



MAYOR MANUEL A. DIAZ

REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

FIRST BUDGET HEARING OF FISCAL YEAR 2009-2010

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10TH, 2009

GOOD AFTERNOON. FELLOW RESIDENTS, MR. CHAIRMAN, MADAME VICE-CHAIRMAN, COMMISSIONERS, FELLOW CITY EMPLOYEES. THIS IS THE LAST TIME I WILL STAND BEFORE YOU TO DELIVER A BUDGET ADDRESS, AND THIS IS THE MOST DIFFICULT ONE YET.

AS I HAVE DONE IN THE PAST EIGHT YEARS, PREPARING THE BUDGET HAS NOT ONLY INCLUDED CITY STAFF, BUT ALL OF YOU, MAKING THIS A TRULY COLLABORATIVE EFFORT. I APPRECIATE THE MANY HOURS YOU HAVE DEVOTED TO THIS PROCESS.

WE ARE ALL WITNESS TO AN ECONOMIC PERFECT STORM - AN ECONOMIC MELTDOWN, THE WORST SINCE THE GREAT DEPRESSION, LEADING TO A SIGNIFICANT DECLINE IN HOUSING VALUES, A RECORD NUMBER OF FORECLOSURES, THE HIGHEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN DECADES AND SUBSTANTIAL DROPS IN CONSUMER CONFIDENCE AND SPENDING.

UNDERSTANDING WHERE WE ARE TODAY IS VERY SIMPLE. ALL WE NEED TO DO IS LOOK AT A HANDFUL OF MAJOR ITEMS OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES.

ON THE REVENUE SIDE, WE SHOULD EXPECT TO COLLECT \$20 MILLION LESS FROM REAL ESTATE TAXES, \$5 MILLION LESS IN STATE REVENUE SHARING; \$5.5 MILLION LESS IN INTEREST EARNINGS, AND OVER \$4 MILLION LESS FROM CHARGES RELATED TO BUILDING PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS.

ON THE EXPENSE SIDE, WE HAVE TO PAY \$35 MILLION MORE IN PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS; \$31 MILLION MORE FOR SALARY INCREASES AND SPECIAL PAYS, AND \$4 MILLION IN ADDITIONAL PROPERTY AND HEALTH CARE COSTS.

WE GET \$35 MILLION LESS, BUT WE PAY \$70 MILLION MORE. TOGETHER WITH A FEW OTHER MINOR ITEMS, THIS MEANS WE FACE A SHORTFALL OF \$118 MILLION. HOW WE ADDRESS THIS SHORTFALL IS OUR CHALLENGE TODAY AND IN THE WEEKS TO COME.

THIS IS REALITY. WE DO NOT HAVE THE LUXURY OF POLITICIZING THIS ISSUE. AS ELECTED OFFICIALS, WE HAVE A LEGAL OBLIGATION TO BALANCE OUR BUDGET AND WE MUST BALANCE IT KEEPING IN VIEW THE PRIORITIES WE HAVE MAINTAINED DURING THE LAST 8 YEARS.

WE BEGAN WITH A VISION TO REFOCUS GOVERNMENT WITH FOUR PRINCIPAL GOALS: (1) REDUCING THE TAX BURDEN ON OUR CITIZENRY THROUGH RESPONSIBLE TAX CUTS; (2) INVESTING IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS AND OUR PEOPLE; (3) SAFEGUARDING THE CITY'S FUTURE FISCAL SOLVENCY; AND, (4) ENSURING THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO ENHANCE OUR QUALITY OF LIFE.

IN THE LAST 8 YEARS, WE HAVE ACHIEVED ALL OF THIS.

WE REDUCED THE TAX BURDEN, CUTTING TAXES AND REDUCING OUR TOTAL MILLAGE RATE BY ALMOST 20%, JUST UNDER A FULL 2 MILLS- SAVING THE TAXPAYERS OF MIAMI ALMOST \$350 MILLION.

YOU CAN TAKE PRIDE KNOWING THAT HOMEOWNERS IN 2010 WILL BE PAYING LESS IN REAL TAXES THAN THEY WERE IN 2001.

