



Keeping You Posted

Councilmember Loretta C. Scott

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City of Rochester Budget—2011/2012

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Budget development for fiscal year 2011-2012 promised to be one of the most difficult that the City of Rochester has ever faced. The prospect of a \$50 million budget gap did not bode well for our desire to maintain city services at acceptable levels. Hundreds of citizens attended Voice of the Customer (VOC) sessions to provide valuable comments and insights regarding what services, programs and activities were important to them and areas where we should look to achieve cost reductions and savings as well. Follow this link to view the entire VOC report:

<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/article.aspx?id=8589947738>

Subsequently, Mayor Richards with ongoing input from City Council, crafted a budget that sought to effectively respond to the need to provide adequate levels of vital services like fire and police as well as quality of life services such as libraries and recreation centers within the greatly reduced

constraints of the projected revenue. Thanks to the insight of citizens, the hard work of the Mayor and his team and the keen oversight of City Council's, we have a budget that preserves the services that are important to you and ensures that vital activities will be continued at acceptable levels. A few important facts about this budget are:

- The almost \$467 million dollar budget represents a reduction of \$5.3 million from the 2010 operating budget. The size of the budget gap was reduced to due to mid-year cost savings. We also drew \$3.9 million from reserve funds to help lessen the gap.
- All libraries, recreation centers and fire houses will continue in operation
- 140 Positions will be eliminated including police officer positions which had been funded as over-hires in the past.
- Eligible city employees will be offered a one-time \$15,000 retirement incentive – this may

reduce the number of actual lay-offs.

- Property tax and water rates and water rates will increase slightly – about \$60 per year for the average homeowner.

Every City department incurred a reduction to some extent. There will be service impacts that we will need to adjust to. For example, snow plowing will begin when 4 inches of snow has fallen rather than 3. The reduction in property code inspectors may result in a slight delay in responding to blight complaints, etc. All in all, this budget represents a great deal of sacrifice – but its shared sacrifice. The budget strikes a sound balance between ensuring adequate levels of critical services but also providing support for quality of life services and programs.

City Council approved the 2011-12 Operating budget at the June meeting.

City Council Approves Rochester City School District Budget

The City School District's \$682 million budget was approved by City Council at the June meeting as well. The CSD budget represents a \$28 million dollar reduction from the 2010-11 fiscal year. To bridge that gap several schools were restructured. Additionally, 890 staff positions were proposed for elimination. It is anticipated however, that the number of lay-offs may be reduced as a result of cost saving concessions contained in the recently settled Teachers Union contract.

City Council authorized borrowing for summer school building construction projects in the amount of \$12 million after receiving assurances from the NYS Department of Education that our \$119 million maintenance of effort allocation for 2011 to the District would be not be increased by the amount of the debt service for the bonds. Additional borrowing has also been approved contingent upon the approval of legislation now pending in the state legislature.

Jobs, Jobs, Jobs

The availability of good jobs is key to community vitality. The government, including the City of Rochester, has been a major player in providing jobs for many years (follow this link to see current openings within the City of Rochester:

<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/jobopportunities/>

Even as the city's workforce decreases we will continue to have opportunities to contribute to the employment landscape. In addition to the \$275 million in personnel costs directly associated with city operations, there is also \$70 million in contract and

service expenditures and \$65 million in capital expenditures that help to fuel the employment engine. Our challenge is to do better at making the expenditures of tax dollars go further in benefiting the people who pay the taxes, i.e. city residents. Efforts to advance that agenda have inched along in recent years.

City Council enacted an Apprentice Training Program Ordinance (10/2003) that requires contracts in excess of \$250,000 to include apprenticeship agreements. The threshold was reduced to \$100,000 in March 2009. Contractors were also

offered incentives for hiring city residents from particular zip codes. From March 2009 to December 2010, 26 construction contracts with a total value just under \$30 million have been issued containing those requirements. The contracts yielded an estimated 322 jobs including 99 apprenticeship placements of which 28 were city residents. I will provide more information in the future on how to access these opportunities as they become available. We can and we will do better! Stay tuned.....



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“Operation Safe Passage”

As you have probably read or heard in recent news, I have been assisting with an initiative that was started by my colleague, Councilmember Adam McFadden that addresses the on-going concerns at the Liberty Pole in Downtown Rochester. On a daily basis, students who attend the Rochester City School District are dropped off at the Liberty Pole via RTS buses to transfer to another bus. Over the last couple of years, the crowd has become larger and so have the issues. The violence and unlawfulness has been a major concern. Councilmember McFadden launched an effort dubbed Operation Safe Passage to address this situation.

I joined with Councilmember McFadden, citizen volunteers and organizations that were already posted at the Liberty Pole every day: RPD, SNUG and Pathways to Peace to help provide safe passage and a caring presence to the youth gathered there. He and I met with the Rochester City School District to urge and engage them in helping to address the situation. They subsequently implemented changes to the bus pass system. The new color-coded bus pass system added transfer restrictions for students and began on May 16th. The impact of these changes was swift and dramatic by immediately reducing the number of unsupervised youth congregating at the Liberty Pole. Operation Safe Passage succeeded in ensuring safe, orderly transfer of students at downtown points

“Summer Fun 2011”

The City of Rochester has a rich history of celebrating our beautiful summers with food, music and fun for the whole family. Plan to attend one or more of our City sponsored events this summer. Follow the links provided for specific information about the acts and schedules. There is something for everyone!

Party in the Park—<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/PIP/>

Night Markets Bands on the Bricks—<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/nightmarkets/>

Rochester MusicFest—<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/MusicFest2011/>

Puerto Rican Festival—<http://www.prfestival.com/>

City Recreation, Cool Sweep—<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/article.aspx?id=8589943589>

Free Summer Food Sites 2011—<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/article.aspx?id=8589943434>

Recreation on the Move—<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/article.aspx?id=8589944096>

