

Mike Wade: Good News for the City of Quincy

Mike Wade/My View 7:56 p.m. EDT October 24, 2014



(Photo: My View)

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For the first time in six years, Quincy residents will not be forced to endure the increase in taxes or utility rates (such as the electric, gas, water or sewer hikes) that have been experienced in recent years. This news deserves recognition, and it is all due to the hard work and dedication of the City Commission that oversaw and voted to pass a disciplined budget for the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

We managed, in our \$30,557,545 budget, to add two new police officers, two part-time firefighters and four full-time public works employees, while reducing the budget by \$800,000. The city did this because public safety and a clean environment are the hallmarks of an attractive community. The two police officers will give residents an additional sense of safety and security, and the additional firefighters will enable the city to respond more efficiently to any fire incidents. Likewise, the four full-time public works staff will strengthen the ability of the Public Works Department to maintain the city's roads, parks and public places.

The city accomplished this through consolidation of certain departmental functions and budget trimming. All departments were asked to take a hard look at their resources and find areas that could result in financial savings for the city. It was an across-the-board trimming effort that involved the elimination of various line items while avoiding a drastic cut in any particular department. The commission made it clear that the city should tighten its belt and show fiscal discipline, beginning with the 2014-2015 budget, if we are serious about putting our house in order and getting ahead in the 21st century.

We believe that this budget reflects the wish of the commission; it's a step in the right direction and a clear sign that the city is turning the tide on the way things are done in Quincy. We believe that fiscal discipline and good governance in our city are essential in order to stay competitive with our neighboring communities.

There was a lot of fuss made over our necessary step to postpone the passage of our budget by a week, until the public was properly notified. I heard many accusations by an outside group of detractors calling for resignations over possible corruption and all sorts of wrongdoing. Their claims were anything but truthful. The fact of the matter is that we spent countless hours working to do things better, in an open and transparent process, because our residents deserve nothing less.

With the passage of the budget, our focus now shifts to its implementation and making sure that we work together to make Quincy a safe and attractive place to live and locate a business. It is our utmost determination to make this All-American city a destination for all to come, live and see why we love and cherish living in the heart of Florida's Future.