



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

August 7, 2009

TO: Council President Joe McNamara & Members, Toledo City Council

RE: The City's Future

During the last week, Councilmembers have spent hours in discussions about Toledo citizens' rights to park in their front and side yards, and sparse minutes discussing the fact that the Toledo City Budget is presently \$8.9 million in red ink.

Then Thursday evening, Council spent hours attempting to impress the voters with how much you care about them by offering "groceries for garbage" in an attempt to justify a refuse increase which needs absolutely no justifying when the City is losing \$3 million annually because Toledo's fee is so low.

In sum, since late January, I have beseeched you to act to balance the City budget, and this past week you spent five hours discussing nuisance abatement parking conditions and "groceries for garbage".

Meanwhile, on Tuesday evening, Columbus citizens boosted their payroll tax by .50% to 2.5% to assist in balancing their budget and prevent public safety layoffs.

That same evening, Findlay's City Council voted to place a payroll tax increase of .50% on the ballot for two years to balance their budget. The vote of Findlay Council was unanimous.

Councils in Columbus and Findlay are accepting their responsibility to balance their budget deficits and sustain their quality of life. Meanwhile, Toledo City Council spends hours talking about nuisance abatement and grocery incentives, rather than giving the City Administration the resources to balance the City budget.

Months ago, the City Administration was asked by City Council to seek concessions from our labor unions. As of this date, labor concessions total \$8.32 million. The City Administration and the labor unions delivered!

Exempt employees have taken a 20% pay cut. The City Administration and exempt employees delivered!

I had to lay-off 75 police officers and over 100 civilian city positions were eliminated because City Council failed to act. The Mayor delivered!

City Council has not delivered. For example:

1. Since March 2008, City Council has provided raises to its staff, to the tune of \$45,283, through the improper utilization of miscellaneous pay.
2. Council and its staff continue to be paid for a 40-hour work week.
3. Did not enact furlough days for Council and its staff.
4. Did not lay off any of its staff.
5. Did not provide for pension rollbacks for Council and its staff.
6. Provided staff with vacation and sick time pay-outs for unused carry-over vacation (\$14,997).

While Columbus and Findlay Councils are acting to move their respective cities forward, Toledo City Council debates a “groceries for garbage” program that will minimally reduce our \$8.9 million deficit.

On Monday, President McNamara is holding a press conference to encourage our citizens to take \$3.9 million from our road resurfacing budget and spend it on employees’ salaries. Or in other words, “robbing Peter to pay Paul.” If that is successful in September, the City deficit for 2009 will still be \$5.0 million.

Councilmembers, I have urged you for months to balance our 2009 budget. The State of Ohio requires that of us. In 2008 we were surprised, as were many other governments, and ended the year slightly out of balance. But this year, 2009, we have told you since February what our revenue picture would be – and hence what our deficit would be. This year there have been no surprises! Just the disappointment I have experienced in seeing Council, week-in and week-out, fail to act to balance our 2009 budget. Week-in and week-out Council has referred politically challenging legislation to committee where it is delayed for months, and often never dealt with. (See attached)

Confucius wrote: "To see what is right and not to do it, is want of courage."

Our jobs are tough in these times, but our jobs are not worth keeping if we forsake our courage to do the right thing.

Politics and fear are trumping fortitude and tenacity – and our citizens are not being well-served. They deserve our best effort to balance our budget and they are not getting your best and/or most courageous effort.

Several of you are bidding for re-election in November. It is rumored that you are then planning, in early 2010, to hold a Special Election to increase the temporary payroll tax in order to balance the 2009 budget. That Election will cost \$400,000, will be too late, illegal and most importantly, devious. If this is your plan, the voters should be told so right now!

Columbus is considered by many, to be Ohio's most stable large city. Perhaps we saw why Columbus is stable earlier this week. The Mayor and Council had the courage to ask for a bump in the payroll tax. The citizens were given the truth and responded.

Findlay is considered, by many, to be Ohio's most stable small city. Its' Council and Mayor voted unanimously to place their payroll tax increase on the November ballot.

What is Toledo's City Council doing to meet this challenging moment?

- Offering "Groceries for Garbage" incentives, and
- Taking road re-surfacing money to pay personnel costs.

It's not easy to do the right thing.

But when it's the right thing to do, you just do it!

Balance the 2009 Budget – not with smoke and mirrors – but with integrity.

**JUST DO IT!**

For a Strong Toledo,

Carty Finkbeiner  
Mayor

Attachments: Columbus Dispatch, 8/5/09  
Columbus Dispatch, 8/5/09  
Findlay Courier, 8/5/09  
Legislation Still in Committee, 8/4/09  
Layoffs, 2008-2009  
Income Statement, 8/4/09  
Memo to Council, 8/4/09  
Associated Press Article, 8/4/09

CF:lj