

**2014 Budget Listening Session  
CITIZEN COMMENTS**

**TEAM: ECONOMY**

2. My highest priority is EDA [*sic—seems to mean RDA*]. I would let services for small businesses and marketing the Opera House as a destination location fall below the line. If RDA can be funded another way, I'm fine with that falling below, but I think its mission is more in line with the strategic objective.
4. Don't feel like I understand enough about these services to comment.
5. My highest priority is the Increase of New Business—is the NW corner of 138 & 51 TIF #3? I would let RDA go below the line. After we get TIF #3 going, we might be able to afford it.
7. OK
9. My highest priority is the Library services. Because even though the Chamber and SBA can assist—the Library provides services at hours that are more readily accessible to the person who is starting a small business while working a "traditional" job.
10. My highest priority is RDA funds to be used only for our downtown. I would let Library service to businesses, etc., fall below the line. Duplicate services.

**TEAM: SAFETY**

2. My highest priority is Police/Fire/EMS. I would let Youth Center/Senior Center Nutrition fall below the line. My preference is that these not fall below the line, but that they could be funded differently.
3. My highest priority is EMS & Fire Emergency Response. I would let Court fall below the line. If the county can help with court, it would be a great way to reduce cost.
4. My highest priority is Emergency Preparedness & Response, Snow & Ice Maintenance. I would let Youth Center fall below the line. Other areas focused on personal and public safety and require skilled or dedicated personnel. Youth Center does not benefit as many people, may be eligible for grants, and is more amenable to volunteerism/partnerships.
5. Agree with your #1, however I would suggest a visit to Appleton, WI, to see how they combine many cities & township police/sheriff's dept. into one of the lowest cost municipalities in the US—Citizen neighborhood groups are a significant part of their program.
7. OK
8. I would not like to see the Senior Center and Youth Center combined. Nice idea in theory, but I don't think in practice the kids would go for it.

9. I would let number of police fall below the line. Even when there is a minor incident, several police cars show up. Reading the "blotter" is riddled with police answering calls that are a waste of time and money. We have too many if they can answer such low priority calls. Also, even though it is nice to have a huge fire station, it more stands out as one department that got way too much money for a city the size of Stoughton.

10. My highest priority is Department Head for Senior Center, Youth Center, Recreation Department. I would let SRO fall below the line. To be funded by the School District. We need funds for the Stoughton Police Dept.

### **TEAM: GOVERNMENT**

1. I would not let Government Media Production fall below the line. Broadcast of government meetings, athletic events, school district meetings is critical for communication! Are there ways to reduce costs in other communication areas, e.g., quarterly newsletter, etc.

2. My highest priority is Financial and Accounting Services. I would let Government Media Production fall below the line. It's the only thing that could fall below, in my opinion.

3. My highest priority is Information Technology. I would let Interdepartmental Media Tech Support fall below the line. I believe that IT within the city could be much more efficient and effective. By consolidating media services into the IT department and hiring skilled IT staff, we can drastically decrease technology related equipment costs. Having gone to school for tech and worked with it my entire life, I know how important it is to have someone who understands the needs of a large workforce in order to effectively increase productivity.

4. Agree with priorities. I would let Media Production fall below the line, but would like to see complete published transcripts in its place. I like the idea of 8 council members instead of 12. We have a hard time getting enough people to run anyway.

5. My highest priority is Parks and Trees (short term)—Noris [*sic—Norse?*] Park remodel. I would let Assessor/Attorney fall below the line. Assessor: connect with realtors for general input & general housing approvals. Attorney: limit more of his requested input. (# of Council Members—would fewer (9) save \$?)

6. My highest priority is Safety. I would let Manage Opera House Performance fall below the line. Safety and services, necessary service should be a priority over entertainment.

7. OK

9. I would let raises (personnel costs) fall below the line. Two years ago all city employees received a 2% raise, last year as well. I believe a 2% increase is in this proposal but as well. Although this seems laudible, I don't think we have the resources to increase salaries 3 years in a row yet.

