

4-4-05



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04/05/2005 11:23 AM

Please respond to
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cc

bcc

Subject City of Alexandria Website Contact Us - EMail for Mayor,
Vice-Mayor and Council Members (alexvamayor@aol.com,
delpepper@aol.com, council@joycewoodson.net,
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Time: [Tue Apr 05, 2005 11:23:22] IP Address: [69.143.37.188]

Response requested:

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Re. Yesterday's Public Hearing on the Budget

My number to speak was 75. I was at the meeting from 4-6 but could not stay any longer.

Had I spoken this is what I would have said.

- I am a residential property owner in Alexandria and am speaking on my own behalf. However, I know from many conversations over the last few months that many of my neighbors in the Chapel Hill & Seminary Hill area share my view.
- Which is, given the proposed budget &

anticipated tax rate (90-93 cents) my tax bill – the money I will be paying out of pocket – will be going up somewhere between 25-30%. This is unacceptable!

- An increase in my tax bill of 8-12% is acceptable.

- I appreciate the challenges, complexities and trade-offs of the budget process. However, my impression is that the process needs an overhaul. The way it seems to work is that a budget is set and then you calculate what the tax rate needs to be to generate the revenue you need to balance the budget.

Comments:

- I would suggest you first set a tax rate target that results in a 8-10% TAX BILL (out-of-pocket) increase and then manage to that number in the budget. If this results in some hard decisions & choices, so be it. This approach is used all the time in the private sector when expenses need to be cut in order to make a profit. Yes, it is arbitrary, but it works. None of the City departments, special interest groups, etc. funded by the budget are going to take the initiative to cut their expenses. They need to be directed to do so.

- There may be other ways to achieve this tax bill goal – other tax revenue sources, ballot propositions for funding specific projects, etc. If these accomplish the goal, great! However, unless you clearly state & commit up-front that you have as a fundamental objective to reduce the TAX BILL we are paying, I have strong doubts that you will ever achieve it.

- From where I sit, as Stewards of the interests of ALL the citizens of Alexandria you have a responsibility to act accordingly. That is what I personally expect of you as our elected officials.