

Jack's Recap

November 02, 2015: two little words “in camera”

After viewing last night's council meeting, I must say as a member of the taxpayer's association, I am pleased that this council is thoroughly committed to the core services report. The review was referred to in almost every discussion last night. However what was disconcerting was that also referred to many many times was the "in-camera" sessions that would be required to adopt some of the "opportunities" designated by this report. These recommendations could realize savings of upwards of \$5 million dollars. If all savings are discussed away from the public, how will the average taxpayer even know that the recommendations were indeed adopted. Isn't total transparency one of the important tenets of this review. We agree where staffing levels have to be discussed that names and positions should be redacted. They could easily tell the public that the city will reduce the staffing levels of a department by a certain number without specifically mentioning any names. They could easily do the same for all departments. It has been determined by the review that the city's staffing levels could use some trimming. No one wants to see job losses but through the years the city has embarked on a hiring binge, and now has come the time to pay the piper. At any rate it is great to hear that council has agreed to implement most of the recommendations outlined by the core services review during the 2016 budget deliberations. New user fees and cuts to services will certainly be the end results of these deliberations. We understand that this will require some very difficult decision making on the part of council, but my recollection during the election campaigning is that, every councillor said that this is exactly what they signed up for. In my many years of following our municipal government, I have to say that this might be the first time that I feel encouraged that our council is doing the right thing and heading into the right direction. Holding the distinction of being the highest taxed community in the comparative group is not something worth bragging about. Implementing the recommendations, found in this report could potentially elevate this council in the eyes of it's citizens. As the report suggests there is a lot of money that can be saved should council agree to adopt the opportunities placed before them, I wish council nothing but luck and success. Staying the course is a recipe for disaster and is completely unsustainable.

That's a rap on this week's recap!