Mistretta, Susan

From: Joe Perrelli <perr94@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 8, 2020 4:58 PM
To: City Council - All
Subject: Comments for Tonight's Meeting

Thank you all for the efforts that you have put into representing the residents of Dover and developing a responsible budget that we can all live with. It's not an easy task and that is especially true when we are in the middle of an unprecedented state of emergency that has upset our way of lives and caused us all to step back and rethink everything. The Board was asked to provide an example of a tax compliant budget.

It has become routine over the last few years for the Council to accept budgets that are in excess of the tax cap. This practice shows a lack of commitment to the residents and the City Charter. Public trust in government has been on the decline for decades. If our elected officials took their obligations to the city seriously, it would go a long way to restore faith in government. That is especially true on the local level where so many of us know our representatives personally and see each other around town. For all of the challenges that are involved in developing a responsible budget that adheres to the tax cap, we believe it is far better than to continue with the trend of thumbing your nose at the residents year-after-year. This is true regardless of the state of emergency and the associated devastation it has had on our residents and our economy.

The School Board was asked to show the Council what a tax cap-compliant budget would look like. This request was rooted in the desire of Councilors and their constituents to ultimately see a budget that is tax-cap compliant. If the Board fell short of fulfilling this task, then the Council should reject the proposal outright and send them back to the drawing board.

The Board has had the great fortune of finding extra revenues coming in from the town of Barrington and through state and federal aid (CARES Act) to help offset the increases to their budget. They have proposed some savings that will come in from retirements and cuts in the supplies, software, and books as stated by Mr. Limmani at the Special Meeting on 04/05/20. If they still find themselves short several hundred thousand dollars and they are committed to not laying off employees, the Board could consider doing away with the list of new positions/increases that they have requested. If that proves insufficient, they may then need to consider foregoing raises and steps increases, a clearly politically unpopular idea. If we are to believe that the Board did their due diligence to find places to cut back the budget and the last resort is to forego raises and step increases, then one would assume that everything else in the budget holds a higher priority than those personnel costs.

We would like to note that it is irresponsible to look at one-time revenue as a way to shore up the School Board budget. This one-time stimulus funding that will be coming through as a result of the current pandemic will not be there next year. The Board needs to be prepared for next year when those funds are no longer available.

Furthermore, we would implore the Council to not use savings from other departments i.e. paving to help offset overages on the School Board side. This kind of shell game is worse than relying on one-time disaster revenue coming down from the state and feds to present a balanced budget.

Thank you again for the work that you are doing to develop this budget. We regret that we are unable to attend the meeting in person in the present climate, and hope that these and all citizen comments will be taken into consideration.

Regards,

Marybeth and Joseph Perrelli

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