WE SPENT OUR MONEY WISELY TO REBUILD OUR NEIGHBORHOODS AND OUR CITY, THROUGH AN UNPRECEDENTED \$2 BILLION IN OUR INFRASTRUCTURE. WE HAVE FIXED OUR STREETS AND SIDEWALKS, MADE OUR PARKS GATHERING PLACES OF COMMUNITY AND URBAN LIFE, HELPED OUR NEIGHBORS IN FLAGAMI AND GRAPELAND THROUGH FLOOD MITIGATION, AND INVESTED OVER \$100 MILLION IN PUBLIC SAFETY INVESTMENTS ENSURING THAT OUR FIRST RESPONDERS CONTINUE TO SAVE LIVES AND KEEP OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFE.

WE HAVE ALSO BEEN RESPONSIBLE- FIGHTING HARD TO SAFEGUARD THE CITY'S FUTURE FISCAL SOLVENCY BY MAINTAINING HEALTHY RESERVES. IT IS TESTAMENT TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THIS COMMISSION THAT OUR RESERVES CONTINUE TO APPROXIMATE 20% OF RECURRING REVENUES.

WE HAVE ALL WORKED TOGETHER TO CRAFT BALANCED BUDGETS, GUIDED BY THESE PRIORITIES. AND THIS YEAR IS NO DIFFERENT.

PROVIDING ADDITIONAL TAX RELIEF BY MAINTAINING OUR CURRENT MILLAGE RATE WAS OUR FIRST GOAL. A FLAT MILLAGE RATE SHOULD, ON AVERAGE, GENERATE APPROXIMATELY \$100 IN TAX SAVINGS FOR RESIDENTIAL HOMEOWNERS. TO PRESERVE OUR BUDGET RESERVES, THE PROPOSED BUDGET ASSUMES NO USE OF FUND BALANCE WHATSOEVER.

FINALLY, OUR BUDGET CUTS ARE DESIGNED TO MINIMIZE THE IMPACT ON THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES AND QUALITY OF LIFE OUR RESIDENTS HAVE COME TO EXPECT. HOWEVER, FILLING A BUDGET GAP OF \$118 MILLION OF A \$500 MILLION BUDGET, CLOSE TO 20%, IS NOT AN EASY TASK. IT IS MORE DIFFICULT WHEN YOU CONSIDER THAT PERSONNEL EXPENSES ACCOUNT FOR

76% OF OUR TOTAL BUDGET. THIS REMAINS IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT, IN THE LAST TWO YEARS ALONE, WE ACHIEVED ANOTHER \$100 MILLION IN BUDGET CUTS. NOTWITHSTANDING THIS DECREASING AMOUNT, WE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO ONCE AGAIN LOOK AT OUR DEPARTMENT BUDGETS TO IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL SAVINGS. WE DISCARDED 10 AND 15% REDUCTION MANDATES. INSTEAD, WE HAVE A 47% CUT IN ZONING; 39% IN THE MANAGERS OFFICE; 37% IN PLANNING; 35% IN FINANCE; 33% IN GSA AND COMMUNICATIONS; 30% IN BUILDING....AND THE LIST GOES ON AND ON.

WHAT YOU HAVE BEFORE YOU IS A BARE-BONES, NO FRILLS BUDGET. WE LOOKED AT EACH AND EVERY DEPARTMENTAL LINE ITEM. EVERYTHING, AND I MEAN EVERYTHING, WAS ON THE TABLE.

WE ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS THROUGH THE ELIMINATION OF 572 TOTAL POSITIONS, REPRESENTING 16% OF OUR WORKFORCE. OUR TOTAL HEAD COUNT WILL NOW BE 3,408 AS COMPARED TO OUR HEADCOUNT IN 2002 OF 3,295, A MERE 3.4% INCREASE.

WE ALSO ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS THROUGH TIERED SALARY REDUCTIONS FROM OUR NON-UNION PERSONNEL, REDUCTIONS THAT RANGE FROM 15% TO 6%. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THIS GROUP REPRESENTS ONLY 14% OF OUR WORKFORCE, IS CONTRIBUTING \$11 MILLION, OR 22% OF THE ORIGINAL NON-UNION EMPLOYEE BUDGET.

