

**City Council of the City of Carbondale, Illinois  
Public Hearing on Proposed FY 2012 City Budget  
March 29, 2011**

The City Council of the City of Carbondale, Illinois, held a public hearing on Tuesday, April 6, 2010, in City Council Chambers of the Carbondale Civic Center, 200 South Illinois Avenue, for the purpose of soliciting comments on the proposed FY 2011 operating budget. Mayor Brad Cole called the public hearing to order at 7:27 p.m. with the following-named members of the City Council present/absent:

Present: Councilwoman Corene McDaniel, Councilwoman Mary Pohlmann, Councilman Chris Wissmann, Councilman Steven Haynes, Councilman Michael Neill, Councilman Joel Fritzier and Mayor Brad Cole

Absent: None

Also present were City Clerk Rachael E. Keehn, City Manager Allen Gill and various members of the City's administrative staff.

Mayor Cole noted that the budget was placed on display for public inspection on March 18, 2011, and presents a financial and operational plan for the City for the period May 1, 2011, through April 30, 2012. The Mayor noted that the City Council must hold a public hearing on the budget as required by law and that formal adoption of the budget by the City Council cannot occur for at least seven days following the public hearing. No vote will be taken at this meeting. The Mayor noted that later in the agenda the City Council will discuss the Community Investment Program and the budget. He noted that this Public Hearing provides the opportunity for anyone to wish to present information to the Council on the budget, adding that in accordance with Carbondale Revised Code Section 1-2B-2, he would ask speakers to keep their remarks within five minutes which will allow as many people as possible to speak. Mayor Cole invited City Manager Gill to offer opening comments.

City Manager Gill noted that the City budget represents a modest turnaround from what the City experienced over the past three fiscal years, with employee raises of 2% across the board being provided and health insurance benefits going unchanged. He continued that funds are being provided for street and sidewalk repairs and sales tax revenues are projected to increase by 1.9% during the coming fiscal year. Further, City Manager Gill noted that revenue will come from a municipal property tax levy for the first time in 9 years, which will provide funding for increases in public safety pension costs. In addition to those changes, City Manager Gill noted that capital projects planned for the coming year include the first sidewalk program in several years, reconstruction of the Short Street Sewer Lift Station, replacement of the Water Treatment Plant Chlorine System, and a set-aside of \$100,000 for future open space projects. City Manager Gill remarked that the set-aside was a commitment made by the City when the Home Rule Sales Tax was increased for capital projects in 2008. City Manager Gill also noted that the FY 2012 Expenditure Budget for all funds totals \$40,948,384 compared to the FY 2011 Budget of \$50,262,548. He explained that the decrease in expenditures is primarily due to a decrease in Community Investment Program expenditures that were ongoing in FY 2011, including the Public Safety Center, Reed Station Road, and Reed Station Parkway. Further, the proposed FY 2012 General Fund Budget is balanced; no funds are included in that budget for the operation of the Eurma C. Hayes Center or for the agencies housed in the facility as a result of the transfer of ownership to the newly formed Eurma C. Hayes Center Corporation. City Manager Gill noted that he is proposing reinstatement of the position of Economic Development Manager, which he indicated he would discuss further later in the meeting. City Manager Gill then presented his budget transmittal letter. (Exhibit PH-A-3-29-11)

Following the conclusion of City Manager Gill's presentation, Mayor Cole invited comments from the audience regarding the FY 2011 proposed City budget.

Hugh Williams, an attorney living in Carbondale, spoke in opposition to the City's proposed funding to District 95 for a summer program. Mr. Williams remarked that especially in tough economic times, municipalities should avoid funding programs that were not meant to be funded by municipalities. He continued to remark that all levels of government are experiencing economic difficulties.

