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The City Budget - Some Key Priorities and Issues

Also In This Issue

Street Sweeping Ends

Clark Street Task Force

Cool Program at the Library

Save the Date for our Open House!

Meet Police

Superintendent Garry McCarthy at an important community meeting

Tuesday, November 15
6:30 pm
Lakeview High School
Auditorium
4015 North Ashland

Superintendent McCarthy will be addressing the proposed closing and consolidation of the 19th District Police Station

Street Sweeping is almost over for the year.

Please bag your leaves and put them out with the trash and clear the sewer drains of leaves.

Click Here for the Street Sweeping Schedule!

Clark Street Task Force

Dear Friend,

I have been immersed in the city budget for several weeks now - plowing through the 4" thick document, attending as many of the budget hearings as possible, and learning from colleagues and city departments. Here's my analysis.

The Mayor's plan cuts a broad swath through the old budget. He is eliminating thousands of never-filled positions, while at the same time his new superintendent is returning police to the street. He's making a big statement on infrastructure by planning to rehabilitate our water and sewer lines. And he is examining how to "right-price" city services - by eliminating preferential rates for water, raising fees for some services, and trying public/private competition. This budget embodies a strategy: Prioritize infrastructure, implement police efficiencies, and better maintain and modernize the city. And some of the new heads of city departments are focused on *managing* - in short, professionalizing our city operations.

There are, however, a couple of issues about which I have expressed concerns on your behalf.

The Condominium refuse rebate

Condominiums must provide for their own refuse and recycling collection, just like office buildings. Condominium associations have received a rebate of \$75 per unit to partly compensate for this obligation. Due to the city's financial difficulties, the payment of these rebates has been delayed by almost two years. And many associations depend on this money for their budgets.

Meeting

November 21st
6:30 p.m.
Basil Leaf Cafe
2465 N. Clark St.

The Clark Street Survey among other topics will be discussed.

JAPANESE GHOST STORIES

with Dr. Kuri Shea

Thursday, November 17
6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY
Lincoln Park Branch
1150 W. Fullerton

Holiday Open House!

December 5th
6:00-8:00 p.m.
at our NEW office
2523 N. Halsted

**OUR NEW OFFICE**

43rd Ward Office
2523 N. Halsted
www.ward43.org

Office Hours:
Monday
9a.m.-7p.m.
Tuesday-Thursday
9a.m.-6p.m.
Friday
9a.m.-12p.m. & 2p.m.-6p.m.

Contact us:
phone
773-348-9500
email
yourvoice@ward43.org

The mayor first sought to eliminate this rebate entirely. A group of lakefront aldermen, including Brendan Reilly, Tom Tunney, and myself, have proposed retaining the rebate by making some slight alterations in fines charged, for example, for parking in residential parking zones without a sticker. The latest compromise offered by the Mayor's office is to retain the rebate, but at \$25 per unit. I do not believe this is adequate, nor does it address past arrearages. We are still negotiating. Show your support for this rebate by [contacting me](#).

Library Cuts

The Mayor originally proposed to reduce hours on Monday and Friday mornings at every branch library. After discussions, the administration has proposed a schedule in which the libraries would only be closed on Monday and Friday when school is in session. \$3.3 million in cuts have been restored. We are still negotiating on those points.

Of course, these are not the only issues. But on the whole, this year's budget is a first step towards stabilizing our city's finances - and improving the delivery of city services. That is why, if these issues are addressed, I will strongly support the Mayor's budget.

And this first budget, while it takes big steps, does not, and really could not address some larger issues:

Our unsustainable pension obligations: Although this year's budget allocated \$476 million to fund pensions, this amount does NOT improve the level of funding. I'm committed to working hard to help create a comprehensive solution to this problem.

Our debt load: \$1.4 billion of our \$8 billion budget is to pay debt costs. The city has borrowed too much in the last ten years and we've got to come up with a plan to cut our debt load down.

Inefficiencies in our city departments: In response to questions I have asked during the hearings, department heads have admitted that many departments suffer from excessive absenteeism, FMLA leaves, and disability leaves.

I look forward to working on these issues in the coming months and I will remain committed to your interests and those that serve our community.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a difference.

Sincerely,



43rd Ward Alderman Michele Smith

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