

**The Republican Council Position
For the Town of East Hartford
Fiscal Year 2010-2011**

Foreword:

Budgets are not a foreign concept to municipalities; so each year the Town Council must come to grips with the finalizing of an Annual Budget. Across the board there is a myriad of opinions to how the budgetary process should move with some very different philosophical beliefs to how this finalization should occur. It is the belief of your Minority Republican members of the Town Council that we should not try to re-invent the wheel; but to look back at prior suggestions and implement these common sense ideas for the betterment of the residents and taxpayers of East Hartford.

Understanding this we must revisit some pertinent questions and statements posed by Minority Councillors and compare the rationale and relevance of these questions to the present economy and state of affairs in East Hartford.

Each year as the Town Council starts its work to resolve the Mayor's proposed budget; there are always new objectives, wishes, wants, and problems to contend with. But your Republican Council members have only one basic constant in mind; the health, safety and the financial impact that may be imposed on the citizens of East Hartford. As this process goes forward, we must not be irresponsible and indulge ourselves by being insensitive to present circumstances and affordability of our residents.

Once again the Town Council is tasked to finalize a budget without the specificity of the State's input thereto. Once again we will state our positions on the budget with our concerns as they relate to the town and its residents. From our position, it is our responsibility to promote and support the need for responsible, efficient, and effective government within the boundaries of fiscal responsibility.

The principle source of any Grand List growth came on the backs of the homeowners.

A statement made by us last year bears repeating. "As the process goes forward, we must not be irresponsible and indulge ourselves by being insensitive to the circumstance and affordability of our residents."

Also, as we have indicated in prior year budget responses, the sealing of the budget is really the culmination of activities/actions made by the Town's management, months or years preceding the budget process. We believe our actions have been consistent with our Road Map in working to bring down the cost of government and to keep it under control, although we may lack a plurality on the Council to bring it all to fruition.

Past Positions:

1. We will continue to vote against accepting any labor contract that does not contain a minimum one-year net zero increase.
2. We have called for significant revision, and/or repeal of the flawed binding arbitration process, which is preventing the town from containing its labor-related costs.

**The Republican Council Position
For the Town of East Hartford
Fiscal Year 2010-2011**

3. We continue to support containing the overall town budget [excluding bond debt service and health care costs] to be equal to or less than Grand List growth.
4. We continue to support the elimination of Town Treasurer and have eliminated the Treasurer's stipend.
5. We support the elimination of the position of Selectmen and thus we are recommending posting the positions at zero dollars.

Budget:

1. The proposed mill rate must be reduced by at least one (1) mill in order to bring taxes into the range of possibility for many of our residents to meet. Our Town is saddled with one of the highest tax rates in the State as well as one of the lowest per capita incomes in the State. This is seen as one of the reasons so many "For Sale" signs are popping up, as residents seek a more affordable living circumstance.
2. With the passing of time, the organizational triangle of some departments has grown obtusely broad at the top. There is opportunity for some reorganization and for some restructuring of various departments to affect reasonable savings, without the loss of staffing. It is time for this consideration to be made.
3. In some departments there is a perception of a disproportionate ratio of supervisory personnel to those being supervised. Reorganization possibilities should be examined.
4. In addition to any further reductions within the Town's Parks and Recreation Department we propose that 2 (two) Pools in the Town of East Hartford should be closed.
5. There should be no overtime for any town sponsored activity.
6. The acquisition or replacement of any asset that can be delayed for a reasonable period without impairing the health or safety of the user(s) must be considered.
7. Minority Council members ask that their fellow Councillors join them in returning 10% of their annual salary to the Town.
8. The Mayor is asked to offer a similar contribution of her salary.

