February 10, 2009

TO:                      Budget/Finance/Economic Development Committee
                          Chair Dale Fritch
                          Vice Chair Kathy Miller
                          Committee Member Elbert Holman, Jr.

FROM:                    Katherine G. Meissner, City Clerk

SUBJECT:                 INFORMATION FOR THE BUDGET/FINANCE/ECONOMIC
                          DEVELOPMENT MEETING OF FEBRUARY 10, 2009

This memo is being circulated “around the bench” in electronic format to the
Budget Committee in order to provide you with copies of comments and
suggestions submitted by members of the public between February 2 and 9th,
12:12 p.m. Fifteen items were submitted and are attached.

If you have any questions, please call me at 937-8459.

Bonnie Paige
for
KATHERINE G. MEISSNER
CITY CLERK

emc: City Manager
     City Attorney
Bret Hunter - I was informed City employees were encouraged to e-mail you with ideas on how to cut the budget, so here is my 2 cents.

I was informed City employees were encouraged to e-mail you with ideas on how to cut the budget, so here is my 2 cents.

Close the libraries. I hate to see these employees loose their jobs, but are libraries really a needed, in demand service, in the year 2009?

Immediately start charging for dependant/spouse health insurance.

Stop allowing employees to take City vehicles home at the end of the day. Exception being detectives and department heads.

Immediately lay off all temp. employees. Currently we have 4 of them just in my dept.

Thanks!
Request: 217512  Entered on: 02/03/2009 12:18 PM

---Customer Information---
Name: Morris Artiaga
Address: 3722 Steve Lillie Cr.
        Stockton, CA 95206
Phone: 209-982-4172
Alt. Phone: 209-601-2167
Email: morart@yahoo.com

---Request Classification---
Topic: Budget
Status: Closed
Request type: Question
Priority: Normal
Assigned to: Connie Cochran
Entered Via: Web

---Description---
A win-win situation would be to employ and independent consulting firm to evaluate the SPD and recommend to the committee and council the most efficient way to reduce their budget. It is apparent that they won't make any significant changes to their annual budget. I would welcome a Bankrupcy. It would allow the City to work with all of the Unions and with all cards on the table.

---Reason Closed---
Thank you for message. I will make certain that it is forwarded to the Budget Committee today.

Best regards,
Connie Cochran
City of Stockton
Public Information Officer
(209) 937-8827 office
(209) 937-7149 fax

Date Expect Closed: 02/19/2009

Date Closed: 02/03/2009 2:07 PM  By: Connie Cochran

Enter Field Notes Below

Notes:

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Notes Taken By: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
I was a citizen of stockton for about 25 years and was born and raised in that great town. I watched the budget committee meeting when the fire chief was asked about his ideas. I have one idea that wasn't mentioned in the cost recovery aspect. The fire department needs to be billing the citizens a use fee for emergency medical care...a first responder fee if you will. The private ambulance companies charge a fee why can't the fire department? I know the fire department is a public service but I'm pretty sure property taxes only pay for fire protection from fires and rescues. The fee should only be to pay for services rendered and not for profit. The majority of all fire departments respond to emergency medical calls, I'm not sure if its mandated by the California State EMS Authority or not, but if it is then there should be cost recovery from the state and or medical or medicare.

I also know from being in the fire service in the bay area, that the Stockton Fire Department is one of the busiest fire departments in the nation, especially when it comes to structure fires. They go to more house and building fires than most cities there size and are comparable to Oakland and San Francisco in terms of total house and building fires. So I would also hope you would consider that when you think about fire house closures or down staffing. Plus the older the city the more fires are prevalent. I would hope the city council would do ride alongs with the fire engines to get a first hand perspective. Thank you

From: Former citizen
Hello,

First I’d like to express my appreciation for how the committee is working transparently to resolve the City's budget crisis.

I’d like to offer this suggestion:
I think a large amount of city employees donate to United Way through payroll deduction. I’m not sure what the total amount is but, would it help if employees wanted to shift their United Way contribution to the City of Stockton instead? Of course, this would be voluntary and temporary.

