

Pursuant to Charter section C-118(D)(3), I hereby object to some of the changes adopted by the Common Council as they are not in the best interest of city taxpayers. The overall effect of the Common Council's modification of the budget is detrimental to the City's ability to remain under the state imposed tax cap. The maximum amount of unused tax levy that can be carried over is \$73,585. The Common Council's modifications increase the margin to the tax cap to \$114,840. This will remove available taxing power from the City by the amount of \$41,254 in the coming year, the difference between the margin and the carryover limit, which may result in our exceeding the tax cap in future years. The reason that this is important is that in the future the state plans to distribute funds to taxpayers in communities that comply with the tax cap; it would be a mistake to increase the difficulty of future compliance.

I object to the following Common Council Budget Adjustments:

1. **Adjustment #14:** reduction of the Golf Fund Administrative charges from \$50,000 to \$10,000. This modification fails to account for the significant services provided by all of the other city funds to the golf enterprise. Watering the course alone costs the city over \$80,000 a year. This reduction causes city taxpayers and user fee payers to subsidize the golf fund. This is unfair.
2. **Adjustment #3:** reduction of \$8,731 from the Allocations section of the Controller's budget for accounting interns. Removal of resources from this department is not warranted given the significant accounting challenges that the city faces. Even if the funds are not ultimately used for interns they will be available for a transfer within the department.
3. **Adjustment #10:** removal of the Corporation Counsel's secretary in the amount of \$31,211. This change will remove the only staff support for the Corporation Counsel. The position is a confidential position and the duties cannot be assumed by shifting them to other clerical staff. Further, existing city employees do not have sufficient time to assume these duties. The Corporation Counsel's office handles labor negotiations and employee discipline; these sensitive matters cannot be assigned to non-confidential employees. As well, the Corporation Counsel handles property transfers; conducts contract reviews and negotiations; assists with Department of Labor issues; prosecutes violations of the city code; handles all litigated city matters; drafts proposed legislation and ordinances; provides legal opinions on all subjects upon request; and serves as legal counsel at city meetings. Without sufficient staff support, the Corporation Counsel will be forced to spend precious time on matters that are administrative rather than on the critical functions of the law department.
4. **Adjustment #2:** reduction of the contractual shared services Allocation amount by \$2,100. This adjustment will negatively impact the ability to maintain City Hall. It is short sighted to forego proper maintenance of this historic building, as deferred maintenance will cost more down the line.
5. **Adjustment #16:** reduction of Allocation for records management equipment by \$4,000. This is necessary to address the poor condition of the records management functions in the city. Loss of efficiency in all departments costs taxpayer dollars.

6. **Adjustment #11:** removal of Employee Relations/Civil Service staff in the amount of \$38,509. This position is needed to improve operations of the department, provide full-time coverage of office hours and to be a resource for institutional memory.
7. **Adjustment #12:** removal of the DPW supervisory position in the amount of \$56,363. This position is required to improve oversight and productivity in the department of public works, thus saving taxpayer dollars through improved efficiencies.
8. **Adjustment #41:** reduction of clean up weeks funding by \$16,000. This change will make it impossible to have a clean-up week without a budget modification. Funds may not be available if this expense is not budgeted. This line had been reduced from over a hundred thousand dollars a year in past administrations and now provides a community drop off site for volunteers to clean city streets, parks and streams (amassing 24 tons of debris over six years) and for a week of free drop off at the transfer station for city residents. The city should provide this funding, as it is critical to the cleanliness and health of our city.
9. **Adjustment #unnumbered:** it appears that the funding of a police position was reduced by \$46,076 based on an expected retirement. This modification should not be made. By leaving the funding in place there will be funds available to defray retirement payouts and any modifications needed for collective bargaining agreements.

It should be noted that I have not objected to every change the council has proposed. The objections I have made speak mainly to areas of concern that will impact critical operations in a negative way and will cost taxpayers in the long run. I offer these changes in the spirit of compromise and hope that the council will meet me on middle ground by accepting these suggested revisions.