

Mistretta, Susan

From: The Fahey's <thefaheysest2007@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 10:34 PM
To: City Council - All
Subject: A Tax-Cap Compliant Budget

Security Notice: This email originated outside the City of Dover mail system. Please use caution with hyperlinks or attachments.

Good evening.

My husband and I were astonished to read in Fosters that the City Council has (finally) decided to work "to bring down our expenses to reach a tax-cap compliant budget". However, we were dumbfounded for the reason: "because of the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic, and that "if we were to go ahead with that kind of budget (*a proposed \$158,331,639 budget, which 'increases spending by 3.9 percent' and exceeds the tap cap 'by some \$1.2 million' along with raising taxes*), "a lot of our neighbors would see that as a slap in the face in very uncertain times." My husband and I will tell you -- it already is a slap in the face every year the budget exceeds the tax cap -- pandemic or no pandemic. How many years has the tax cap been overridden -- 5? 6? **It took a pandemic for the City Council to see they should bring down expenses to reach a tax-cap compliant budget?**

John Linville of Dover has a solution to Dover's budget woes, which he so eloquently wrote about in his letter to the Editor, January 24, 2020: *"Every five years, I was required to do a zero-based budget. This involves first determining what tasks you do with the starting assumption of zero. Once you have manually loaded your tasks, you then compare the lists to the mission and vision of the enterprise. Tasks outside that structure, some may be vestigial or non-supportive, are eliminated. Then the tasks are person loaded and assigned a cost depending on the job. At this point the budget should reflect what is actually needed. What we have now is the practice of compounding budgets, where we start each year with last year's costs and then add on incrementally without regard to whether or not the historical tasks are still relevant. We taxpayers would have far more confidence in public sector budgets if this practice was employed with a reasonable frequency."*

My husband and I came across the following article (from 1993 but still relevant in 2020) -- Ten Ways to Trim the Budget - Proposals for Fiscal Prudence, and thought we would share it with you -- great ideas --

<https://www.city-journal.org/html/ten-ways-trim-budget-12630.html>

You care about your / our City; that's why you work as City Councilors, and we thank you. Since you are basically volunteering (total \$9,249.72 compensation for nine (9) members 2019), would you cut your own "salaries" for the betterment of the City? There are items that

can be cut from the budget. Start with a \$0 based budget and look at each line item through the lens of want vs. true need.

We thank you for your time in reading our letter.

Sincerely,

Kathy J. & Scott D. Fahey