

Ward 6 Staff



Steve Kozachik
Council Member



Ann Charles



Donovan Durband



Teresa Smith



Christal Ferree



Bonnie Medler



Ward 6 – Newsletter

A Message from Steve

JULY 13, 2011

Before I get started with the newsy stuff, let me say that if you are an animal lover like I am, I strongly encourage you to go and see Buck at The Loft Cinema. It's a wonderful biographical story that will take you through a range of emotions, human to human relationships, and human to animal relationships - lots of good stuff.

While we will have no Mayor and Council meeting this week, that doesn't mean our office has shut down for business. In fact, we are using this time to focus in on some of the items that were put into play after the past several weeks' M&C activity.

One of the items on top of the list is that we will be scheduling a meeting with the various neighborhood leaders to come and meet with Tucson Department of Transportation (TDOT) staff. The goal will be to identify the most troublesome areas in need of pothole repair and put together an open and transparent plan for addressing as much of it as we can with the now infamous \$75,000 set aside from the Ward office budget for this purpose. TDOT will arrive at the meeting with some preconceived ideas as to where they'd like to focus and you bring your own locations to the discussion, so everything's being considered.

It was, and continues to be, my belief that the past 3-4 weeks' kicking this issue around was wholly unnecessary and quite the distraction. And yet, the result so far, was as it should have been. I say "so far" because I am going to watch to make sure Ward 6 is equally included in the wider road repair discussion that is still to come. The wording of the motion that the rest of the Council put together (some portion of them) has my antenna up. It is as follows:

This was the motion made by Council Member Cunningham. He clarified that the HURF funds from the sale of HURF restricted property sales would start with the \$585k+ realized last week.

MOTION:

Council Member Cunningham MOVED and it was duly seconded to direct the City Manager and the Department of Transportation (TDOT) to proceed with the program for streets by applying funds from the sale of HURF-restricted lands. Ward Offices shall work with staff to leverage additional savings and any available Back to Basics HURF funds to further augment the paving program.

Amounts realized through office savings and Back to Basics HURF monies from Wards 1 through 5 will be allocated and coordinated as part of the overall TDOT paving plan. Ward 6 can pursue a separate augmentation with its remaining office and Back to Basics HURF funding rather than participating in the coordinated citywide



**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

program, if so desired.

It was **FURTHER** moved that all investments be reflected in the paving map posted on the TDOT website to offer the public continued transparency on how every dollar is invested under this initiative.

Motion PASSED by a vote of 7 to 0.

A couple of points to note: first, the \$585K was the result of the City selling some land that had been purchased with money such that the proceeds from the sale could only be used for transportation related work. It is those dollars being referred to relative to the “overall TDOT paving plan”; i.e. chip sealing, or whatever other method of long-term repair selected by TDOT. The fact that the Council elected to single out Ward 6 in the wording of the motion caused me to specifically ask whether or not the intent was to exclude our Ward streets from consideration of this overall paving work. Having been told that that was not the intent, I supported the motion. That discussion is on the record if referring to it later becomes necessary to protect Ward 6 interests.

We will participate in the identification of arterials and collector streets being identified for this further work. We will also take a look at the status of Back to Basics projects to see if there is any money not previously committed to neighborhood projects that might be tossed into the hopper. The other Ward offices chose to give their year-end savings to the paving effort, which is fine and is their right. Those amounts ranged from a low of around \$3,100 to a high of around \$45,000, for a total of \$163,000. The Ward 6 year end budget money will go to fixing the potholes in our Ward (\$75,000) and we’ll allocate back to the wider City paving plan the balance which is estimated to be in the \$10,000.

Combining the other Ward office budget money with the \$585K generated by the sale of City property yields a total of approximately \$750K. TDOT staff has told us that it costs in the neighborhood of \$35,000 to chip seal one mile of roadway. That means the wider, City wide effort will be able to take care of a little over 21 miles of roadway. That’s not a lot, but it’s a good start, and we will be watching to insure that Ward 6 paving is not left out of the conversation.

Here’s another one that I’m keeping an eye on. At the last study session we were briefed on the progress, or lack thereof, related to the water department and on-going concerns and negotiations related to the pollutant 1,4 Dioxane. Here’s a bit of chemistry and history.

