

*Teamwork Toledo Comments  
Budget Press Conference  
08-30-09*

Good afternoon. Thanks for coming.

Toledo city government has known about a \$27 million budget deficit for several months now. But here we stand, two-thirds of the way through 2009, and city council and the mayor are still wrangling over what to do about the remaining \$8 or 9 million.

Most on city council are backing Issue One-- asking voters to reroute nearly \$4 million in capital improvement money--road repaving and other projects--to pay for police salaries.

The so-called Safety First plan would force voters to choose between smooth streets and police protection.

City council...including four incumbents....are literally "passing the buck"-- asking voters to make the tough choices on how to spend \$4 million so they won't have to do so.

Toledo City Council has had several months to study the budget...come up with solutions...and this is the best they can do?

Put the onus back on the public? And if Issue One fails, what is Plan B?

If the mayor has his way, Plan B is a package of tax increases. A hike in the monthly trash tax...and an increase in the income taxes paid by hard-working Toledoans whose employers reside in the suburbs.

I don't like either plan.

Raising taxes is wrong. Forcing citizens to choose between smooth streets and police protection also is wrong.

Why should voters have to choose between smooth streets and police on patrol?!?

*We can have both. We expect both. We pay enough taxes for both.*

How do we do that? There is a third option, which should have been Plan A all along.

It's simple-- **CUT THE BUDGET, CUT THE BUDGET, CUT THE BUDGET!!**

Take the same approach a family or business does. If the money's not there, don't spend it.

In other words, if public safety and smooth streets are top priorities, then fund them at the expense of something else.

The mayor sent council a memo earlier this week...in it, he used several phrases to describe the current state of city council-- such as:

- "...against the backdrop of council paralysis...";
- "an unwillingness of council to take necessary actions"; and
- "ducking the tough decisions";

The mayor and I don't see eye-to-eye on too many things, but HE IS RIGHT this time!

Not on the actions he wants them to take, but on his descriptions of the state of city council.

If voters see smooth streets AND police protection as top priorities, they can do two things at the ballot box on September 15th-- reject Issue One...and ***hold the incumbents accountable for their indecision, inaction, and ineptitude/incompetence.***

If they'd stop the political bickering, do what we elected them to do, they'd find other ways to cut the

budget or restructure city government!

If they won't do it, please vote for someone who will.

***I will-- and so will my teammates on Teamwork Toledo!***

So...how do we get there?

What I call the "three R's"...and the "three C's"...

**RECLAIM, RESTRUCTURE, AND REINVENT**

--Reclaim city government on behalf of the citizens, voters, and taxpayers

--Restructure city government in ways that save money, improve efficiency, and become more user-friendly for residents and business owners.

--Reinvent existing structures that use tried-and-true techniques and best practices without the need for more costly studies, time-consuming commissions, or burdensome policies/legislation.

**COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND CONSOLIDATION**

--Cooperate where possible with other local governments and agencies on things such as purchasing-- it's working right now for electric through the Northwest Ohio Aggregation Coalition (NOAC). Why not a group purchasing cooperative?

Northeast and Southwest Ohio already have them.

--Collaborate in ways that make sense...such as three townships recently did to buy a crack sealing machine...each township put one person on a three-man road maintenance crew to save money, instead of each alone outsourcing the work.

--Consolidate duplicate operations...some examples...the city and county each have building inspection departments, information technology departments, and others. Can some of those be consolidated...as has been done with the health department and plan commissions?

I realize there's a lack of trust at all levels of local government...and fear of losing political control. But there WILL be a new mayor...and an opportunity to rebuild bridges-- let's start putting the planks in place to do just that, so we can form some win-win partnerships in the long term and solve these budget crises facing every community in Northwest Ohio.