

JUNE 3, 2019: EAST POINT CITY COUNCIL MEETING

FY20 PROPOSED BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

Per the City Manager's proposed FY20 budget, page 11, **STRATEGIC GOALS** read: **“Mayor and Council and senior staff identified strategic goals and priority areas for the next three years. These strategies will sharpen the City’s focus on issues that are critical to the orderly growth and prosperity of employees, rate and tax payers and visitors.”**

I noticed right away that **“employees”** were named first, secondly **“rate”**, thirdly **“tax payers”** and fourth, **“visitors”**. This Budget truly reflects the “growth and prosperity of employees” with another across the board salary and benefits increase of **1.5%**, after nine straight years of **2.0%**. The growth in employees, excluding Mayor and Council and the Mayor’s two part-time employees, will go from 583 to 587. Other than mentioning “tax payers” in the strategic goals, I could not find any projects that will directly address their “prosperity”.

In the latest 2019 quarterly census tract report of the **Greater Atlanta United Way**, East Point has a total of:

1. 33,365 residents
2. 6,793 families and
3. 8,497 children.

The report also states that 15.7 percent of these children do not have health insurance and 42.2 percent of them are living in poverty. 49.1 % of the families are not financially stable, 46 % of the families have housing cost burdens, and 22.8% are mothers without a high school diploma. 30.2% of the adults do not have health insurance and the unemployment rate is 17.6%. I believe that the **“tax payers”** need some prosperity support from Mayor and Council to help low income residents regardless of age to bring their homes up to code with new roofs, heating and air units, plumbing, windows, doors, floors, gutters and insulation since Mayor and Council are no longer using CDBG funds for these expenses. CDBG funds continue to be used for Parks and Recreation including a **\$64,800** purchase for a bike ramp in Sykes Park.

Since the City has experienced more than a **3%** increase in property tax assessment and billing, homeowners living in areas where gentrification is a growing concern should be provided with some property tax financial assistance so that they can better afford to remain in their homes. It does not take a genius to know that with some foresight and a desire to help, Mayor and Council should feel compelled to help the long suffering homeowners after the 2008 recession who made it possible for the City to stockpile **\$40 million** in the MCT account from electric utility customers. Currently, the Electric Utility will begin the FY20 Budget with a fund balance of **\$31.4 million**.

Mayor and Council can vote to change the FY20 Proposed Budget tonight to include **\$2 million** for **“Residential Referendum Projects”** and place the funds in the Restricted Funds Account while legislation is written and adopted to address the process of selection of residents and the disbursement of payments and oversight of the projects. The City continues to make a killing off the Electric Utility even in this proposed budget. Mayor and Council, I hope that you will vote to

include the **\$2 million** in the proposed YF20 budget. Do not make this a very serious campaign center piece for the upcoming November Election.