Personally, if this was an option, I would not mind participating. I’m guessing that many others may not mind as well, if it would save jobs. Some employees may feel better about contributing to a charity, but my suggestion is sort of like a charity donation. You would be donating to the General Fund to help fund employee's livelihood, so that they can take care of and support their family.

It's just a suggestion and I hope the committee will share it with everyone in their next meeting.

Thank You,

Nancy Xiong, CGAP
Deputy City Auditor I
City of Stockton, Ca.
www.stocktongov.com
Phone: (209) 937-8042
Fax: (209) 937-7026
From: Florence Low
To: BudgetCommittee
Date: 2/6/2009 10:11 AM
Subject: Tina DeBorba - (209) 602-4716

Budget Committee,

Tina DeBorba called to share her thoughts regarding the article in The Record. She is not in favor of the city entering into a binding arbitration with the Police Department because during the process, the city will continue to spend money they do not have. The Police Department should take a salary cut like the other departments. The police should take a salary cut voluntarily.

She has a question and would like a call back - she wanted to know how long will the binding arbitration process take?

Tina DeBorba
Unfortunately, I have not been able to attend the public meetings concerning Stockton's financial crisis, but felt that it was important that I share my perspective given the city's predicament and the resulting consequences most likely forthcoming due to the difficult decisions that need to be made.

I was disappointed in the level of detail shared by Assistant Police Chief Blair Ulring during last week's meeting, but perhaps the city was not prepared to dive deep into the police department's budget in this forum. Nonetheless, I think it would be informative and helpful if we could truly see where the city resources are being spent. A more insightful overview would have included greater details on estimated expenditures for existing headcount, overtime dollars, projected wage adjustments/merit increases, benefits and taxes, etc. My concern is that we have not assembled a bottom's up analysis of our police department's costs. I have to believe that there are significant dollars spent towards other activities, such as training, travel & entertainment, community relations, rent, repairs & maintenance, insurance, etc. Consequently, I suspect that there are a number of opportunities present in other accounts to squeeze additional savings so that we are able to minimize the number of officers terminated.

If I recall correctly, the number of sworn and non-sworn officers totaled 613, which in my experience equates to approximately $61M in annual cost. I would contend that this is a high end estimate, if not rich. This estimate assumes an annual employee cost of $100K (Base wages, O/T, benefits & taxes), so every 100 employees equates to $10M. The total revised budget in the presentation came out to $89.6M, so what will the rest of the funding totaling approximately $28M be spent towards? We cannot be spending $90M solely on headcount related costs. Has the leadership of the department identified items that could be delayed or eliminated altogether so that we can avoid massive layoffs? A greater amount of detail would have been helpful in shaping the serious decisions needed to balance our spending.

Lastly, it is comical how highly correlated the historical expenditures line was with the budget line within the charts shared by Assistant Police Chief Ulring during the meeting. In fact, I suspect that police leadership ensured that any historical surpluses be spent just before the end of the fiscal year so that actual expenses equal budgeted expenses. School districts and government entities do this all the time in an effort to justify next year's spending requirements.

Albert Troutman, CFA
Cell 209-406-4750

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This e-mail and any attachments are intended only for the individual or company to which it is addressed and may contain information which is privileged, confidential and prohibited from disclosure or unauthorized use under applicable law. If you are not the intended recipient of this e-mail, you are hereby notified that any use, dissemination, or copying of this e-mail or the information contained in this e-mail is strictly prohibited by the sender. If you have received this transmission in error, please return the material received to the sender and delete all copies from your system.
Why would you spend valuable money buying useless property in the middle of the Ghetto (Ralph White's property), when we don't have money to build or upgrade it? That money should have been used to pay Police wages. With job losses and increased crime we need MORE Policeman, not LESS!!! We can't even walk out of our front door to go to work in the morning without being afraid of being robbed. More and more businesses are being robbed every day. Without Police protection we going to have to buy guns to protect ourselves and take the law into our own hands.

Christine
To Whom It May Concern,

I read about your future cuts due for your police department. Honestly, do you really feel this is a good idea. Stockton is already known as one of the top cities to have the most crime and laying off your police officers, I am sure will not help the citizens of Stockton.

