



## VOICE FOR THE PEOPLE

**Knowledge is Power; and Elections have Consequences!**

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**If there is ANYONE BUT PITTMAN, who told you this; check their documents!**

### RESIDENTS NEEDS vs EMPLOYEES NEEDS!

I posted on Facebook that I would respond to a previous post and a question from two residents. My post was that although I agreed with Mayor and Council wholeheartedly on the pay raises for the police officers, I disagreed with police officers living outside of the City taking City Police cars home with them. I also suggested that the City could consider a gas allowance for a certain amount instead. One poster seriously disagreed while another poster added some great suggestions. In response, I posted that to be fair to Mayor and Council, my response would take more space and that I would address their posts on my eblast and website on Thursday instead of the Community of East Point Page. This is my **RESPONSE**.

Going forward, any responses to posts or other media outlets concerning East Point should be made on the GOALS of Mayor and Council with concrete suggested solutions if there is disagreement based on facts or Best Governmental Practices. Mayor and Council have the **sole GOAL** of meeting **both** the Residents Needs **and** Employees Needs. When there is a conflict, or a **Negative** action proposed by Mayor and Council that will **greatly** affect **one** of the two Groups, Mayor and Council **must** always **choose** the **Residents**.

The City needs Residents in order to be a City and Survive. The City also needs to show that it can provide Public Safety for the Residents in order to retain its Charter per the State of Georgia Constitution. It appears that the City **cannot** exist without Residents **and** Public Safety. Hence, Mayor and Council must **balance** the needs of the Residents with the needs of the Police Officers in determining what kind of Police Department we are going to have.

Let's list all the most important and essential needs of the Police Department first. The City must be prepared to provide the Residents with a Police Department that can protect both the Lives and Properties of Residents. To accomplish this the Police Department must:

## Page 2

- 1) Recruit qualified and competent Candidates / veteran officers in good standing outside of the City (background checks, evaluations, etc.)
- 2) Offer competitive salaries and benefits.
- 3) Provide first class training throughout the Department ( health, professionalism, and fair treatment, etc.)
- 4) Provide first class safety equipment, uniforms, cars, computers, vests, weapons, etc.

The above items are solely for the benefit of **protecting** Residents and Businesses, so they must come first without any hesitation on the part of Mayor and Council. However, there is room in the Competitive salaries and benefits category that can **Negatively** impact the Residents, and this is where **conflict** arises. This is where Mayor and Council have to use all the financial tools and data that can be acquired to **resolve** the conflict. Did this happen?

The City is in a nationwide competition to recruit and hire qualified and competent Police Officers. The **demand** for Police Officers provides great **leverage** for the Officers in demanding higher wages that are competitive in the Atlanta Metro Area especially in comparable sized cities in Fulton County. According to Channel 2 News reports and printed media reports, East Point beginning new Police Officers' salaries far exceeds every City in Fulton County and large other county areas outside of Fulton County. The Police Department is also the largest Department in the City, and protocol demands that all supervising officers' salaries be **greater** than their subordinates. Hence, all Police Officers will be getting a raise.

How does this large raise **impact** the City's Budget? For every increase in an employee's salary, the City has to increase the cost of benefits. The past Finance director was unable to state the actual City's benefits cost for employees. The actual benefits costs cover the following:

- 1) Matching Pension cost paid by employees pay, 6% OR Matching Social Security cost paid by employee ( 7% or more, I don't know how much.)
- 2) Workman Compensation paid only by City (I don't know how much.)
- 3) Portion of Health benefits ( I don't know how much.)

I do know that the amount of employees benefits exceeded seventy percent when I was Mayor. Hence an employee making **\$55,000** plus **70%** employee benefits cost would cost the City **\$93,500**. This easily adds up to a lot of money for the City to pay for raises alone. Add in the cost of more gas and car maintenance and the cost goes up for East Point Police Officers who are Residents, and exponentially higher for Police Officers living outside of the City. The large increase **must be made up** by **reducing** Budget items relating to Residents or **increasing** the costs to Residents. So, Mayor and Council must decide on what to keep and **WHY**:

- 1) Pay raises with increased Budget costs.
- 2) Allowing all Police Officers to drive cars home with additional Budget increases.
- 3) Reducing Budget items for Residents.
- 4) Increasing the cost of Budget items for Residents.

I say keep the pay raises because we need to recruit and hire more Police Officers. Since the pay raises exceeds Atlanta Metro Areas' salaries there should **not** be any additional benefits that **will not** offer **additional** safety to Residents and Business Owners in East Point. Hence **drop** the benefit of Police Officers taking cars home who live **outside** of the City. In fact, Police cars outside of the City can be more of a **liability** to the City due to vandalism by disgruntled people who have a grudge against the City due to a legal matter; gangs; high cost of gas; car milage; time spent in congested traffic; a lack of replacement parts; towing charges; and accidents **without** offering any additional protection to the Residents. I had suggested a gas allowance, but I have since changed my mind.

Residents will be **footing** the bill and stand to continue to **lose** out on recreational space and meeting facilities. Funding for Commerce Park in Ward D has been inactive for the past three years. No new recreation center with a swimming pool is on the drawing board. The Auditorium that should have \$4.8 million in reserves is still in the talking stage. There is no Soccer teams in the City to use the Georgia Soccer Park on Welcome All Road during specified times that the Field is not being used that the City donated \$600,000 to make improvements to. Residents should **not** be concerned about **increased** costs or utility fees to pay for free gas and a Police car to be driven outside the City. The City is **responsible** for paying its employees a **livable** wage and where those employees **chose** to live and **getting** to work is not the concern of the City.

If Police Officers want to drive a car home, they can move into the City. Residents are not getting any free gas or cars when they leave the City to go to work. **YES**, the American Recue Plan has given local governments a great deal of money to help their Cities and Residents. Mayor and Council need to tell the Residents how they will be helped!