

From: Kevin Van Lierop
Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2012 1:38 PM
To: Brown, Denise
Cc: Saunders, Cathy
Subject: Re: Concerns Over Budget Process

Denise.

First and foremost I wanted to say Thank You for taking the time to respond to me in the capacity which you did. I can only assume that you've been rather busy talking with the citizens of our ward and the city regarding this matter.

While I certainly don't want to take up more time from either of us than is needed I feel that I need to elaborate on my concerns.

I thank you for the numbers you have provided, which I've previously been aware of and that I have no disagreement regarding them at all. The amounts in reserve funds are certainly substantial when placed in certain contexts but I am worried that when looked at over the long term, and the implications of not contributing to them as initially planned, that as a city we're not planning the best we can.

Historical examples, both from London and other municipalities from across the country, show that when amounts contributed are less than initially anticipated this trend continues in subsequent years (often with fewer contributions) and often does not end up resuming the level of contributions that were initially planned. In cases where contributions do resume as planned, at the same level, this typically only takes place after a long period of time and with substantial, often critical cuts (in the negative sense of the word) to other services. My concerns are about what fiscal state the city/community will be in when this 4 years of 0% are over. I for one DO NOT want to be paying 10% in taxes 4-5 years from now as it simply does not make sense.

In addition, and certainly as important as the issues around using monies from the reserves in question, is that of the service cuts being proposed in general. This more than anything is what really hits home for me.

As someone who is at the point in their life where the choice needs to be made whether to remain in London or seek employment elsewhere I'm very concerned what the future will hold if the proposed cuts are made. I'd love nothing more than to remain in London, building stronger roots, but with an outlook at is looking more grim with each discussion about unnecessary cuts. I am feeling more and more that there are fewer opportunities or consideration being given to what London should be offering young professionals in the future knowing very well that this demographic will be the one contributing the most to the economy in the coming years. While I don't expect you to understand this I certainly hope that you'll take my concerns to council along with others of the same that you might hear.

And as one last comment, to address your point about the city residents that are struggling to stay in their homes, I could be considered to be one of these people. As someone who is unemployed with no source of income whatsoever I see the value that a small increase in taxes brings. For the small increase that would be the case the amount of value that would be the case the provided value, in terms of city services, is much larger than if I were to spend that same amount of money on my own. Having the City of London provide these services and having them paid for via a small tax increase makes more sense from a value point of view than providing citizens with a 0% increase and expecting them to be paying for the same amount and level of service out of their own pocket with their small savings.

Once again, I sincerely appreciate you taking the time to engage with me in a thoughtful manner.

Cheers,

Kevin

On Monday, 13 February, 2012 at 4:56 PM, Brown, Denise wrote:

Good afternoon, Mr. Van Lierop, and thank you for your email. I will address the 2 main issues that were discussed last week. If there are any others you would like to discuss, please let me know.

First, let me assure you that I understand the importance of helping less fortunate families in our community. I was raised in a 3 bedroom house shared with 11 other family members. Our house until 1970 had no indoor plumbing.

Currently, NAHRF already has **8 Million dollars** in reserve. We added another Million in their reserves, instead of the 2 Million originally planned. This is not their operating budget.

Building affordable housing is not necessarily helping these that are less fortunate. I have visited several of these buildings in Ward 11 and I would not want anyone that I know living under these conditions. With 1 Million dollars, we can help more people and quicker. Partnerships with regular landlords to place individuals that need our assistance can be done at a much lower cost to the taxpayers. In addition, we need to address why there are so many vacancies in the city's affordable housing system. If landlords can turn apartments almost overnight for the next tenant, why can't we?

Believe me when I say that I truly believe putting the less fortunate in one building is not helping anyone. Putting them in amongst the community is a much better solution.

Regarding the 1.3 million from the reserve fund, the City has **207 Million dollars** in reserve fund and the decision was to reduce the 2012 contribution from 34 Million to 32.3 Million. We are still investing quite a significant large amount in our reserve fund.

My goal is not to get to 0% at any cost. It is important to know that helping less fortunate does not always mean affordable housing. There are many city residents, many of them seniors and unemployed, that are struggling and want to stay in their homes. Any increase in taxes will cause them even more hardship.

Again, thank you for your email. Please do not hesitate to contact me, should you wish to discuss any other issue.

Sincerely,

Denise Brown
Councillor - Ward 11

From: Kevin Van Lierop

Sent: Friday, February 10, 2012 11:01 AM

To: Orser, Stephen; Van Meerbergen, Paul; Polhill, Bud; Brown, Denise; Henderson, Dale; Swan, Joseph; Fontana, Joe; White, Sandy

Subject: Concerns Over Budget Process

To my ward councillor, Denise Brown, the Mayor and other city councillors;

It is with great regret that I find myself writing this letter today. I had hoped that those of you in support of a zero percent tax increase would have seen the issues with this choice but it seems that if the opposite has happened.

As a Londoner living in Ward 11 I feel as if you're mis-representing what is in the best interest of the community and city, both as they currently stand and what they could be in the future, what they need to be in the future.

I am outraged with your support of the unnecessary cuts that are being suggest in addition to the pulling of monies from the City's reserve fund to simply achieve this unrealistic and unneeded zero percent goal.

If we want to be a city of opportunity, retain and attract great talented people as well as make London a place that people want to call home, now and in the future, we as a collective community need to gain a better and clearer perspective as to what we value now and what will be valuable to future generations.

We cannot only think about the now and the coming year when making the decisions and choices that are currently being made, we need to have a vision and perspective that looks beyond the coming year, beyond the next election. We need to collective take a sustainable approach (and

actually understand what this means) so that future councillors, staff and citizens have the resources they/we need to create the type of community and city that they/we deserve.

While I am in no way trying to tell you how to do your job, whether as my councillor or part of City Council as a whole, I am expressing my discontent with the choices you're making as I don't believe them to be in the best interest of the community or the City of London as a whole, now or for the future.

At ~\$30/home (or whatever number you choose to sight) I must ask if the cuts you're making and the decisions you're making are in any way practical, needed or in the best interest of our community. I for one know the value of a dollar, the value of services in our collective community and the relationship between the two, and would urge you to take into consider the same.

I urge you to take into consideration my concerns as well as the others that I have no doubt you will receive, and when the time comes near the end of the month please make the right choice and the right vote.

I would be more than happy to discuss my concerns with you in person and know others who would appreciate the opportunity to do the same.

Cheers,

Kevin Van Lierop

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