



Fiscal Planning & Budgeting: The Way to Economic Recovery

As a former City of Poughkeepsie 5th Ward Councilman and 10th District County Legislator, I am disappointed in the overall lack of action and leadership in the current Common Councilmembers regarding handling the city bus

When I was on the Common Council, I served as the Budget & Finance Committee Chairman. It was my responsibility to schedule meetings with various department heads, review all financial reports, set the meeting agenda, and meet with the Councilmembers to ensure that a timely budget would be adopted.

One of my primary responsibilities was to inform voters of the city's budgetary priorities. We did not leave budget issues unsettled for months; we discussed and voted on matters in a timely manner. It was my duty to research, interview, and question as many people as possible in order to acquire the information needed to handle matters in the best possible way. I was fully prepared at every meeting to make timely and important decisions that impacted the 5th Ward and the City of Poughkeepsie.

The Common Council members must take their share of responsibility for the issue to lay on their desk for three years. more than enough time to consider various optionsrais bus fares, expand or reduc bus routes, appl for state or federal transportation grants, or even developing a marketing and outreach plan to increase ridership. Any of these potential alternatives could have been implemented while more strategic plans were being developed by the city administration.

The consolidation of city buses is probably the first of many so-called debt reducing initiatives that will be put forth by the city administration and the Mayor's Office. For many of us, we don't know what will be next. What city service will be reduced or eliminated? Will our city residents get another doubledigit tax increase? Will the city propose to sell the water plant, privatize the parking lots, eliminate or reduce the garbage collection or raise our water fees? Wors yet, will the city close a fire or lay-off police? Without a comprehensive or debteduction plan everything is a possibility and a thought worthy option.

In less a month or two, the next budget cycle will be . The Common Council and the Mayor's Office need to start putting together the 2018 city budget. More importantly, they need to develop a multi-year Debt Reduction & Revenue Generating Plan. By not having specific budgetary priorities and a general fiscal plan, the Common Councilmembers will be making fiscal decisions in the dark.

Our city cannot afford to consolidate, privatize, undersell properties, or give-away another potential revenue source nor overpay for a city service to "balance" the budget. Councilmembers and city residents need to know how the city plans to reduce and manage the \$12 million debt. Our city residents deserve to know if their property taxes, water bills, and garbage fees will increase year after year.

This fall, I will be asking the residents of the City of Poughkeepsie to support and elect me as the new CouncilmemberAt-Large. If I am elected, I will work to foster a healthy spirit of cooperation between the Mayor's Office, city administration, and the Common Councilmembers. I will provide the necessary leadership and guidance over the city's Budget & Finance Committee a municipal legislative agenda that is fair, equitable, and fiscally sound and responsible for everyone.

closing, I strongly encourage every voter to take a close look at the candidates running for political office. Please review their voting record, political experience, education, community service and overall character. Our city needs experienced leadership that can move our city forward. Thank you.

Mario Johnson

Independent Candidate for CouncilmemberAt-Large