You really need to think seriously as to what this would do to Stockton with less officers. I have a problem now when shopping there, I don't think I would feel safe with your cuts.

Sincerely,
Dena Fagtundes
Tracy, California
I am appalled to learn that the City is laying off Police Officers. Stockton has a high violent crime rate and barely has enough officers as it is. The City Manager and Council Members have mismanaged our budget and taxpayers money. Now due to their poor executive decisions, the citizens of Stockton pay the consequences. Stockton's downtown already has poor attendance. Taking money to beautify downtown without regard to the Public's safety is ludicrous. It doesn't matter how much money you spend, people are not going to be drawn. History speaks for itself. The Arena is also another poor financial decision. We, the citizens of Stockton, are already taking the brunt of your poor financial management, now, are we to take even more with your decision to jeopardize our safety? We have over 100 gangs in Stockton. Less officers on the streets allows them more power. What will it take for you to put our safety first?? Does someone in your family have to be a victim of crime, before you will listen to reason and common sense? We, as citizens, are all concerned for our safety and the officer's safety that is left on the force to protect Stockton with a skeleton crew.

--
Dorothy Edens
Buyer
San Joaquin Delta College
5151 Pacific Avenue
Stockton, CA 95207
209-954-5071
Hello:
I am a Tracy, CA resident, and I have friends whose family work for the Stockton police dept. and I see they are cutting back on jobs/budgets, etc. Since Stockton, has some high crime stats, etc. I would respectfully request that you do no further cuts and keep what you have in order to keep Stockton a safer place to live, shop and work.
Respectfully submitted-
Julie Curran-Mattos

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From: "Julie Curran-Mattos"
To: 
Date: 2/9/2009 3:31 PM
Subject: Stockton police dept. cuts

"Two names you can trust."

Julie Curran-Mattos
Realtor

juliecm@inreach.com
www.curranrealestate.com

Curran-GMAC Real Estate
445 W. 11th St., Suite A
Tracy, CA 95376
tel: 209-835-4000
fax: 209-835-9132
City Council Members,
I am a business owner in Tracy, California. I and several friends and family members frequently shop and do business in your city. We are now reconsidering this practice due to safety concerns. We realize that in these hard economic times budget cuts are necessary but cutting police officers puts us all in danger. Anymore cuts that will affect our safety and we will shop elsewhere. Let's not go backwards in time when Stockton was a very scary place to visit. Please put your citizens and visitors safety first.

Sincerely,

Paula Fagundes, Ron Fagundes, Marie Bacchetti, Lindy Bacchetti, Karen Bacchetti, Armando Garcia, Carla Bacchetti, Steven Payne, Nicole Simoni, Dianne Simoni
To whom it may concern,

I am a Tracy resident who often shops in Stockton. I have read that the city council will be meeting soon to discuss the possibility of further reducing the police force in Stockton. I am strongly opposed to this idea as Stockton already has one of the worst, if not the worst, crime rates around. (In fact I heard a report on the radio just yesterday stating that Stockton was number one in the nation of the “most miserable places to live”, largely due to crime.) It is my opinion that a city’s first and foremost responsibilities is to provide a safe place for its citizens and community to live, work and shop. Cutting addition police is no way to ensure safety for the public, especially when the crime rate is so high and out of control.

Stockton is/can be a beautiful city rich in history and potential prosperity. Their must be other avenues to explore to reduce costs other than placing the public at even more risk by reducing the police force.

Chris Lawrence
Operations Manager
1- A couple weeks ago I witnessed Council member Eggmen ranting over the fact that everyone who is a city employee should live and spend their money here in Stockton, Does the City Manager live in this city? If not, I think we should have a City Manager that does so that he/she can see on a daily basis what the City of Stockton is all about!

2- To help with current budget issues, I think that the city should eliminate the practice of issuing city cars (take home cars) and allowing city gas to be used, instead of laying off police officers. Is this practice of assigning city cars to administration personal still in effect during this crisis, police department included?

