

January 17th, 2013

Dear Mayor and Councilors:

We understand that you are hard at work dealing with various challenges and opportunities the City is facing such as tax reform, transportation strategies, budget preparation and regional planning. We are writing to express our members' concerns with regard to this year's budget deliberations and in particular proposed tax rate increases.

As you know, commercial taxpayers feel the full burden of any tax rate increase, with the multiplier being almost 4:1 ratio. In addition, commercial taxpayers are also facing increased water rates and well as other increased costs. Such increases not only limit opportunities for business growth, they make our city less competitive.

The Chamber understands that the City has many upward pressures on expenses. We are looking for you to apply financial and fiscal efficiency to budget discussions. Rather than discuss what new services to add, we are looking for you to ask the question "Can we afford this?" Turning to the commercial tax payer for a source of increased revenue is the wrong approach.

I fully understand the difficult decisions before you, but this is the time to make the decisions needed to keep our city competitive for business and attractive to residents.

Also, in the coming weeks, the Chamber will be submitting its Annual Pre-Budget Submission, which will outline key priority areas our members wish to see addressed.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Valerie Payn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "V" and "P".

Valerie Payn
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