been arrested come directly before a judge and in many cases can be diverted to home detention or otherwise released-saving the City money on an unnecessary incarceration. These programs operate into the evenings, by video court and throughout the daylight hours. Together they have saved the taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars, and in many cases have kept the people who would not have benefitted from incarceration out of the jail environment altogether. The goal is to do a thorough review of each case and assess whether or not jail is warranted. In such cases where it is not, we all benefit from having these alternatives available. We will ask the Court staff to continue monitoring how well these programs are working and to recommend their expansion when it is in the best interest and safety of the public.

Staff is in the process of offering new insurance coverage to both existing and retired employees. Both vision and supplemental life insurance coverage is being included in the available menu for city workers and retirees. Neither element is now included, so both options would constitute new, voluntary elections by workers. For the purpose of arriving at employee costs, there are two ways being considered. One is to blend premium rates together between existing and retired workers and the other is to offer the policy elements in an unblended manner. When blended, the vision coverage would increase the cost to existing workers due to the relatively higher costs associated with providing the benefit to retirees. While we are asking existing workers to take furlough days and therefore absorbing salary cuts already, I don't believe it is equitable to also ask them to take on the costs of voluntary coverage for retired workers.

With respect to the supplemental life insurance coverage, the same sort of dynamic applies. Specifically, if the rates are partially blended, the city would have to fund



Important Phone Numbers

Tucson Police Department

911 or 791-4444
nonemergency

Mayor & Council
Comment Line
791-4700

Neighborhood Resources

791-4605

Park Wise
791-5071

Water Issues
791-3242

Pima County Animal
Control
243-5900

Street Maintenance
791-3154

Planning and
Development
Services 791-5550

Southwest Gas
889-1888

Gas Emergency/
Gas Leaks
889-1888

West Nile Virus
Hotline
243-7999

Environment
Service
791-3171

Graffiti Removal
792-2489

AZ Game & Fish
628-5376

Continued: A Message From Steve

nearly \$250K in added costs due to actuarial reasons. We cannot afford to offer those voluntary elections while we are struggling to balance our budget and continue to provide the core services city residents expect to receive. I am hopeful the rest of the council joins me in making the fiscally prudent decisions in these cases.

With the thought of “expectations of the public” in mind, I want to share with you some thoughts on our 9-1-1 Service Center and how it needs to be protected from budget reductions. In a recent tour of those facilities it became clear how reliant we are as taxpayers on the calm and professional approach to our emergency calls we receive from the center workers. When we call the 9-1-1 lines, we expect to have our call received and responded to. We do not expect to hear a busy signal or suffer long delays while awaiting other callers' needs to be met.

Last fall, the City Manager committed to me that there would be no reductions in staff at the 9-1-1 Center. This is a sub-unit of the City General Services Department in which they must have a person in a chair taking calls and dispatching on a 24/7/365 basis. Budget cuts would compromise that ability. The work already has a high level of stress associated with it. The workers work 10 hour shifts and must be “on” throughout. They must be fully funded.

Another funding source that must be guarded is money that is allocated by the 9-1-1 State run fund. In the past several years, the State has raided that fund and forced greater pressure on the city to make-up the difference, or see a decrease in the ability of the center to provide the service we expect. You may have noticed that lately my fight to protect our local budget from the State has ramped up a bit. The same effort needs to be made to protect the emergency response fund. And, the City Manager's office cannot reduce funding for this critical service. It takes 6-9 months to train one 9-1-1 worker, and even longer for them to become proficient at their tasks. We cannot continue to lose workers to attrition and dollars to the State. Literally, lives are at stake.

This is a quote from a recent Homeland Security/Public Safety update:

State of Arizona “Sweeps” 9-1-1 Funds to Fix State Budget

Since 2003, the State Legislature has redirected \$50.5 million from the revolving fund to its general fund for other purposes, delaying needed equipment and service upgrades and virtually eliminating the fund. If the Legislature sweeps any additional monies, as proposed again this year, it would have a major impact on the city's ability to adequately serve the emergency communication needs of the 3.7 million Maricopa County residents. *(and in Pima County, as well - my note)* This proposed sweep would take the monies used for monthly 9-1-1 service costs and require 9-1-1 services to be reduced or cancelled.

FY 2003 \$12,000,000

FY 2004 \$ 3,000,000

FY 2009 \$25,000,000

FY 2010 \$ 8,500,000

FY 2011 \$ 2,400,000

FY 2012 \$ 2,200,000 (proposed sweep)

Total \$53,100,000

The reduction in monthly collections together with legislative fund sweeps will have a significant impact on the 9-1-1 systems locally and statewide. When Arizona residents pay a tax for 9-1-1 services, the tax should be spent on 9-1-1 services and not diverted to fix on-going state budget shortfalls.

I'd like to thank Governor Brewer for vetoing the Bill that would have allowed open carry of weapons on college campuses. She heard the concerns of students, administration, faculty and the University Presidents and acted accordingly. I would now like to encourage the Governor to do the same with SB1201. That Bill will allow open carry of weapons in all public buildings/structures (swimming pools, TCC arena for the Muppets show, etc) unless the following are all in place:

- Armed guard
- Metal detector
- Signage
- No alcohol being consumed

The City does not have the money to provide all of that at each public facility. Without each of those elements in place, open carry is to be allowed. This is not an anti-2nd amendment position. Guns at kiddy shows at the TCC do not make people safer. They simply present the possibility for more accidental shootings. We've had enough of that in this community and don't need the State Legislature creating the scenario for more. The Governor needs to veto this bill as well.

