

Matt Miklave Responses, Question 1-4

Question 1: Looking at the city's budget for the coming fiscal year, what would you have done differently?

A.) Are there areas you see that could have been cut?

B.) Would you have reallocated money to other departments/projects?

Please be specific. We all know you think the Norwalk taxpayers are beleaguered, that property taxes are too high and city services are not good enough. But we need specifics.

Answer: The 2013-14 Operating Budget (which is this year's budget cycle) was palatable only because of a one-time favorable arbitration award under the teacher contract. We will not be able to rely on that one-time fix next year. The challenges facing Norwalk are significant. We have to hold the line on further tax increases. We have to implement the common core curriculum. We have to develop a jobs creation plan that supports local entrepreneurs and innovators. We have to invest more resources to combat violent and quality of life crime. And we have to fix our infrastructure. There is a lot of work to do and we have to look both short-term and long-term to develop a credible plan to manage our budget.

In the short term, the amount the city sets aside for future retiree health care benefits (called "OPEB") must be included in any budget solution, among other one-time fixes. (One City Official has already privately confided that OPEB is the equivalent of the City's "rainy day fund" in the event state aid is substantially reduced.) But only long-term budget reform will put Norwalk on a path to meet the ever increasing demands on our resources without raising taxes on Norwalk's struggling taxpayers. Each candidate has pledged to try to hold the line on taxes, but I am the only candidate who has set out a detailed plan on how we can achieve that goal. Vague promises and wishes are not enough. I have a concrete plan for budget reform -- a top-to-bottom assessment of the City's entire \$330 million operating budget. Just recently, one council member was able to use these principles to free up almost \$1 million from a \$20 million capital budget to invest in infrastructure. The Administration touted that this was only the third time in eight years they "scrubbed the books" to find savings. The Miklave Administration will scrub the books weekly to find savings by cutting programs or services which do not meet performance standards previously set. If we are able to find \$1 million out of a \$20 million capital budget (about 5 percent), just imagine how much we will be able to save in a \$330 million operating budget. Making PPB a daily exercise remains the key to our future.

Question 2: POKO's Wall Street development just got another 6-month extension despite major grumbling by some Zoning Commission members. Given the misgivings of said members and history of extensions, would you push to keep the project alive if nothing has happened in six months, or would you lead the charge to pull the plug and go back to square one?

Answer: It surprises me that some developers and projects (95/7 or Waypointe) seem to receive endless extensions and subsidies while the constant focus of this Administration remains the POKO development. I believe in making development a level playing field. The Miklave Administration will hold every developer to the same standards and expectations. As I previously announced, on my first day in office, I will form an Economic Accelerator Team to focus on building a series of economic accelerators to help jump start a jobs-creation program by supporting local entrepreneurs and innovators. I will invite representatives from the

development community to be a part of that team. I will also ask each developer to meet with my Administration to review the status of each development, assess compliance with current agreements, and engage in a candid discussion as to the future of each project. To the extent that reasonable extensions of time are all that is needed to allow the developer to complete the project in a reasonable time horizon, then I would favor extending the deadlines. However, to the extent a developer is unable to present evidence that a further investment in time will result in a completed project, then I would lead the charge to consider alternatives including reopening the development process to allow other developers to compete. In addition, I will also work with all stakeholders to review the roles of the Zoning Commission, Planning Commission and Redevelopment Agency and their staffs to streamline the development process, while at the same time insuring that all parties and the public have an adequate opportunity to provide input.

Question 3: Oak Hills: There are two proposals for a practice range. One involves putting it in the woods and cutting down trees, one involves making use of a different space. There is a fear that, based on one company's past practice, the OHPA/city would front the money to build the range and hope to regain it and more through usage fees. The process, like the school superintendent search and the police chief "search;" is being kept secret. Should the OHPA be more transparent about the process? For that matter, should all of these searches and decisions be more transparent?

Answer: I love to play golf and would love to see a driving range at Oak Hills Park. But I question the ability of the current management team to build or manage it. I was distressed to watch as the Oak Hills Park Authority, after repeatedly claiming that they had sufficient cash on hand to make it through the winter, come to the City 90 days later and demanded a \$150,000 loan or else they would shut the course down. Now we have learned that even though the Authority has engaged in an "aggressive marketing plan," the number of rounds is below expectations. I also understand that some members of the Authority believe that the cost of routine maintenance should be paid by the City, rather than by those who use Oak Hills. These troubling developments lead me to believe that it would be exceptionally unwise for the Authority to go deeper into debt to build a driving range of any size or in any location. I will not support any effort that increases the City's risk or liability. I am deeply concerned about the lack of transparency involved in the operation of the Authority.

Question 4. It was reported when the city signed on for 10 years with City Carting that there was a clause that allows the city to terminate "for convenience." Some or all of you have been critical of the contract. Would you be inclined to terminate the City Carting contract? If so, would you offset the reported savings by making cuts elsewhere? It has been reported the outsourcing save taxpayers \$110 each off their tax bills.

Answer: I voted against the City Carting agreements. First, just a few months previously, in response to efforts by Council Democrats to investigate single stream recycling, the Administration insisted that single stream recycling was not economically viable and the technology was untested. Yet, 90-days later, those same officials insisted that single stream recycling was a "no brainer." This sudden reversal alone creates a reason for doubt. Second, the recycling contract was contingent on a corresponding garbage hauling contract. I did not support linking the two contracts. Third, I was opposed to the privatization of garbage collection

precisely because I thought that once it was contracted out, it would not be economically feasible to bring it back into DPW. Fourth, I thought that awarding a "no bid" ten-year recycling contract locked the City into a contract for far too long. Finally, while I have heard the some City officials claim that the City Carting contracts can be terminated without penalty "for convenience," no one from Corporation Counsel's office has made that claim. I am skeptical that the contracts can be terminated without penalty for any reason. If I am elected Mayor, my administration will conduct an independent review of the City Carting agreements to assess performance under the contracts, methods to improve recycling and garbage collection, methods to eliminate or reduce offensive odors and conditions in neighborhoods, and the cost to the City of alternatives. Basically, I hope to conduct the unbiased, independent review of the issues which the City skipped over in its rush to implement the privatization plan.