1,4 Dioxane was used as a stabilizer in industrial solvents in aircraft manufacturing facilities from the 1950’s to the 1970’s and has been found in ground water at the Tucson Airport Remediation Plant (TARP) well-field in southwest Tucson. The TARP treatment plant removes Trichloroethylene (TCE) from the water pumped from the well field, but does not have the capability to remove 1,4 Dioxane.

In 2010, the EPA completed a new risk assessment that shows 1,4 Dioxane to be nine times more likely to cause cancer than was previously estimated. In light of this new assessment, the EPA is in the process of updating the advisory level for 1,4 Dioxane to a level expected to be significantly lower than the three ppb previous maximum contaminant level. While Tucson Water has been blending water treated at the TARP with water from other sources to reduce the 1,4 Dioxane to a level below the current three ppb advisory level, the change in standards is the catalyst for M&C to have authorized Tucson Water to immediately begin the design and construction of a new treatment plant that will



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)

effectively remove the 1,4 Dioxane.

The U.S. Air Force has taken primary responsibility for the contamination of this section of the ground water aquifer with 1,4 Dioxane. The City of Tucson, Tucson Water and the EPA are in discussions with the Air Force to determine how to pay the \$10M construction and \$250K Operation and Maintenance related to the new plant. We were told that the EPA and DOD are negotiating what is called a Federal Facilities Agreement, a document that allows Federal agencies to begin negotiations on culpability, cost allocations, clean up strategies, and more bureaucratic posturing. We, M&C, made it quite clear that we're not waiting on that process to unfold and that we are taking money that was already allocated in the Tucson Water Capital Improvement Plan budget and spending it on the treatment plant. Those are dollars our community needs for other infrastructure upgrades.

I have already asked for an update on the status of the Federal Facilities Agreement and other discussions surrounding this issue. Tucson Water customers should not pay for this treatment plant, nor should they pay for its operation and maintenance. The Feds need to get beyond the mind set of capping their obligations, act like responsible neighbors in this community and write some checks to pay for this problem.

The water service area being effected by 1,4 Dioxane is shown if you click this link:
<http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/sites/default/files/water/TARP%20Delivery%20Area.pdf>

The peach color is the area of Tucson that is being served water that contains the 1,4 Dioxane. We may have gone through a few weeks of not playing well together over potholes, but this is an issue on which you'll see bipartisan agreement in support of our ratepayers, and in support of Tucson Water customers who are being served this water.

Another significant issue is the 9-1-1 Call System. Providing public safety is a primary and critical goal of the Tucson City Government. Since last fall, during the early stages of the FY'11 budget discussions when the City Manager proposed 15% across the board budget cuts for all departments, I have been vocally concerned over the manner in which such cuts would impact the effectiveness of the 9-1-1 system. As we discuss "First Responders", Dispatchers at that Center are the first touch people in need of public safety assistance experience. The work environment is highly stressful. My staff and I have toured the center, spoken to 9-1-1 staff and discussed a variety of aspects of the work environment with supervisors and City staff including Manager Letcher. Here are some very real issues that surround the Center and its operations:

When it was directed that each department prepare for a 15% budget reduction, General Services (the umbrella department for the 9-1-1 Center) indicated to the City Manager's department that such a reduction would necessarily impact staffing levels in the Center. Anticipating that direction would be forthcoming to reduce by that amount, both attrition and resignations resulted in an understaffed condition at 9-1-1. It was then, and continues to be, my belief that the Dispatch Center should have been kept whole in terms of budget capacity and not be forced to cut back. That didn't happen and we're still trying to dig our way back to previous staffing levels. There are several reasons that getting back to those levels is problematic.

- 1) The City of Tucson offers uncompetitive salaries for these positions compared to other jurisdictions
- 2) The City of Tucson has not resolved the requirement for 9-1-1 Dispatchers being forced

to take unpaid furlough days, exacerbating our inability to compete with other jurisdictions in terms of salaries.

3) Recruitment for new personnel is a slow process that ultimately takes up to 9 months before a new hire is qualified to take on the full duties of a Call Center worker

In the midst of that staffing challenge, the City, being the recipient of State funding, began the process of installing a new dispatching system carried on a Qwest platform. The previous system was fast becoming obsolete and so an upgrade, on the State's nickel, seemed a no-brainer.