UNFORTUNATELY, THESE VERY STEEP AND PAINFUL CUTS WILL ONLY GENERATE SAVINGS OF APPROXIMATELY \$90 MILLION. WE NEED TO FIND ANOTHER \$28 MILLION IF WE ARE TO COMPLY WITH OUR LEGAL REQUIREMENT TO BALANCE OUR BUDGET.

OUR CHOICES ARE EXTREMELY LIMITED, BUT QUITE SIMPLE. YOU EITHER INCREASE REVENUES BY RAISING THE MILLAGE RATE TO THE FULL AMOUNT YOU AUTHORIZED IN JULY AND BY TAPPING INTO OUR RESERVES; OR YOU NEED TO IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL SAVINGS. YOU ALSO KNOW THAT WE HAVE ASKED OUR UNIONS TO HELP US FILL THE GAP BY ACCEPTING THE SAME TIERED SALARY REDUCTIONS OF NON-UNION EMPLOYEES AND BY AGREEING TO THE ELIMINATION OF ACROSS-THE-BOARD, ANNIVERSARY AND LONGEVITY INCREASES.

WE ARE NOT ASKING OF THE UNIONS ANYTHING DIFFERENT THAN IS BEING ASKED OF THE PEOPLE WE SERVE WHO WORK IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS. REGRETTABLY, THE UNION'S FAILURE TO COOPERATE LEAVES US WITH VERY LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO RESORT TO ADDITIONAL LAY-OFFS.

BUT, BEFORE I EXPAND ON THIS ISSUE, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE LOOK NOT TOO FAR AHEAD TO NEXT YEAR. WHAT WILL YOU AND OUR NEW MAYOR LIKELY FACE DURING NEXT SEPTEMBER'S BUDGET HEARING?

IT IS NOT UNREASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT WE WILL FACE AN ADDITIONAL \$50 TO \$60 MILLION FUNDING GAP ABOVE THIS YEAR'S FUNDING GAP.

THE CITY EXPERIENCED A 16% DECREASE IN ASSESSED VALUES LAST YEAR, BUT REALIZED ONLY A 6% DECLINE BECAUSE OF \$3.6 BILLION IN NEW CONSTRUCTION. THIS 10% DECLINE COUPLED WITH FURTHER DECLINING VALUES COULD MEAN AN ADDITIONAL DECREASE OF \$30 MILLION IN TAX REVENUES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011.

NOW, LET'S LOOK AT OUR PENSIONS. MANY OF US ARE PLEASED THAT THE STOCK MARKET SEEMS TO HAVE LEVELED OFF SOMEWHAT. LAST SEPTEMBER 30TH (OUR PENSION THRESHOLD DATE) THE MARKET TOOK A SIGNIFICANT NOSE DIVE. THIS IS RESPONSIBLE, IN PART, FOR OUR INCREASED PENSION CONTRIBUTION.

HOWEVER, AS STEEP AS THAT DECLINE WAS, THE DOW JONES CLOSED ON THAT DATE ABOVE 10,500. TODAY, THE DOW JONES IS HOVERING AROUND 9,500, A DROP OF ANOTHER 10%. MOST OF US WILL PROBABLY AGREE THAT IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THIS DIFFERENCE WILL BE MADE UP BEFORE THE END OF THE MONTH.

THIS ADDITIONAL 10% COULD REPRESENT AN ADDITIONAL PENSION CONTRIBUTION OF BETWEEN \$15 AND \$20 MILLION, ABOVE AND BEYOND THIS YEAR'S PENSION CONTRIBUTION. IF UNION EMPLOYEES MAINTAIN THE SAME SALARY AND BENEFITS STRUCTURE AS THEY HAVE THIS YEAR, THIS WOULD REPRESENT AN ADDITIONAL \$13 MILLION IN PERSONNEL COSTS.

