

No Standing News

Since we have no standing, we stand with those left standing.

Volume I

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WE MADE A MISTAKE!

(.....but if you give a mouse a cookie he'll still want your property tax.)

By Phil

We said if we made a mistake we would admit it. Well, we did make a mistake estimating the recreation sales tax figure in the last article, "What Happens If You Give A Mouse A Cookie?" This was the mistake.

ERROR: In the city budget, we said they hope to take in about **\$2,775,000** in sales tax revenue from the 2% city sales tax. One-fourth of that, we told you, would be about **\$693,750** which, we said, was far short of the annual debt service of \$975,000 - \$1.2 million annually over 15 years on the \$11.7 million dollar bond debt.

CORRECTION: The revenue, we should have said, should be about **\$1.3 million** per year, not **\$693,750**. We miscalculated the revenue from the 2% city sales tax because half of the revenue from the sales tax isn't listed in the section described as "Total City Revenues." Part of the city 2% sales tax is earmarked for transportation and capital improvements. The revenue from those two earmarked taxes is not shown in the city budget until you get down to the itemized budget for the Street/Cap. Improvement Fund where the transportation and capital improvements budget is shown. Some other taxes such as the new .5% park and recreation fund sales tax also doesn't show as city revenue

until you get down to the Park department budget. So, if you need to look at the city budget for information remember, "Total City Revenue" is actually only "Partial - Total City Revenue." You must go through each department budget and pick out other sources of revenue to find out what the real "Total City Revenue" is. After you find those "Other City Revenue" amounts and add them to the "Partial-Total City Revenue" you might be close to the "Real Total City Revenue" total.

So, the correct statement should have been that the new recreation tax, by the city's estimate, will bring in about \$1.3 million. That should be enough to make the annual debt service payment if none of the "if"s happen. IF no one notices that we have one of the highest sales tax rates in the state. IF the new Wal-Mart Super Center in Salem doesn't affect Rolla sales. IF the economy doesn't slide into a recession. IF the general assembly doesn't remove sales taxes from a major spending category to make up for raising their own pay. If a lot of other "if"s don't happen to our sensitive sales tax financing base.

However, now that we have admitted the mistake in calculating the tax we stand by everything else we said in the article. We're still being asked to TRUST the city council NOT to pull the pin on a property tax grenade at the first sign of management problems with this center. Shifting the bond payments to the property tax is the only way they can access the recreation tax money to operate the center. They are counting on lots of people, some as far away as Cuba, Missouri, to willingly pay an unknown amount of user fees sufficient to cover the unknown operating costs of a facility that has no final plans or cost

estimates and therefore has no feasibility study or cost analysis.

Don't count on Dr. Moorkamp and his committee of well-intentioned citizens to come up with explanations later. After all, they're just volunteers. And while they have been a hard-working, dedicated committee, ultimately the responsibility for the rec center falls squarely on the shoulders of our elected leaders. It's the city council and city management who make all the final decisions, right?

So now even with NSN's corrected figures on meeting the bond payment amount, voters are still left with the same unanswered questions. The city is counting on luck and very creative and energetic management to generate the money necessary to cover the daily operation of the center. I don't know about getting lucky, but I do know that Kwantes has been complacently operating a lackluster park program at a deficit for over 20 years. If he is creative and energetic he's been hiding it well. The big question is still this one. Do you trust your city government to manage all of these unknowns so well that you are confident they will never trigger that property tax grenade with just a simple council vote? Well, do you?

WE ARE SORRY FOR THE ERROR.

FREE MAYBERRY NOW!!

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