Donald Monty, 418 South Giant City Road, remarked that in response to a suggestion by Mayor Cole, he (Mr. Monty) had submitted a list of more than 40 questions to City Manager Gill regarding the proposed budget. Mr. Monty requested that both his questions and City Manager Gill's responses to those questions be provided to all Council members because the purpose of the Public Hearing is to provide information to the City Council, not necessarily just to the City Manager. Mr. Monty spoke in opposition to the City's proposed funding to District 95. Mr. Monty iterated that he does not oppose District 95 and that he appreciates the hard work that the teachers there do. Mr. Monty expressed concern over the City being the source of funding to District 95, which is governed by an elected Board and has the ability to levy its own taxes. Mr. Monty noted that there have been widespread cuts in City staff positions. Mr. Monty continued that the agreement extends through five years, and as written does not include any way to end it before then. He also noted that funding for departments such as street maintenance may continue to diminish in the upcoming years and that it doesn't make sense to agree to a five year obligation at this time. Mr. Monty also expressed concern over the lack of mechanisms provided for oversight of the success of the program in the proposed agreement. He noted that the proposed agreement provides that the City may request progress reports, but disagrees that the City should have to request them. Furthermore, he noted that even if the progress is bad, however it is measured, there is no provision for the City to terminate the agreement. Mr. Monty summarized his comments by asking the City Council to direct the City Manager to remove the \$150,000 allocated for District 95 from the budget and instead allocate the money for pressing City needs. Mr. Monty then expressed concern over the terminology used in the City Manager's budget transmittal letter regarding the position of "Economic Development Manager." Mr. Monty noted that the letter refers to the position of "Economic Development Manager" being restored, but that in the division 40006 budget for Economic Development, the position is labeled as "Economic Development Specialist." Mr. Monty expressed his opinion that the title "Manager" conveys more importance than "Specialist" but that maybe the title "Specialist" was used to get around paying the person what a manager-level position gets paid in the City's pay-plan. Mr. Monty also noted that the City Manager's transmittal letter indicates that the position of Assistant City Manager is to be eliminated, thereby indicating that there will be no Assistant City Manager for Economic Development. However, on p. 66 of the budget there is the following statement: "In FY 2012 the Assistant City Manager for Economic Development will continue to . . ." Mr. Monty said that the conflicting information begs the question of whether we have an Assistant City Manager for Economic Development or a Development Services Director.

Liz Gersbacher, 1507 West Taylor Drive, commented that she would like to acknowledge the City's clear expertise in presenting this year's proposed budget. She remarked that the proposed budget is very user-friendly and that she is appreciative of that. She also noted that this is the first year that the proposed budget is available online and she congratulated staff for that. Ms. Gersbacher continued to remark that Mr. Gill's budget transmittal letter talks about possible revenue shortfalls and that the City must continue to live within its means. She also noted that Mr. Gill's letter indicates that the shortfalls may necessitate curtailment in some services that the public has come to expect. Ms. Gersbacher expressed concern regarding the possible curtailment in services. She noted that even with recent tax increases the City is not able to provide stability in the provision of what she considers basic services to Carbondale residents. She noted that she has a number of questions regarding budget issues, but that some of those issues would be better addressed in the coming year. However, Ms. Gersbacher did choose to express concern over the

proposed funding to District 95. Ms. Gersbacher expressed her respect for the schools in the district, having graduated from them herself. However, she noted that she does not understand how the City can afford to fund a summer program for a taxing entity that citizens already contribute to, especially in these difficult economic times. Ms. Gersbacher then read from the proposed agreement with District 95, and noted that the proposed agreement does not contain any proposed measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. She iterated that the proposed agreement obligates the City for five years. Ms. Gersbacher then distributed a copy of an article to the Council which discusses the methods used by schools to evaluate program and student progress and success. Ms. Gersbacher concluded that she is unable to support the proposed agreement to provide funding to District 95.