WHAT SORT OF NUMBER ARE YOU LOOKING AT NEXT YEAR? 150 MILLION? 175 MILLION? WITH EACH PASSING YEAR, THE OPTIONS BECOME LESS AND LESS; UNTIL YOU ARE TOTALLY OUT OF OPTIONS. WHAT WILL YOU DO NEXT YEAR? YOU CAN LOOK AT ADDITIONAL LAY-OFFS. YOU CAN INCREASE REVENUES BY RAISING TAXES. YOU COULD INCREASE FEES, CREATE NEW FEES; PERHAPS EVEN BRING BACK SOME OLD FEES CREATED DURING THE FINANCIAL CRISIS OF THE 90'S SUCH AS THE FIRE FEE.

YOU COULD BEGIN TO SUBSTANTIALLY OUT-SOURCE CITY SERVICES. YOU MAY WANT TO CONSIDER PRIVATIZING CITY DEPARTMENTS. YOU CAN REVIEW THE EXTENT OF SERVICES OFFERED BY OUR PARKS SYSTEM AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS. YOU WOULD LIKELY ALSO HAVE TO CONSIDER SELLING ASSETS. IN OTHER WORDS, YOU WILL FIND YOURSELVES BACK IN THE '90S; A CITY IN WHICH PEOPLE WILL NOT INVEST, OPEN A BUSINESS, OR MOVE TO. THE PROGRESS WE HAVE MADE WILL WITHER AWAY - OR WE CAN DO SOMETHING TODAY

THERE ARE THOSE WHO SUGGEST THAT I AM EXAGGERATING; THAT I AM PRESENTING A NEGATIVE PICTURE TO ILICIT UNION CONCESSIONS. I THINK THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE IN COMPLETE DENIAL. JUST ASK ANY OF YOUR CONSTITUENTS IF THEY THINK WE ARE IN DIFFICULT ECONOMIC TIMES.

TO ACHIEVE A BALANCED BUDGET TODAY AND BEYOND IS GOING TO REQUIRE A GREAT DEAL OF COURAGE AND LEADERSHIP, THE POLITICAL WILL TO MAKE THE TOUGH CHOICES, AND THE

ABILITY TO BE WILLING TO MAKE THE SHARED SACRIFICES NECESSARY TO KEEP OUR CITY STRONG. AND WE MUST ADDRESS THE ESCALATING COST OF GOVERNMENT.

PEOPLE ARE OUTRAGED ABOUT THE SALARIES AND BENEFITS OF OUR EMPLOYEES AND IT IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND WHY. WE NEED TO FIX OUR PENSION SYSTEM. IT IS SIMPLY UNSUSTAINABLE. THE CITY MUST GET FROM UNDER THE CLOUD OF GATES. OUR PREDECESSORS WERE ABSOLUTELY WRONG FOR THE MALFEASANCE THAT PROMPTED THIS CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT.

THE CITY HAD AN ABSOLUTE OBLIGATION, LEGAL AND MORAL, TO MAKE THE PENSION FUNDS WHOLE FOR THE MONEY THEY MISDIRECTED. IT IS INCONCEIVABLE TO ME, AND A HUGE BURDEN ON THE TAXPAYERS WE REPRESENT, TO CONTINUE TO PAY THE PRICE FOR THE MISTAKES OF DECADES PAST. THE WRONG HAS BEEN REMEDIED; THE INTENT FULFILLED. THE TIMES AND THE ERA WE LIVE IN ARE SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT FROM THE 70S AND 80S. OUR PENSION FUND, LIKE ALL OTHERS, SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO MARKET CONDITIONS AND THE ACTUARIAL ANALYSIS OF OUR RESPECTIVE ACTUARIES; NOT THE LIFELONG SUPERVISION OF A COURT; A JUDICIAL INTRUSION PREVENTING OUR CITY FROM MANAGING AND ADJUSTING DURING GOOD TIMES AND BAD.

THESE MATTERS SHOULD EXIST WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF OUR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS. I STRONGLY AGREE AND SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITY'S FINANCE COMMITTEE. WE SHOULD CHANGE THE CURRENT COST OF LIVING (COLA) STRUCTURE IN OUR PENSION PLAN. IT IS SIMPLY UNSUSTAINABLE.

