



For
Thurs.

THE CITY OF UTICA

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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To: The Members of the Common Council

From: Mayor Robert M. Palmieri

Date: January 23, 2013

Last year: \$7.8 mil
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On December 18, 2012, the *Observer-Dispatch* documented the Common Council's projection that Utica was facing a budget deficit of between \$3.8 and \$4.2,000,000.

The same article and subsequent public comments made by members of the Common Council indicate the possibility that Utica's legislators will enact a budget adhering to the two percent tax cap.

Observing this tax ceiling would produce revenues of approximately \$400,000, well below the amount needed to meet the Common Council's projection.

If the Council decides to resolve this projected budget gap within a two percent tax cap, providing a responsible level of service to the citizens of Utica would become problematic.

Predicates.

The purpose of this memorandum is to explain the impact the cap will have on those departments most responsible for protecting our people and our quality of life.

In order to close the Council's projected deficit, the City of Utica will need to eliminate at least 55 positions. These positions will necessarily come from those departments requiring the greatest number of personnel: the Department of Public Works/Recreation Division, the Utica Fire Department and the Utica Police Department.

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For the sake of discussion, it is assumed that each position eliminated within the DPW represents a decrease of \$55,000 while each position cut from the Police and Fire Departments represents a decrease of \$75,000:

DPW:	15 Positions at \$55,000/position =	\$825,000
UFD:	20 Positions at \$75,000/position =	\$1,500,000
UPD:	20 Positions at \$75,000/position =	\$1,500,000
TOTAL:	\$3,825,000	

While cutting these positions could eliminate the deficit, the real life impact on the safety and the City's quality of life would be severe.

I. Department of Public Works/Parks and Recreation Division.

A two percent tax cap will compel the elimination of fifteen positions.

Three positions will be taken from the Parks and Recreation Division, virtually eradicating all Summer programs. Swimming pools will not open. Softball fields will not be maintained. It is also likely that winter recreational facilities will be seriously compromised.

One highly specialized diesel mechanic will also be eliminated.

Eleven laborers will be eliminated. Such a loss will result in the cessation of spring/fall green waste pick-up as well as a pervasive deterioration in all snow plowing and street cleaning capability.

II. Bureau of Fire.

A two percent tax cap will necessitate the elimination of twenty positions.

This reduction would primarily occur among line firefighters in the Suppression Division.

The consequences of cutting entry level line firefighters will be extreme and expensive:

1. Call backs and overtime expenses will result in a significant increase in replacement time.

2. Reduction of the daily complement will result in the closing of at least one fire station.
3. The number of units served under the Rental Occupancy Program would decline.
4. The number of Lead Abatement Inspections would decline.
5. The number of state mandated elevator inspections would decline.
6. Delivery of Emergency Medical Services will be delayed.
7. The City of Utica's agreement with Oneida County regarding Hazardous material protections will be jeopardized.
8. Utica's ISO rating will go down causing an increase in commercial insurance rates.

III. Bureau of Police.

A two percent tax cap will force the elimination of twenty positions. This action will require that other units be utilized to "backfill" losses in the Uniform Patrol Division.

1. **Elimination** of the Special Operations Unit. All SOU personnel will be transferred to the Uniform patrol division.
2. **Elimination** of the Traffic Division, with its two positions being transferred to the Uniform Patrol Division.
3. **Elimination** of as many as two narcotics investigators from the Metro Narcotics Division.
4. **Elimination** of one of two investigators from the Warrants Division.
5. **Elimination** of one Desk Officer.
6. **Elimination** of an undetermined number of officers in the Criminal Investigation Division.
7. **Reduction** of Night Shift Patrol Zones from seven to six.
8. **Reduction** of Day Shift Patrol Zones from eight to seven.
9. **Curtailing** of officer response to non-critical, non-criminal calls for service.

10. **Slashing** of additional police services as follows::

- a. Neighborhood Watch participation will be **eliminated**.
- b. Prostitution enforcement details will be **eliminated**.
- c. Outreach to the homeless, community organizations and business groups will be **eliminated**.
- d. Response to non-injury traffic accidents will be **eliminated**.
- e. Traffic education programs will be **eliminated**.
- f. Traffic surveys will be **eliminated**...
- g. Additional traffic enforcement around schools and in residential neighborhood will be **eliminated**.
- h. Traffic citations for moving violations will be **reduced**.
- i. Quality of life and special problem area enforcement will be **eliminated**.

The City of Utica faces extraordinary and uncertain times. We cannot discount any eventuality nor discard any option.

This Common Council needs to give itself every responsible power and avail itself of every reasonable alternative.