Seymour Bryson, Carbondale, first commented that Mayor Cole deserves recognition for addressing the race issue in Carbondale. He then expressed concern about the reading and math scores of African-American students in Carbondale compared to the scores of white students. Mr. Bryson reminded the Council that Mayor Cole had challenged the community to address this problem several years before. Mr. Bryson also noted that the City helped fund the new high school and Saluki Way with millions of dollars, yet the District 95 summer program funding is only \$150,000 and it would help particularly black children. He expressed concern that while educating the children is the school's responsibility, they can still use more help and that the \$150,000 a year is worth it. Mr. Bryson also noted that different departments at SIU would be involved with the summer program and monitoring its success. Further, he noted that the citizens of Carbondale have an obligation to all citizens, not just to middle-class citizens black and white but also to low-income citizens, black and white. Mr. Bryson then urged the City Council to look beyond the critics of the proposed funding to District 95 and to give it serious consideration.

Jane Adams, 606 West Elm Street, expressed her agreement with Mr. Monty's earlier comments concerning the proposed funding to District 95, as well as agreement with Ms. Gersbacher's comments. Ms. Adams opined that the race issue in the school district is a serious issue and that she hopes the school board and new Superintendent will take up and address vigorously and seriously. Ms. Adams continued that past programs similar to the proposed summer program have not been successful in the past and will not erase the issues the District faces, especially when the City cannot provide the basic services needed for its own citizenry. She then urged the Council members to pull the line out of the proposed budget which provides funding to District 95. Ms. Adams then commented on the Development Services position, saying that she too was confused by the wording used for the Assistant City Manager and Director of Development Services positions. She asked that the Council resolve the discrepancies and then perform a national search for a new Director of Development Services, preferably one who understands the particular issues facing the City. Ms. Adams then spoke concerning the Community Investment Program, specifically about the water main breaks over the past year, and that there are infrastructure issues that should be addressed soon. Ms. Adams also noted the performance of the Police Department, remarking that she has noticed a real shift in the level of crime experienced in her neighborhood over the past year. She noted that the Citizen Alert Line has been a successful tool in the reduction of crime in Carbondale, helping the citizens and police work together. Ms. Adams concluded by urging the Council to very seriously look at withdrawing the \$150,000 designated to District 95 and put it into places needed for fundamental City services and also to find a way to re-fund the position of Director of Development Services, and to begin the process of a national search to fill the position.

Sam Goldman, Carbondale, expressed concern that the state of Illinois has just suffered another shortfall of \$2 billion in income, and that the shortfall will be passed on somewhere, probably to municipalities. He noted that the projection of growth in the budget is already spent, and would like to know the source of optimism for growth in the budget. Mr. Goldman also noted that the City should find other ways to help the School District other than to help pay their bills.

Randy Ozborn, Carbondale, began by thanking the Mayor, Council, and commended the previous Mayors

and Councils that began the practice of funding civic organizations to the level that they do. He noted that funding from the City is important, especially for an organization like his (Carbondale Boys and Girls Club), and that the City is making a statement through their actions that the people served through this source of funding can count on the City for tangible support for programs that matter. Mr. Ozborn further noted that funding to programs, such as the proposed summer program at District 95, shows that the work of the City is more than just streets, sewers, lights, and safety, but that it is about people. He then encouraged future Mayors and Councils to continue and expand on that.

Jack McKillip, 400 South Oakland Street, spoke concerning the proposed funding to District 95. He expressed concern that the funds would be turned over to the same people, using the same curriculum, that are already struggling to provide education to students. Mr. McKillip suggested that the City put out a proposal to see what suggestions people have for programs, and also that there be an independent evaluation measure in place to provide feedback on the program yearly.

Baylen Earles, Carbondale, noted that he has lived in Carbondale for about 7 months, and he thinks the town is doing great and that he appreciates the City Council and City Manager for their hard work on the city and the budget.

There being no one else to address the City Council during this public hearing, Mayor Cole declared the public hearing closed at 8:34 p.m.

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Rachael E. Keehn, City Clerk

Approved by the City Council on:

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