



PAUL CUNNINGHAM

WARD 2

October 20, 2017

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PAUL'S NOTE

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Our city budget is structurally balanced, which is a far cry from where it was when I first got into office. Much of the credit goes not only to my colleagues but City Manager Michael Ortega and his leadership team.

We still have a problem, one that makes it hard for us as policy makers to have the fiscal flexibility to do a lot of the things that you would like us to accomplish: pensions for our employees.

There are a couple of things you need to know when you are thinking about the pension systems. One is that it runs different in every state. I say this because many of you that I talk to regularly are public employees who retired from another state where the ways the system is managed is very different. Many of the rules we live under are determined by the state. Although we as city taxpayers are pay-

ing, much of what happens with the public safety pension funds is under the control of state lawmakers.

Also, keep in mind that neither the City of Tucson nor the state can cut back on pension benefits that are already promised to existing employees.

Pension benefits are provided through separate plans. The Tucson Supplemental Retirement System (TSRS), is maintained by the City and Mayor and Council set the policy for this system and an appointed board monitors results. This system is actually doing well and is stable. The state has a second pension system for our commissioned personnel, Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) for police officers and firefighters. PSPRS has been the focus of a lot of discussion at both the city and state level.

Pensions represent near-

ly \$120 million in costs to the city annually. \$83 million is for public safety pensions, covering 1608 retired police and fire personnel, and \$36 million is for the 2974 retirees under TSRS. That is just under a quarter of our city budget. For comparison's sake, the entire Parks and Recreation budget is under \$35 million.

It would come as no surprise to anyone that the financial earthquake that hit in 2007 and 2008 affected our pension system for public employees, both public safety and otherwise. As the investments that the state authorized for our pension funds dipped in value, it meant less money for future pension payments.

This could have been dealt with through careful management and planning, which unfortunately is not something our state govern-

PAUL'S NOTE, CONTINUED

ment is known for. The system was still being managed assuming those pre-2008 rates of return (between 7% and 8%) instead of the 5% that the fund was actually getting. Despite this, automatic increases to future retirees were still allowed to take effect. It left us as a city to make up for the difference.

In May of 2016, Arizona voters passed Prop. 124, which changes the benefit plans for public safety employees hired after July of this year. The fiscal effect for the city won't be significant for decades, however.

In fact, according to our budget folks, the city's contribution to public safety pensions will continue to increase for seven years. The contribution rate for non-public safety pensions is expected to hold steady.

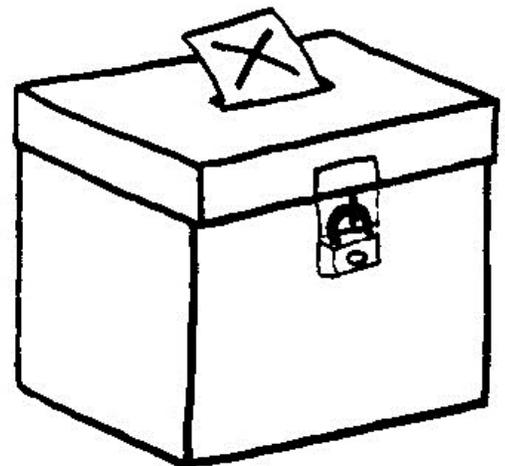
As someone who used to serve on the pension committee for my union when I was a probation officer, I understand the importance of pensions as a promise to our employees. As a policy maker, I'd like to make sure that costs for those pensions don't make it hard for us to provide for future employees or services for our citizens. I've been working with the finance department and our city manager to see what we can do to keep costs down. I'll keep you up to date on what our future plans are.

ELECTION INFORMATION

Ballots were mailed this week. Eastsiders can vote in person at the Pima County Recorder's Office, 6920 E Broadway, Suite D from now through November 7.

Those of you mailing your ballot should do so by Wednesday, November 1 to ensure that it gets processed.

For more information, call the City Clerk at 791-4213.



CASE GARDEN FRIENDS

Case Garden Friends, who help maintain the garden at Case Natural Resource Park near Broadway and Houghton, will be holding a clean up on October 28. They are looking for help with basic maintenance and they also do special projects, arts and crafts. You can adopt out areas of the garden for a season. They welcome scout groups, churches and other organizations to volunteer for projects.

To find out more, you can look up Case Garden Friends on Facebook or email casegardenfriends@gmail.com

PAINT PIMA PURPLE

October will mark the 30th Domestic Violence Awareness Month, so once again, Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse is asking...

Will you help us Paint Pima Purple?

You can book an appointment to get a purple hair extension for \$10 at Salon Nouveau (323-0770) and all proceeds will come to Emerge!

There will also be two opportunities to “Stuff the Truck.” With help from Two Men and a Truck, supplies will be collected for domestic abuse survivors. On October 27, you can bring supplies such as gift cards, new bath and hygiene items and undergarments to Rincon Congregational UCC, 122 N Craycroft

The Ward 2 office will also be collecting supplies on Oct. 27.

CAROL WEST SENIOR CENTER

Movie Day: Gifted, rated PG-13. Wednesday, October 25. Frank, a single man raising his child prodigy niece Mary, is drawn into a custody battle with his mother. \$1, refreshments served.

The Carol West Senior Addition at Udall features multipurpose rooms, lounge area with TV, computer adult learning center and pool tables. It is open 6 am—8 pm Monday thru Friday and Saturday 8 am—4 pm. For more information, call 791—4121

PARKS PROGRAMS

Holiday Arts & Craft Fair Registration: Vendor registration is open for the Holiday Arts and Crafts Fair in Reid Park. The fair is scheduled for Thanksgiving weekend- Saturday and Sunday, November 25-26, 2017 from 9 am to 4 pm. For more information, visit tucsonaz.gov/parks or contact Susan Orrico, Event Coordinator, 791-4877. Attached is an event flier.

Swim Fall Schedule: The swim fall schedule began on August 3rd. For additional information: <https://www.tucsonaz.gov/parks/pools-and-splash-pads>

Fall Leisure Classes: Session two of classes will run October 29 through December 16. Visit EZEereg.com for details.

Call 791-4877 for more information or questions.

**PAUL CUNNINGHAM,
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Remember to like
Paul on Facebook!

Please bring these items to the Ward 2 Office
for the following charities:

**THE COMMUNITY FOOD BANK—Non Perishable
Items**

**DIAPER BANK OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA—
Infant/Child/Adult Diapers**

**TIHAN - Personal Care Items for Individuals
and Families in Need**

LIONS CLUB—Eye Glasses

**DANCING IN THE STREETS ARIZONA—Ballet/
Dance Equipment**

CASA MARIA—Plastic bags

**SR. JOSE WOMEN'S SHELTER—Summer items
and clothing, athletic shoes, back packs, tote**

MAYOR AND COUNCIL

The next Mayor and Council meeting will be on **Tuesday, October 24**. Regular Session starts at 5:30 pm following an afternoon study session.

There is always a short call to the audience before the business portion of the meeting. Council chambers are located downtown at 255 W Alameda.

The agendas for the meetings are posted online at <http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/clerks/mcdocs>