PROPOSED BUDGETARY ADJUSTMENTS

The proposed revisions are not without impact to the services town residents have come to appreciate. We have proposed and incorporated the following:

- We have eliminated the leaf pickup program just to encompass bag pickup of leaves
- We have eliminated stipends for Selectmen along with Town Treasurer

**The Republican Council Position
For the Town of East Hartford
Fiscal Year 2010-2011**

- We have reduced the Town Council stipend and the Mayor's salary by 10%
- We have eliminated the Youth Task Force Coordinator position
- We are closing (2) pools
- We have taken back (3) Directors cars with (1) 24 hr Vehicle and (2) Trucks
- We have comprised a separate overtime account for all town agencies except for the Fire and Police Departments, reducing overtime by 20%
- We call for the delay of the distribution of \$250k for Revaluation efforts, imploring our State Legislative Contingent to change the laws and mandates requiring this expenditure.
- We have amortized the \$1,232,083 Capital payment for (3) years, utilizing the remainder of the amortized amount to help balance the budget.

Moving Forward:

1. With a declining Grand list, the proposed budget is far too excessive. Much needed development to bolster our Grand List growth must be at the forefront of strategic planning and economic development. Since the 1800s, the potential for a through road in the north meadows had been considered; but residential growth at the north end ended this possibility. However this does not preclude the possibility of responsible riverfront development. [The roadway could end in a cul-de-sac configuration with development on both sides of the road.]
2. The need for Charter Revision has become more evident as we approach the end of our budget process for the second time under the timeline imposed by the provisions for budget referendum. Not only are department heads, the Mayor and the Town Council impacted, but also the greatest detriment is to the taxpayers. Revisit the charter, correct the errors and omissions of the previous revision, but more importantly, return to the old schedule of setting the budget. If provisions for referendum are to be continued, provide within the revision a 45-day extension under the provisions of the prior year's budget until any referendum dictates are met. In addition, a Town Manager, with the necessary and seasoned professional training would further support a better-prepared budget with long-term strategic planning.
3. The 1989 study of Town structures commissioned by former Mayor McNulty was never implemented and some of today's problems are the result thereof. Another study must go forth soon and be followed by the necessary planning, scheduling and prioritization. Then comes the finding of resources before we again reach our present egregious situation.
4. To stem the financial bleeding of our residents, we must start on March 16, 2010 to seek every avenue possible to find long term solutions to meet our fiscal responsibilities. The next spurt of Grand List growth cannot again come on the backs of residents.
5. Consider bringing our Senior Center facilities into the twenty-first century. The "make-do" use of existing facilities must be replaced with the "designed-for" Senior needs of today and tomorrow.

**The Republican Council Position
For the Town of East Hartford
Fiscal Year 2010-2011**

6. The reinstatement of the Police Explorers program is seen as a current aid to the Police Department and a training ground for future recruitment.
7. A similar program for Fire Department Explorers is seen as a positive for future recruitment also.

Conclusion:

Looking ahead, we have offered several recommendations. Admittedly, some may be harbored within us. Some are needed now, and others needed for the future. Some are for potentials that at some point can or should be implemented. Some may be too "far-fetched" to be given due consideration, but it is our intention that each and all points will be evaluated. So in closing, we have looked at the past which is now history. We have called on the knowledge of today and have offered what are seen as some of tomorrow's needs. We will weigh the success or failure of the Town Council's combined efforts next year at this time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donald H. Pitkin, Minority Leader
Eric A. Thompson Sr.
Susan P. Skowronek

Additional Overtime cuts to be placed in Overtime Account:

		Requested	Change	Allocated
Town Council	G1100-60141	3,000	-1000	2000
Town Clerk	G1200-60141	700	-300	400
Corp Council	G2200-60123	500	-250	250
IT	G3300-60141	8000	-3000	5000
Assessor	G3600-60141	9000	-4000	5000
Revenue	G3700-60141	6000	n/c	n/c
Inspections/Per	G6100-60141	8000	-3000	5000
Public Wrks Adm	G7100-60141	1600	-800	800
Engineering	G7200-60141	2500	-500	2000
Parks & Rec Main	G8200-60141	118278	-18278	100000
Social Servi	G9400-60141	400	-200	200
Totals		\$157,978	-\$31,328.00	\$120,650.00