

Ward 6 Staff



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Ward 6 – Newsletter

A Message from Steve

MAY 25, 2011

This will be the 12th newsletter since Christmas in which I've described our budget in some fashion. This will also be the last time for a while because last night we voted to adopt a Fiscal Year 2012 budget. What we adopted was essentially what the Council voted to give to the City Manager on February 15th. It passed 6-1, with my vote being alone in dissent.

What we passed is not disastrous, but it is also not sustainable. We will have to get our arms around debt, land sales, assumptions related to growth and do so in a way that protects our ability to provide the services you, as taxpayers, deserve. It is also undeniable that we will face a continuing disagreement over how we address the general fund allocation that is tied to public transportation. It cannot continue to grow unabated. We must work to find efficiencies in a way that does not result in making the system unattractive to those who rely on it for their primary means of travel around town. It's a balancing act that will take work. And yet, here is what we are balancing against:

Police will end this fiscal year down 18% in personnel since I was elected. That is nearly 200 vacancies on the force. They have reduced proactive services such as Bike Patrols, Community Service Officers (CSO) in schools, Gang Outreach, participation in P.A.L, and the 911 dispatch center is understaffed and is looking at a 6-9 month lead time on hiring/training new employees. Fire will end this fiscal year having taken a \$5M cut this year and being nearly 60 commissioned personnel short. They will have reduced four Alpha Trucks, two medic units, a water tender, an Assistant Chief, Deputy Chief, Training Captain and six inspectors.

Let's not play the game any longer saying that service levels have not been impacted. And let's please stop alleging that I'm trying to gut the bus system. Neither is true - and both are a little old and tired.

Another area in which the budget will impact our community is graffiti abatement. Click on this link http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/sites/default/files/ward6/Graf_Grid.pdf and it will show you community wide how many "tags" were reported by neighborhood. I hear two primary issues continually raised at every neighborhood association meeting - potholes and graffiti. This budget sets as a 45% level for streets around town that are in "good" condition.



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

That means it sets a level of 55% of our roads that are in fair, poor, or failing condition. The graphic shown in the graffiti link speaks for itself.

So, we're done with this budget cycle. Next time around we can all hope the economy has recovered to the point that we can begin to replace some of what we have lost this time around.

We addressed two water related items. One is our water rates. We had two options to consider. One would increase water rates in a manner that results in greater rate stability sooner, but it placed the entire burden of the rate hike on the lowest end users. The other spreads out the rate increase over all classes (by volume) of users. The second option was what we voted unanimously to adopt. The following link -

<http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/sites/default/files/ward6/link.pdf> contain graphs that show where Tucson stands in relation to other cities in terms of water rates. I believe what we did today, with respect to this item, reflects our desire to encourage conservation and mitigated the impact on the low ccf users. It is estimated that these new rates will cost users approximately \$2.46 per month.

The other water related item we passed last night was fee increases on items such as meters, connections, meter reading and similar services provided by Tucson Water. The new fee with which I took exception is the new pipe inspection fee. The case can be made that piping installed by developers costs the City nothing. It is conveyed to the City after having been designed, trenched, installed, and tested by the developer - and the costs passed onto the homebuyers. The City inspection fee would similarly be passed along to the homebuyers in what is an already depressed market. I moved to eliminate the inspection fee from the menu of new charges. The motion died for lack of a second and the new fees were voted into effect on a 6-1 vote.

We passed for immediate implementation a waiver on solar permit fees. The economics of that vote are simply that if you want more of something, you charge less for it. We want to encourage solar installations on both existing structures and new buildings. That vote was a no-brainer to support. I was hopeful that the council would have applied that same economic thinking to the inspection fees and waived them as well in an effort to help our building community return to health.

Each week I seem to have another RTA story to relate. This week it is the Silverbell Road project. The RTA originally estimated the cost of that project at just over \$61M. Unfortunately, it only committed to funding it with \$42M. The stretch of road is recognized by many as one of the most archeologically sensitive areas on the west side. With that in mind, early estimates placed the cost of archeological testing and mitigation at \$12M. RTA has offered up \$4M for archeological work and it was to be a draw down on the \$42M they offered for the project. I pulled the item from consent and asked the Mayor (our RTA representative) to take it back to that group and relate that the City of Tucson is looking for full participation from them in the funding of the work, including all factors associated with the project. We are seeing far too many examples lately of



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)

RTA cost shifting to jurisdictions. I was pleased that the rest of council supported the motion to continue the item until we get a reply from the RTA.