3- I watched President Obama last night on TV, I thought I heard him say that some of the tax stimulus moneies will be given to cities who are in need of some assistances because of the current foreclosure problem and budget crisis, if so, is the City of Stockton going to get some of the money to help this current problem and if we are why are we jumping the gun by laying off police officers? I heard via the news that Sacramento might get 8 million of that money, where do we currently stand?

4- By reading the news paper, watching both the budget and council meeting via the internet, I have form this opinion regarding the police department: SPOA has done everything they could to be fair in this situation, I am of this opinion that City Manager Palmer and HR Garcia have some type of ax or personnel issues against the SPOA. I heard via friends of the PD that they were going to give back to the city %5 which was equal to a furlough day and extend their contract with the city with no pay raises. By watching Palmer on TV last week, he stated that the PD wasnt going to do the furloughs days therefore, he laid off 29 police officers. I believe that SPOA delivered as requested; honor the mediation agreement and lets start making Stockton a better place to live so that the police can clean up this city in order to bring back businesses, jobs and people to live in this town. The bottom line here is that making Stockton a safer place starts with the Police Department, if this council continues to not honor contracts and continues to laid off police officers, then Stockton will never recover and be safe..we will be number 1 in all crime stats and Stockton will no longer be the All American City. I read in a money magazine that Stockton was rated last in safe cities to live in..how do we go from the All American city to a city that is unsafe to live, do you think laying police officers off is going to help this?

#4- Last question, HR Garcia is dating a former disgraced police officer who might have some issues with the PD, isnt this a conflict of interest especially during mediations and other things regarding the PD?
To the Committee:
I am very concerned about any future police cuts that you may be considering. It seems with the redeveloped downtown, Stockton is trying to improve its image and keep people shopping and attending local events in Stockton. I am a long time Tracy resident who attends sporting events at the local high schools, shops at the Stockton Malls and attend events at the Stockton Arena. I am not sure I will continue to commute to Stockton for events if I don’t feel safe and protected by the local police. Please do your best to keep the law enforcement presence a priority, by not letting anymore officers go.

Sincerely,

Jollyne Toste
Parent, Teacher,
Community Member
Here's a couple of areas that maybe you could look at when considering the budget problems:

1. **Arena** - Our family LOVES the arena, and we support as many of the events there that we can. It is not unusual to see anywhere from 4 to 6 uniformed police officers walking around inside the arena during a hockey game.
   **Are those uniformed officers on regular duty or overtime?**
   **Couldn't the level of their skills be better used on the streets of Stockton?**
   **Couldn't we hire a security firm to do the same work for much less?**

   Hiring a security company could stimulate private business in Stockton, and get our police officers back on the street where they are most needed.

   Also in regards to the Arena, is it really necessary to have 6 motorcycle officers bunched together at the intersection of Fremont and Madison when events are over.

   How many City police officers are utilized at each event at the Arena, Fox Theater and Civic Auditorium?

2. **Contract Employees** - Has anyone looked at how many City employees are "double dipping". Like our former mayor - collecting their pension from the City, then coming back to work as Mayor and collecting another full time paycheck. I know there are other areas in the City where they have hired back retired employees in either a part time position, or as a contract employee.
   **Can't those jobs go to someone who's in need of a job, and isn't already collecting a City retirement check?**

3. **Wa-Mu** - Since the City has already purchased the Wa-Mu building - could that building be better used as a revenue source for a few more years by leasing out the space, and keep the old City Hall as is?

4. **Furloughs** - Why is the City going round and round on the furlough business? It's nice that the employees gave up pay and in exchange got more time off. But wouldn't it be easier to just do a pay cut across the board for EVERYONE, in every position in the City, regardless of what the unions want - including the police and fire departments. If everyone had a 5% paycut, what would that give back to the budget? I would think that people would prefer to make 5% to 10% less and still have a job. Of course they'll grumble, but hey . . . . there's always unemployment. Which would you chose?

Thank you for allowing the citizens share our ideas for saving money. Good luck, and may God Bless you all as you lead the City through this difficult time.