10. My highest priority is Snow Removal, Lawn Care. I would let Assessor fall below the line. I believe they estimate on percentage increases not set by them. Comparisons are questionable.

### **TEAM: COMMUNITY**

2. My highest priority is Refuse Collection. I would let Troll Beach fall below the line. My daughter and her Brownie troop and 1/2 the mothers contracted the crypto bug, and the next time we went, Steph broke out in a severe rash. I believe in its present form that it is a health hazard.

3. My highest priority is Parks Maintenance and Parks and Open Space Management. I feel unqualified to put anything in the second option. That said, our parks are very important. Not only do they bring in people to the community, but they are great when hosting events like the Coffee Break Festival which are part of the city's identity.

4. My highest priority is providing services that directly affect quality of life and health of the community. I would let broadleaf control in parks, brush collection fall below the line. Parks are beautiful without broadleaf control—not necessary. Brush collection could be responsibility of property owners.

5. My highest priority is Current (1-2 yrs) of Urban Forestry—232 trees that are DEAD & DANGEROUS! I would let signs & markings fall below the line. Refuse collection is great/Recycle collection (?) Brush & used furniture (once a month?)

6. My highest priority is Refuse & Recycling. I would let Opera House/Share Ride Taxi fall below the line. Because it or Shared Taxi would allow Urban Forestry to be funded.

9. My highest priority is the Library. The library has already increased copying fees. Because the library sends out email reminders for when books are due, it has already seen a reduction of income from fines. If fines are increased, it is more likely that they will see even less revenue from late fees. (Maybe counter intuitive but true.)

10. My highest priority is Community Media Production. Could the school pay for the production of their sports and programs. Use a student in their media courses. To fall below the line would be a disservice to the community. I would let Township Cemetery fall below the line. A township cemetery. Isn't there a cemetery board to designate or hire a caretaker? Perpetual fees used for salary.

### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

1. I appreciate the work that has been accomplished and suggestions made on how to look at revenue resources.

3. The Opera House is doing better now than it has been in the recent past. Is there any way we can look into options for making this fully self-sufficient?

4. It seems like the city is on the right track with strategic goals. I would like more information, and I know now that it is available on the website, but sometimes it's hard to know

where to look to put it all together. More informational sessions would be helpful, offered at different times for shorter period of time. A Facebook page is an excellent idea for getting feedback and putting out info. Somehow the city needs to find a way to alert more people to what is going on. One advertisement in the Hub is minimal.

Additional note—for some reason, I often have difficulty seeing forms on my computer (Mac) from the city website. Wondering if there is a more compatible format that can be used.

5. X Taxi Services(?) looks like a lot of taxis sitting at Page & Main. Has anyone audited the program?

6. We have 2 large (maple?) trees that are endangering power lines. The power lines are running between them and are over main power lines going into the house that would take out and tear down the lines off the house which then make the home owner pay. There are also very large limbs hanging low over the street, the neighbors' vehicles, and will actually brush the top of one vehicle without snow and ice on it. Also overshadows the new smaller tree put in by the city a few years ago. The city removed all other large threatening trees when they planted the new smaller ones except for the trees in front of our house at 709 W. South Street. These trees pose a real danger and threat to the power lines, house, and vehicles and need to be removed as soon as possible, preferably before the winter storms.

7. Urban forestry is higher importance—park row. Most especially in older neighborhoods.

8. Other than a few opinions here and there—I don't feel qualified to fill out this questionnaire. There are too many unanswered questions and too many variables I don't know.

I'm willing to support a reasoned, informed decision and from what I've seen of this process I think you've done that—but in the future I think it would be good to make the team reports a little more comprehensive if you want to get any educated feedback from community members.

9. \* Stoughton's per capita spending for library services was second lowest of all libraries in Dane County. The library needs to be rewarded for using its resources efficiently.

\* Reading what police respond to makes me think of Mayberry—perhaps they have too much time on their hands. Don't get me wrong, I'm glad to live in a safe community, but when we are looking at such budget shortfalls, I don't want our city government acting like our federal government—cutting everything except the Military Industrial Complex and to some extent our police force is our community's military industrial complex.