



For Immediate Release
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KNAPIK QUESTIONS OPPONENT'S ROSY FISCAL PICTURE

This afternoon, at the Massachusetts State House, state budgeting officials met with professional economists from the Department of Revenue, the Senior Economist and Policy Advisor of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Northeastern University, and the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation. Their testimony to the Legislature's Ways & Means Committee painted a very grim picture for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2010 and for Fiscal Year 2011. The consensus estimate was that our state's current budget could be over \$600 million out of balance, requiring mid-year cuts to state programs and potentially to local aid accounts. As bad, economists forecast a \$2 billion deficit for FY 2011 as well.

Meanwhile, at City Hall, my opponent issued the following quotes via his website: "Westfield's fiscal situation is good." "I am not worried about our budget this year." While the Mayor backs his statements with tales of balanced budgets and deposits into our City's stabilization fund, he conveniently leaves out some of the more troubling details that put our City in what I believe to be a precarious position.

First, I would like to address my opponent's assertion that he is not worried about our budget this year. I find that troubling, and I do not share his optimism. Reports grow louder everyday that we should be preparing for another mid-year cut in state aid this year. More worrisome, department heads are revisiting their budget numbers and are seeing shortfalls, and it is only October. The Fire Department is on pace to run out of funding in its overtime account by December and one of our 5 rapidly-aging fire trucks has fallen out of service requiring that we borrow a truck from Springfield in order to provide fire protection to our City. This will require an investment of at least \$650,000 between overtime funding and purchasing of a new fire truck.

Further, our City must comply with a federal mandate to repair the Westfield River levee system at a cost of over \$2 million. We must find a location to house our homeless animals before our contract with an unheated shelter runs out in November, which could cost up to \$375,000.

More puzzling are the contradictory messages being sent by our current Mayor. In a September 9th e-mail to department heads, he suggests the preparation of budget cuts, yet a month later, he claims in the newspaper to not to be worried about the budget. This, along with delayed decisions relative to the animal shelter, and a failure to recognize and acknowledge the capital needs of our fire department shows a consistent lack of direction and leadership.

In FY 2009, Mayor Boulanger submitted a budget to the City Council that was significantly out of balance, requiring the Council's Finance Committee to identify \$900,000 in cuts in order match revenues with expenditures. Additionally, this action by the city council restored appropriate amounts of funding needed to run our school and veterans services departments that were short funded by the mayor. Our FY 2010 budget disagreements have been widely publicized as I believe the Mayor arbitrarily reduced expense accounts to levels that will prove insufficient to sustain city services over the course of the year.

Lastly, the Mayor claims responsibility for increases in our City's stabilization account since 2007. His release says the account balance upon his taking office was \$272,289. In fact, the balance was \$772,289. Since then, five deposits have been made, all at the direction of the City Council's Finance Committee, including \$208,000

in certified free cash from the FY 2007 budget and \$1.8 million in certified free cash from FY 2008, both prepared by former Mayor Richard Sullivan. \$438,000 in remaining funds from the FY 2009 budget was deposited in June of 2009. These are just some of the details the Mayor failed to acknowledge.

As Mayor, I will communicate a clear and honest message to city employees and residents. In order to navigate this fiscal storm, our city government needs to be open and honest with our citizens. I pledge to hold public budgeting forums so that city employees, concerned citizens, and business stakeholders can communicate their budget priorities directly with my Administration. I ask for your vote on November 3rd so that we might work together to set a responsible and clear vision for our City.

****PLEASE REMEMBER TO VOTE ON NOVEMBER 3rd! ****

For a ride to the polls call 562-1390 or email at dnapik@msn.com
