

Written by Letter to the Editor  
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Attaining good government and low taxes was put succinctly by Coun.. John Vassilaki during the recent "Ask your councillor" question on how to deal with a possible future deficit (Herald, March 17).

Vassilaki: "I think we need to do three things in order to have job growth: investing in people; investing in modern infrastructure and supporting a dynamic and innovative business climate."

"In order to achieve these three items; we have to balance the budget in a fair and responsible way. I don't mean that staff brings a budget with a \$1.2-million deficit. I'm talking about bringing a budget

forward where we (councillors) don't have to dip anywhere to balance it in the end. It has to be balanced in such a way that it's permanent, not temporary, so we don't have to fight balancing budgets year after year after year."

This opinion is somewhat backed up by Helena Konanz: "Coincidentally, in the 2014 budget sessions, Council was forced to deal with a shortfall of nearly \$1-million. It was council's job to go line by line, making fiscally responsible cuts where needed, with a zero based tax increase in mind."

Curbs on budgeting by zero based budgeting have failed to achieve expected decreases in taxation: Mainly because civil servants incorporate their wants into the budget before our needs. Coun. Vassilaki suggested civil servants should be instructed to bring

forward a balanced no-deficit budget to council. They can always add their unbudgeted recommendations for debate.

Another idea for the next election from Coun. Andrew Jakubeit: "We have lots of City land that is not

getting utilized or generating any income. We could have a municipal campground near Munson Mountain for families and outdoor adventurers who can't afford our summer rates at our motels or want a camping experience. We could lease City land for affordable housing which means an owner can occupy a home without the high upfront land costs and the City gets a monthly lease payment plus the property is new to the tax roll."

Wes Hopkin: "I would deal with a shortfall in a similar way that Council has dealt with shortfalls the past three years, a balanced combination of cost cutting, the use of surplus reserves, expanding revenue opportunities, and in this last year a small tax increase."

We either move forward or we fall behind. Get involved in the November civic election.

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