

Matt Miklave responses

Question 1:

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

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.