Which I suspect is a good lead-in to the on-line petition issue that has consumed a bit of my time this week. I referred to it as a Hail-Mary Pass, knowing that time is running out on this legislative session, and we need the legislature to step up to the plate and rescind the preemptive rules they are about to lay in our laps. Several people have asked me to be more specific. The list would crash your hard drive, but to name a few: restrictions on our ability to either increase or expand our tax base, caps on our State Shared income taxes (generated here/belongs here), rules on how we hire and fire staff, caps on the number of city workers, the level of city salaries, forcing bidding out programs/projects, the several weapons issues already referred to, rescinding regulations if adopted by agency and not passed as legislation (this would potentially impact child care facilities, solid and hazardous waste, air and water quality, dog and horse racing, and more). This is a general and partial list.

Additionally, they are now considering placing on the ballot a measure that would change the State Constitution and end up banning publicly funded election processes. In 1985, the voters of this City changed our City Charter to allow for public funding of our local elections. The State wants to preempt the vote of the citizens of Tucson. My objection isn't taking a position either way on the merits of public funding for elections; it is simply stating



Important Phone Numbers

Senator John
McCain (R)
520-670-6334

Senator Jon Kyl (R)
520-575-8633

Congresswoman
Gabrielle Giffords
(D)
(8th District)
520-881-3588

Congressman
Raul Grijalva (D)
(7th District)
520-622-6788

Governor Janice
Brewer (R)
Governor of Arizona
602-542-4331

Toll free:
1-800-253-0883

State Legislators

Toll Free
Telephone:
1-800-352-8404
Internet:
www.azleg.gov

Mayor Bob Walkup
791-4201

City Infoguide
[http://
cms3.tucsonaz.gov/
infoguide](http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/infoguide)

that if Tucsonans want to allocate General Fund dollars for that purpose, then we should have that right. If we want to change it, we have that option as well. What we do not need is for the State Legislature to tell us how to do that (same principle as with the State induced “ward only/non-partisan” bill that is now being contested in court).

Rio Nuevo was a huge waste of taxpayer money. There is an investigation under way now to identify whether or not criminal wrong doing occurred. Rio Nuevo is not emblematic generally of how this city operates, or the quality of workers and commitment to excellence employed by our city workers. Rio needs to be investigated - and where there is guilt, appropriate action needs to be taken. And yet, hog-tying that ugly legacy on the rest of the city operations with restrictive and preemptive legislation is simply self-serving on the part of those who are pushing that agenda. This is not at all helpful to the professionals who work for the city and who are doing their best to provide the services you expect and deserve. As I write this, there are over 750 signatures to the on-line petition, plus nearly 30 elected officials. We still have to send the petition out to county supervisors, so the number of elected will increase.

If you haven't seen the petition and would like to check it out, click on (<http://www.change.org/petitions/stop-hurting-our-local-government>) And if you think I'm misrepresenting the charge that Tucson and Pima County are being specifically targeted by the State, consider this language from the budget allocations being handed out for GIITEM (Gang and Immigration Intelligence Team Enforcement) dollars:

The GIITEM Fund can be used for employer sanctions, smuggling, gang, and immigration enforcement. Allocates the first \$1,600,000 to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office and the next \$500,000 to the Pinal County Sheriff's Office. Monies given to Sheriffs' Offices do not require further approval by the county board of supervisors. Remaining monies may be used for agreements with cities, counties and other entities at a 3:1 match rate. Excludes Maricopa and Pinal Counties from the matching requirements. *Excludes Pima County officials from receiving funding.*

Enough already with the focus on this region. And where are our Southern Arizona elected officials standing up for your safety and for our ability to protect our budgets and provide the services we should?

Sincerely,



Steve Kozachik
Council Member, Ward 6
www.tucsonaz.gov/ward6

The Junior League of Tucson, Inc.

<https://secure.closerware.com/tucson/npo.jsp?pg=fundraiser&article=507>

Rummage Pre-Sale & Party

Friday, April 29th, 2011, 6 p.m.-10 p.m., Entrance fee is \$5
Dinner tickets are \$20.



Rummage Sale

Saturday, April 30th, 2011, 7a.m.-1p.m., Entrance fee is \$1 or 1 canned good
Treasures range from furniture to antiques, artwork, toys, clothing, kitchen items, small appliances, electronics, books, sporting goods, office equipment, holiday items, new items, jewelry and more. **How to contribute:** Have some loot you want to donate? If you would like to make a contribution and support community programs, please bring it to 2099 East River Road offices between 9 a.m.- 1p.m., Monday through Friday. If you require a pick-up, please call the office administrator at 299-5753. Your contributions are 100% Tax-Deductible and greatly appreciated.

Tucson Children's Museum Saturday, April 23 2011, 10:00am – 1:00pm

Join the Tucson Children's Museum for Easter fun with their annual egg hunt beginning at 11:00am. Play games, decorate bunny ears and other crafts. 200 S 6th Ave.



Art After Dark

http://www.tucsonmuseumofart.org/calendars/index/5/4/11/20/1/view_event/264

Cost: Free for Museum members; \$10 for non-members **Dates:** Apr 22, 2011 8:00 pm April 22 is Earth Day so Tucson Museum of Arts will be celebrating world culture. Experience the beautiful dancing of Spain and Japan with Flamenco and Butoh dancers; listen to the low-fi indie sounds of Seashell Radio, and the eclectic acoustics of The Awkward Moments; be creative with an art project made with recycled materials; feel the beat of Africa with The Dambe Project; and don't miss the old fashioned photo booth by with Omer Kreso and the music of Satyr Entertainment in the lobby. Presented every other month by the Tucson Museum of Art, Art After Dark is when the arts come alive in downtown Tucson.