Homeland Security eliminated funding to Tucson for what is called UASI (Urban Area Security Initiative) money. We have received over \$15M in those Federal grant dollars over the past 5 years. The money has gone to regional rapid response training, incident training, communications center upgrades and staffing in areas related to terrorist readiness. The loss of the money puts our PCWIN program (an interoperable communications network) in a stall, short by \$690K from continuing on schedule for completion. As is the norm, Phoenix received over \$7M in UASI dollars. I asked if our relationship with their public safety agencies was such that they'd see the wisdom in sharing 10% of their allotment with us so we can continue on with our PCWIN work. The short answer is that they are probably precluded from doing so based on the conditions written into their grant allocation. So both Chief Critchley and Villasenor (Fire and Police) will scrub what's left of their budgets to try to keep the work moving, and in the meantime, Mayor and Council will await a further report from both agencies in two weeks to let us know what we can do to assist in getting Tucson funded once again. We lost out this time because the Feds decreased the importance of Border Proximity in their evaluation of sites under consideration. The money is to fight terrorism. One would think that being a border region would qualify. We're not done with this one, yet.

Do you remember the now infamous Downtown Convention Hotel? The dust is still settling from its collapse as a City funded project. Unfortunately in the midst of that dust, there are several local vendors who were involved with the construction of the East Entry to the TCC. The newly reconstituted Rio Nuevo Board is in dispute with Garfield Traub (the developer) over some retention and change order dollars. So while that is being worked out, numerous vendors are owed money for work they performed. Also in the mix is Turner/Sundt, the G.C. on the project. Between the developer and the G.C. our local businesses that did the work need to be paid for work long overdue. To be fair, Rio has their hands tied while this is being resolved. Today I brought the item to the City Manager and City Attorney to weigh in with Rio and see what we can do to get these bills paid. Way back last summer I was raising concerns over some of the principles involved with that project and the manner in which other jurisdictions had been treated by them. It seems those concerns are now being borne out. I am in the process of gathering a list of all of the businesses who are owed money. If you fall into that category, let me know so I can advocate on your behalf.

Two events to which I'd like to invite you:

Planning and Development Services is holding evening sessions for Residential Improvement Projects. The Residential assistance will take place on Thursday, May 26th until 6pm at 201 N. Stone. If you have questions about the permitting process, take advantage of their late hours.

On Saturday, May 28th from 6pm until 9pm, I will be participating in a program that honors veterans who are wrestling with housing issues. The event will take place at Trinity Presbyterian Church - 400 E. University Blvd. Other speakers will include Dave Croteau for Veterans for Peace and State Senator Frank Antenori. Yes, it is an eclectic grouping and is being put together that way intentionally to show that our support for veterans is non-partisan. There will be BBQ, pies, live music and other

family friendly activities. If you're not leaving town for the Memorial Day weekend, come and join us in honor of these men and women who have served us.

Finally, with service on my mind - I wish to send out my most sincere condolences to the family of TPD officer Joseph Pat Olguin who was lost to the community in a tragic event a couple of nights ago. Officer Olguin is remembered for his dedication, professionalism and integrity. He will be missed deeply by those with whom he served and by those who had the honor to know him

Sincerely,



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



Memorial Weekend Travel Alert

The Arizona Department of Transportation has issued the attached travel alert for the Memorial Day holiday. The alert identifies two construction projects that will impact travel plans to Flagstaff and California. The Hassayampa River bridge project on Interstate 10, 40 miles west of downtown Phoenix, reduces traffic to one lane in both directions. This project will have delays for those motorists traveling to and from California. Motorists traveling to and from Flagstaff can expect delays on Interstate 17 at Munds Park, 20 miles south of downtown Flagstaff. Traffic is reduced to one lane in both directions. Everyone is encourage to plan ahead and allow enough time to get to their destinations. Visit www.azdot.gov/hassy for more

May 29 – Memorial Day Concert

Bring your blankets, folding chairs and enjoy a wonderful concert at the DeMeester Outdoor Performance Center Reid Park at 7:00 p.m. For the program, please visit: <http://www.tucsonpops.org/>

Summer Safari Friday Nights at the Reid Park Zoo

Every Friday from May 20-July 8 from 5:00PM-8:00PM. Cool off in the Reid Park Zoo at Summer Safari nights! Fridays, starting in May, relax in the cooler temperatures, enjoy viewing your favorite animals, get an up close and personal encounter with one of the animal ambassadors and enjoy games, crafts and face painting for kids. Prices are \$7.50 for adults and \$5 for children (ages 2-12). Kids under 2 are free. There is also a \$1.00 discount for Zoo members. For more information, please visit: <http://www.tucsonzoo.org/event/summer-safari-nights-2/>