

# Behind The City Scene



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Council Member  
Ward IV**

It is that special time of year, and no I am not talking about the cool evenings and the leaves turning and dropping! It is City budget time. During the City Council meeting of October 10 the City Council adopted the 2017 budget.

Here is how the process works. In mid year the City Manager proposes the budget for Council review. Then a "Workshop" occurs in late summer on a Saturday. The proposed budget is reviewed Department by Department. A Council Member can make a Motion to either add or delete something. It takes 5 votes to list the action up on a whiteboard. At the end of the day the Mayor asks for votes on all the whiteboard items. If there are 6 votes, which is a majority of the 11 member Council, then the action is considered to be formally incorporated into the Budget documents. This year there were 9 items added to the budget during the Workshop. I voted for only 2 of the nine. These 2 items related to adding 5 more police officers and providing stop signs (\$600) for an intersection in Ward 3.

I was unsuccessful in proposing the elimination of a \$100,000 study to determine how many police officers we should have. I am not a big fan of studies like this because, very candidly, the results almost always reflect the preferred outcome of the sponsor of the study. Currently the minimum ratio of police staffing is 2 officers per 1,000 population. This is mandated by a previous ballot issue. The City Manager's office, in my opinion, opposes this mandate on the grounds that the number of police officers should be the prerogative of City Management and Council. The problem I have is that the mandate is a result of a vote by the people and I have no problem with a "floor" of required police officers. Public safety including both police and fire is "Job 1" for local government, followed very closely by adequate maintenance of our streets which is a, "Pay me now or pay much more later." paradigm.

Of the 7 items I did not support 1 item really upset me in terms of an outrageous misuse of tax payer money. The expenditure sponsored by a member of Council is ten thousand dollars for "Buskers, Brews and BBQ". Some might say, "It is only ten thousand dollars." In Washington DC it would be, "It is only 10 million dollars." That sentiment is wrong here just as it is wrong in DC! I don't mean to sound uptight but I'm also not comfortable with public funds being used for the purchase of alcohol. There was only one adjustment when the budget was adopted. A fellow Council Member proposed, and I supported, seven thousand dollars to create a low power radio station in Aurora to serve immigrants and refugees from Africa with pro democracy news and information to help them successfully assimilate into our country. For example in many African countries, the police are much feared for very legitimate reasons.