THE CITY WILL NEVER CATCH UP WITH ITS OBLIGATION TO FULLY FUND THE PENSIONS. RATHER, OUR UNFUNDED LIABILITY WILL CONTINUE TO BE A MOVING TARGET AND WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE. WE SHOULD END DEFINED BENEFIT PENSIONS FOR NEW EMPLOYEES OR ENROLL THEM IN THE STATE PENSION SYSTEM. EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO CONTRIBUTE ADDITIONAL SUMS INTO THEIR RETIREMENT PAY.

WE SHOULD ELIMINATE THE ELECTED OFFICERS' RETIREMENT FUND FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS ELECTED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FISCAL YEAR 2010 AND BEYOND. RETIREMENT AGES AND BENEFIT CAPS SHOULD BE MATCHED TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

AFFECTING OUR PENSION SYSTEM AS WELL AS OUR CURRENT OPERATIONS ARE OUR SALARIES, SPECIAL PAYS, COST OF LIVING INCREASE AND OTHER BENEFITS. THE INCREASE IN OUR PENSION OBLIGATION FOR FY 2010 IS NOT SOLELY DUE TO THE VOLATILITY OF THE MARKET. IT IS ALSO AS A RESULT OF OUR SALARY AND BENEFITS STRUCTURE.

WE NEED TO GET OUR SALARIES UNDER CONTROL.

THE AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARY OF 133 FIRE LIEUTENANTS IS \$150,000, NOT INCLUDING OVERTIME, WHICH IS ESTIMATED AT ANOTHER \$12,600 PER PERSON. TOTAL ANNUAL COST TO TAXPAYERS - \$21.5 MILLION. THE AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARY OF FIRE EXECUTIVES IS \$243,000,

NOT INCLUDING: (I) OVERTIME FOR CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS (15) (ESTIMATED AT \$26,000 P/YR); AND FIRE CAPTAINS (61) (ESTIMATED AT \$29,000 P/YR).

- 9 FIRE EMPLOYEES MAKE MORE THAN THE CITY MANAGER
- 47 FIRE EMPLOYEES HAVE A HIGHER SALARY THAN THE MAYOR.
- 65 FIRE EMPLOYEES (10% OF FIRE DEPARTMENT) MAKE MORE THAN THE CFO.

THE FIRE DEPARTMENT ALSO HAS: 73% OF OUR EMPLOYEES WHO MAKE IN EXCESS OF \$300,000; 82% OF OUR EMPLOYEES WHO MAKE BETWEEN \$200,000 AND \$300,000; 26% OF OUR EMPLOYEES WHO MAKE BETWEEN \$200,000 AND \$100,000 AND ONLY 22 FIREFIGHTERS WHO MAKE LESS THAN \$100,000.

50% OF OUR EMPLOYEES MAKE MORE THAN \$100,000 PER YEAR. AND, AGAIN, LET ME REMIND YOU OF THE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT OF THESE SALARIES ON OUR LONG-TERM PENSION OBLIGATIONS.

YOU ALSO NEED TO LOOK AT HOW WE ARRIVE AT SALARY RANGES FOR NON-SWORN PERSONNEL. AN ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/SECRETARY MAY BE ASSIGNED A SALARY RANGE OF BETWEEN \$43,000 AND \$75,000. IN OTHER WORDS, IF HE/SHE STAYS AROUND LONG ENOUGH; EVEN IF NOT PROMOTED OR EVEN WITHOUT ANY NEW RESPONSIBILITY, MAY RETIRE FROM THE CITY AT THE HIGH END OF THE RANGE, WHICH, BY THE WAY, IS REGULARLY ADJUSTED UPWARDS.

THIS PRACTICE WOULD NEVER BE TOLERATED IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

FINALLY, YOU SHOULD LOOK AT OTHER AREAS SUCH AS ACCRUED BENEFITS, COMPENSATORY TIME AND SPECIAL PAYS.

OUR EMPLOYEES ENJOY BENEFITS THAT MOST TAXPAYERS WOULD ONLY DREAM OF.

IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT SOME MAY VIEW THIS DEBATE AS MEAN SPIRITED OR ADVERSARIAL. NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH. THESE DECISIONS HAVE TO BE MADE NOT BECAUSE WE ARE NOT PROUD OF OUR EMPLOYEES.....NOT BECAUSE WE DO NOT APPRECIATE THEIR GREAT WORK.....NOT BECAUSE WE DO NOT HIGHLY RESPECT THE COURAGE AND TENACITY OF OUR FIRST RESPONDERS.

DURING THESE DIFFICULT ECONOMIC TIMES, THE LAST THING I WANT, THE LAST THING ALL OF YOU WANT, IS TO ADD OUR EMPLOYEES TO THE RANKS OF THE UNEMPLOYED. BUT WE MUST ALSO DEAL WITH REALITY. THE CITY, THE TAXPAYERS CANNOT AFFORD AND WILL NOT BE ABLE TO AFFORD THE CURRENT COST STRUCTURE. IF WE ALL COLLECTIVELY LOVE OUR CITY AND WISH TO SEE IT PROSPER FOR YEARS TO COME

IF WE ALL COLLECTIVELY WANT TO KEEP OUR FAMILY TOGETHER, AVERT LAY-OFFS AND PROTECT JOBS, THEN THESE ARE THE ACTIONS THAT WE MUST TAKE TODAY AND FOR THE FUTURE. AND THESE ARE THE ACTIONS THAT WE MUST TAKE IN ORDER TO PROTECT AND

DELIVER ON THE PROMISE OF OUR PENSIONS, NOT JUST FOR OUR EXISTING RETIREES, BUT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE ONLY RECENTLY JOINED OUR CITY FAMILY.

SACRIFICES MUST BE MADE. THE QUESTION WE HAVE TO ANSWER IS WHO SHOULD MAKE THESE SACRIFICES. SHOULD IT BE THOSE WHOSE SALARIES AND BENEFITS ARE PAID BY THE PUBLIC -OR- SHOULD IT BE THOSE SAME PEOPLE WHO PAY OUR SALARIES AND WHO TODAY ARE HURTING ECONOMICALLY, LOSING THEIR JOBS AND HOMES OR IN FEAR OF LOSING THEIR JOBS AND HOMES AND TAKING SALARY CUTS.

TODAY, WE MUST ALL DECIDE-----DOES THE CITY SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE? OR DO THE PEOPLE SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE CITY?

FOR ME, THE CHOICE IS CLEAR. THE REALITY PEOPLE ARE FACING TODAY DOES NOT MIRROR THE WAY GOVERNMENT IS ACTING. THIS HAS TO END. WE CANNOT IN GOOD CONSCIENCE ASK PEOPLE TO GIVE US MORE....SO WE CAN PAY OURSELVES MORE. THIS IS WRONG.

AND IT IS UP TO ALL OF US TO FIX IT.

I CLOSE WITH A STATEMENT I MADE IN SEPTEMBER, 2005, AS I DELIVERED MY BUDGET ADDRESS FOR FY 2006:

“WE HAVE BEEN BLESSED BY UNPRECEDENTED GROWTH, BUT WE CANNOT, NOR SHOULD WE CONTINUE TO EXPECT DOUBLE DIGIT INCREASES IN OUR TAX BASE. AND THERE WILL BE A LIMIT TO WHAT CAN BE CUT WITHOUT AFFECTING THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO OUR RESIDENTS. TODAY WE HAVE A CHOICE: WE CAN CONTINUE TO USE THE PEOPLE’S MONEY TO FEED THE APPETITE OF THE BUREAUCRATIC BEAST, WITH HIGHER PERSONNEL AND PENSION COSTS -OR- WE CAN REMEMBER WHY WE ARE PUBLIC SERVANTS, WHY WE ARE HERE, AND PUT THE INTERESTS OF PEOPLE FIRST.”

THIS STATEMENT RINGS WITH A GREATER SENSE OF URGENCY TODAY.

I LOOK FORWARD TO FINISHING OUR WORK AND FULFILLING OUR OBLIGATION TO ARRIVE AT A BALANCE BUDGET BY THE END OF THIS SEPTEMBER.

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