

2012 Budget Survey
City Council Composite 9-1-2011

1. ***Short Range*** (Current Budget proposed by Mayor Kooiker * Correction: This budget was submitted by Mayor Hanks in June 2011) ***Can you ratify the budget in it's current form? What needs to happen so that you can? More cuts or increased revenues? How much impact will this idea have on the budget? What services would be effected?***

I can support the current budget with the addition of the CPI adjustment for property tax, and with 1/3(+/- \$100,000) going to the RCPD budget for their stated short fall and the rest to the Street Department Budget 301, line item 4370 Street Improvements. If discussion takes us to the CPI adjustment for the past year or so, we get 1/3 to the Parks Department, 1/3 to RCFD(fire), and the balance to the Street Department in the same line item as above.

To ratify the current budget we do need cuts and increased revenues. Perhaps we start with subsidies... all on the table as equal percentage cuts as possible with revenue increase starting with CPI funds for property tax.

I can vote to ratify the proposed budget if we can identify how to fund compass and enhance revenue so that future councils are not faced with a similar situation in the future.

I may suggest a cut of a certain percentage from the total budget. I will also be willing to take some money out of 2012

Much of the work here can and should be done by department heads. If they are aware that next year may be lean and that money saved this year increases the chance of raises next year. I believe we need to increase taxes and make some minor cuts with the proposed budget. I believe we definitely need some cuts if we are going to raise taxes.

I can, only because of the consequences of not doing so. BUT, there have to be no increases to special interests (we need to send a "help yourself" message) and there has to be a plan in place to fund COMPASS as well as shift what we're doing (increased revenue in lieu of decreased services) so we're not in the same (or worse) predicament next year.

Short range to support the budget – NO unless we get some look at CPI, permit fee adjustments, subsidy review or new revenue stream.

2. ***Long Range*** *What do you see as the biggest pitfall if we continue to ratify budgets as previous councils/administrations have? With or without Compass what changes need to be made? More cuts or increased revenues? How much impact will this have on the budget? What services would be effected?*

We cannot continue as we have in the past—stop it now!!

I call it "full cost accounting" or another name is "system maintenance", where honest, real dollars are placed on operational costs, overhead, maintenance, repair, and replacement is in there. We then income/expense average and have a stable program that is realistic. I am not sure how the performance based budgeting process, as being discussed, will be that detailed and get results. But, I am all ready to listen and study.

We need to cut much more than we have. This gets into non-essential services. However, we also have to keep in mind what we are doing to protect our City long term. For example, we could sell some property that currently has a park in it---and it may save us some money each year and generate cash but it will also detract from Rapid City's appeal for the years to come.

I believe that COMPASS is going to guide us in what changes to make to the 2013 budget and the specifics remain to be seen. It will be nice to have a crystal ball which is the potential COMPASS has.

Long range we have no goals other than campaign promises. Our major departments have developed strategic plans and the council has not. I think it is interesting that our Departments have strategic plans, while we, the Council just react. We need goals and reminders of those goals. Compass can look for cost savings, but can it look for needs assessments?

Interdepartmental transfers have become a false budget balancing tool which magnifies our problems and clouds any solutions. Compass combined with an honest accounting of our funds will provide us the mechanism to make better long range decisions. We have a responsibility to watch over the public funds and in turn must always look for the most economical yet effective way of doing business. Not taking the CPI in the past, simply for political reasons, has put the city and us in a terrible situation.

3. Essential Services *We all use this term, but as I talk with each council person it is obvious that we have different definitions. What does "essential services" mean to you?*

I consider these our infrastructure (streets, water, sewer, garbage collection). I also consider police, fire and EMS to be essential. Other services that are very important include our public transportation (Rapid Transit, the airport). I'm sure I'm missing others that are essential. Keep in mind that our finance department is critical but they do not generate income. I'm sure I'm missing other pieces. Non-essential are things like the arts, museum, economic development funding, library, pools, etc. However, I think we all want to be able to keep these going strong, so creativity in the budget and long term planning will be critical.

Essential Services–Police, Fire Dept, water, sewer, streets (maintained and kept clear).

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To me : public safety & infrastructure. According to the City's charter: public safety, parks, streets and drainage, utilities, snow/debris removal, fire safety, water, sewer, lighting, licensing, board of health, schools, library, prohibit animals at large, AUDIT, appropriations, and equalization.

Essential services – do we or our citizens really know the difference in essential services or needs and wants? Do we continue to support individual or support favorites? I continue to ask is quality of life versus a better standard of living a need or a want.

Police, fire, streets, water and sanitation (sewer & garbage collection) are the obvious services people expect. Along with these we need to provide a safe environment in the future through proper planning.

Essential services could be argued to be in the eye of the beholder. We need safety and health protection. Examples are Water, sewers, fire and police protection and safe transportation. Wants are quality of life like the Civic Center, Journey Museum and convenient transportation. My largest concerns are street repair, including what is under the ground. My next priority is drainage maintenance. Third priority is we must do what we can to get a second water line to the Airport.

If we look at the basis for a city government, to protect and promote the safety, health, and public welfare, essential services come down to what it takes to survive physically. That would mean we would have to provide:

Essential

Police, Medical Fire, Water, Waste Water, Solid Waste Collection/Disposal, animal control some basic community planning, engineering, and control and effective transportation to support these functions. You must be able to get an ambulance, fire truck and or police car to where it is needed.

Non-Essential

Non-essential would be those services that do not protect or provide life sustaining resources. However, they do provide quality of life, which in most communities we expect. However, expectation, may not be affordable. I would say that non-essential services would include parks, recreation facilities such as pools, gymnasiums, golf courses, possibly libraries, snow removal(with the exception for emergencies or economic process), economic development, chamber of commerce, CDBG, ice arena and hockey, civic center and related activities. All of these make a community better, but could we survive safely without. That is the question.

4. Tax Increase It's fair to say that none of us want to raise taxes. Do you have a tipping point where the city's need overrides your desire to hold the line on taxes? What is that point? (i.e.. level of debt or cancellation of particular services)

Tax increase and /or fees. Like it or not past administrations & council actions have put us against a wall—we are at the tipping point.

I am only keen on taking the 2.1 CPI money, hate to go back and get the other, but that might be more palatable than putting street taxes, etc.

Given our financial position of dwindling reserves, I believe we need to look at this. Again, if we go this route I believe we also need to make some tough choices and make some cuts.

One reason we are in this mess is because past councils took the safe route and refused to increase taxes. Politically safe or not, we now must at the very least take the current CPI.

If we don't at least take the CPI we are simply kicking the can down the road for the next council.

I'm not a fan of raising taxes but I believe we need to consider this. At this juncture I would support some tax increase. Given our financial position of dwindling reserves, I believe we need to look at this. Again, if we go this route I believe we also need to make some tough choices and make some cuts.

We've hit the tipping point where not raising taxes for too long is degrading the integrity of our operations.

I can't support the current budget unless we include a look at developing or enhancing revenue streams. I can support a CPI increase and the catch up allowed by State Law. If an increase is necessary to meet the essential functions of the City, and is reasonable, I support it. We simply have to be honest with how we raise our money, for what, and how it is spent. If we tell the people we are raising their taxes to provide them the essential and non-essential functions they want, and the cost is the true cost, to do anything else, would be false and misleading. By having no growth budgets because of a poor economy may be a necessity, but ultimately we must be responsible custodians of the community. If our infrastructure is falling apart, due to the lack of maintenance and timely replacement, we are doing a great disservice to those we represent. Most know that costs increase, Most people, when told the truth, and get a chance to discuss the issue, I feel would be agreeable to funding reasonable government.