

6/17/2021

This budget only balances because it includes an imposed fee

I have been against imposing this fee since the day our budget officer presented it. The attempt to make the ambulance department look as if it had a shortfall was by withholding their tax and shared revenue funding that we are required to transfer for fire protection by a city policy that has been followed since after measure 5 passed. Until this proposed budget.

I believe the city has been trying to blame the shortfall on the Fire and Ambulance for several years assuming that the citizens will pay more to keep those services.

I challenge anyone to look at the budget that was proposed in April and prove that I am wrong about the withholding of your taxes to fund the Fire Department. You will find it on the last page of the general fund on line 16 ... zero dollars transferred out of general fund. Then go to the Emergency Services Fund in the Revenue on line 5 you will see zero dollars transferred in. Drop down to line 17 in that fund and you will find where they proposed to do this fee instead of using your taxes. During the budget committee meetings, I proposed a motion that follows our policies to fix the improper attempt. That motion passed.

The shortfall is now showing in the budget where it should have been all along. We do not have the revenue from taxes, state shared revenues and grants to support all the programs in the general fund. This has been a problem for many years, slowly depleting all excess saved monies. Library, Parks, Muni Court, Police, the WAC, Planning and Administration are what make up the general fund. The budget committee passed a motion to close the WAC within 6 months, because it runs at a 50k loss every year. But all other motions to reduce spending in any of these funds failed at the budget committee.

I realize the shortfall is real, and the small changes made by the budget committee thus far reduced the total we now need to 540,000. I believe the city owes it to the citizens to reduce expenditures to further lower the fee.. I know that the PD and FD took cuts this current year and we still had to borrow 350k from water and waste water to make it through until now. That reduced our levels of service in Public Safety. We have to pay those loans back this coming year, which account for 350 of the 540k shortfall. It is time for these other programs in the general fund to make the same sacrifices as our public safety departments already have.

I would like to see the council go through the general fund budget line by line and reduce spending in these other programs besides public safety.

And stop allowing the blaming the Ambulance for the shortfall.

COPIED AND PASTED FROM THE CHAT FEATURE ON ZOOM DURING THE 6-17 COUNCIL MEETING

From Tim Barclay to Everyone: 07:22 PM