



CITY OF PLAINFIELD

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Adrian O. Mapp
Mayor

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The following is written in response to the budgetary comments and presentations offered by both the Plainfield Citizens Budget Advisory Committee and Government Strategy Group on May 5, 2014.

There are several different approaches to the preparation of a Municipal budget. An approach in itself is not necessarily right or wrong, but must be considered in light of surrounding circumstances. The recommendations made by the Government Strategy Group are based on a single year approach and give little consideration to past operational results; trends such as the City's declining ratable base; or where the City wishes to be in the near future. The budget prepared by this Administration for the 2014 year of operation considers not only the financial and operational trends over the recent past but also embraces a vision of change for the City. This budget provides funding for initiatives in Planning, Recreation, Community Relations, and Economic Development, which are all key components in the revitalization of the City of Plainfield.

During his presentation and in the related material that was distributed, Larry Carroselli, the budget consultant from the Government Strategy Group, stressed the use of surplus and the ability to regenerate surplus as a "major concern" in the budget process. The proposed 2014 municipal budget anticipates \$4.9 million (as opposed to the 2013 which used \$2.9 million). However, Mr. Caroselli failed to consider that the main component of surplus regeneration in 2013 was the level of tax collection. City Tax Collector, David Marshall, has done an outstanding job of raising the tax collection rate from 93.84% in CY2012 to 96.42% in 2013. This 2.5% improvement resulted in an additional \$2 million in surplus for the City as of 12/31/13, as well as providing for the reserve for uncollected tax to be reduced in 2014 to \$3,750,000.00 from \$4,560,000.00 in 2013. The Administration believes that the concerns raised by Mr. Caroselli in this area may be overstated, as preliminary projections from Mr. Marshall indicates that the collection rate will likely increase again for the year of 2014, providing additional surplus for the 2014 year end.

The budget cuts outlined by the Government Strategy Group might have merit if the 2014 budget had been designed merely to continue the operations at the same level where they have been for the recent past, rather than dedicate the necessary funding to the areas of operation that the City needs to improve if we are to move forward. As a governing body, we have the responsibility to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the City of Plainfield, and this budget adequately funds those obligations. This has not been the case in recent years.

The other area of concern that the Government Strategy Group addressed was the issue of examining obsolete grants, aged ordinances, dormant trust fund balances and other areas of financial housekeeping that might provide additional available funding. We would like to offer the Administration's assurance that with the recent hiring of full time Chief Financial Officer, Al Steinberg, this process was already well under way. In the near future, the City Council will be asked to consider action on resolutions associated with such actions.

The Citizens Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC) did a commendable job in the preparation and presentation of their findings. However, some of their recommendations are not necessarily realistic or applicable to government operations, nor are the CBAC members aware of the work that is currently being done by the Administration.

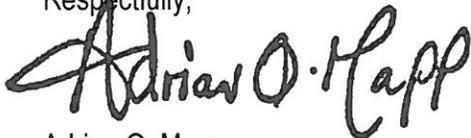
Many of the recommendations made are already "works in progress" by the Administration. For example, the area of Public Safety (Police & Fire) will be evaluated and handled by our recently hired Police Director. We expect a modified "T.O." (Table of Organization) for the Council to approve in the near future, which will also make recommendations for overtime and compensatory time.

Information Technology is a key initiative of the new Administration. In order for information to be relevant in decision making, it must be both accurate and timely, and the intent is to implement systems that can provide just that. The plans we have in this area should address many of the CBAC recommendations regarding the need for information.

CBAC made many relevant recommendations and observations that we certainly can take into consideration for, not only this, but also future budgets. Perhaps the most applicable recommendation specific to this budget was regarding the creation of the position of "Grants Writer." It might be advantageous for the Council to also consider adding the position of "Grants Coordinator," which would be responsible for obtaining grants and also seeing the operation through to the execution of grants by the different departments, as well as grant reimbursements and reporting.

It appears that budget considerations come down to this question; Do we, the Governing Body of the City of Plainfield, want to seize the opportunity given to us to take the additional surplus realized through the 2013 operations and reinvest it in the future of the City? The Administration believes that this budget offers the best opportunity to maximize Plainfield's potential and bring about the bright future that we all fervently desire.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adrian O. Mapp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Adrian O. Mapp
Mayor