The new system has experienced electronic and software glitches. While some of that is expected when a new system is installed, what we are experiencing with this new system goes beyond what was anticipated. We are in the middle of a 60 day testing period, after which the City will decide whether or not to stick with the new system. As noted above, the nature of the work is already stressful and adding these uncertainties only exacerbates that stress level, possibly putting the public's safety at risk.

By way of full disclosure, after I had received a significant amount of feedback surrounding the conditions at 9-1-1, I sent the following request to the City Manager:

"I am requesting that the plug immediately be pulled on the system (the new dispatch software program) for the remainder of the testing period, that the remainder of the testing be conducted off-line so peoples' lives are not at risk while we work out the bugs in the system, and that you immediately prepare a management plan that results in the 9-1-1 call center becoming fully staffed, and with salaries that allow us to be competitive in the marketplace."

Following a meeting with staff, I now know that "pulling the plug" is not an option. The guts of the old system have been removed and the Qwest system components are in place. Given that we cannot simply flip the switch and go back to the old system, pending resolution of the ongoing systemic problems, one is left to ask, "What if we decide to reject the product at the end of the testing period?" One is also left to ask what is being done to resolve the outstanding system related issues.

The answer to the first question is that we don't know. I have asked – the answer is being researched and I will let you know as soon as I find out. The answer to the second question is that Qwest, recognizing the importance of resolving the issues related to system reliability, has assigned several on-site servicemen who are in the process of trouble-shooting the system in a full scale effort to work out the bugs.

So, we cannot pull the plug until the system is fixed. However, the City Manager must still be tasked with putting in place a plan for addressing the retention and hiring of staff so that the Center once again has a proper number of trained employees, who one can only hope is working with a system that is properly functioning.

What might some of that plan include?

- Elimination of furlough days for 9-1-1, TFD and TPD call center employees

- Conducting a classification analysis on the jobs included in the center and adjusting pay grades in a manner that makes us competitive with surrounding jurisdictions (we're losing our trained personnel to Green Valley and Marana!)

- Kick to the front of the H.R. application process applications that have been submitted to fill

Dispatch positions

Offering part-time employment to recent retirees from the Center until full-time staff is back in the seats

We will attempt to address the furlough days for the remaining City workers in upcoming months as financial data begins to make clear our FY'12 and FY'13 budget conditions. However, ahead of that, the truth is that to the extent that we continue to lose 9-1-1 staff and, to the extent the new system continues to be less than fully reliable, the safety of the public is at risk. It is my opinion that these items should be on the top of the City Manager's "To-Do" list until there is a resolution.

All of this points to the budget. We will not solve the structural budget problem without making job creation the primary focus. In a recent Forbes Magazine ranking, Tucson ranked 165 out of 200 cities in measuring "Business and Careers." The factors considered were past and projected job growth, costs of business and living, income growth, educational attainment, and several more. The point is that we have got to work together as a M&C to put in place the incentives needed to catalyze job creation. I've made several suggestions to M&C and those will be again discussed at our next M&C meeting. Others will bring forward their own proposals, I say, "come one, come all" – bring your ideas and let's get our local economy moving out ahead of that of the rest of the State, or the rest of the Nation. We've made modest progress over the past year but we can do better. Unless and until we do, problems such as those we're facing in terms of staffing public safety operations will continue, furloughed employees will continue, and we will be operating from a defensive posture from the start of every budget cycle. We, as a governing body can do better than that.

...and while I've got fire dispatch on the brain – we do not service areas directly west of 1st Avenue near River Road, despite the fact that we have a fire station immediately on the east side of the street. Our firefighters can throw rocks and hit the homes that they cannot provide service to. On the other hand, there is a sliver of land up in the NW area that we do service, despite the fact that it is outside of the Tucson City limits. Northwest Fire is right in that vicinity. They service the 1st Avenue homes and businesses that we cannot. Come on, folks – let's get the City Manager, and respective Fire Chiefs together and work a service area swap out so we're not expending excess fuel, excess time en route and excess wear and tear on our equipment. That doesn't take outside of the box thinking – it only takes a modicum of leadership.

Sincerely,



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