

Chris McDonough
17 Vernon Place
Mount Vernon, NY 10552
csmcdonough@mac.com
914-625-7447

Questions delivered to the Mount Vernon City Council at their meeting on February 23, 2022

At the public hearing last night councilman Thompson said, "Everything we do we have to back it up with facts". This is good to hear because I'm interested to learn facts. To that end, here are a few questions.

1. The public has been told that our city workers are the lowest paid in Westchester County. That may be true, but it does not mean they are low paid. Municipal workers in Westchester County are among the highest paid in NYS (and the country), and Westchester County residents are among the highest taxed in NYS (and the country). In addition to relatively high salaries, municipal workers are given good benefits and pensions, and a high degree of job security, as well they should.
 - a) What is the mean, median, mode, and range of salaries for city employees? If you could provide this information for the city in general and by department that would be very helpful.
 - b) What are the salaries of employees in the comparable neighboring cities that are used when the "low wage" justification for salary increases is invoked?
2. What percentage of salary increases in the 2022 budget are discretionary and what's the total dollar amount for those salary increases?
3. Instead of hiring more people, what initiatives have been undertaken to improve training so that the good people we have can be more productive?
4. The "Sanitary Sewer Fee" is scheduled to be \$1.25 per 100cf of water consumed with a minimum charge of \$18.75 per 1500cf of water consumed. Since water consumption is measured quarterly, that means the minimum annual charge will be \$75 per customer. What is your estimate of the actual annual cost of this fee per customer? For example, if this fee had been in place in 2021, my family would have paid \$101 dollars. Is \$100 about what the average water customer should expect to pay for this "Sanitary Sewer Fee" in 2022?
5. What is the plan for the \$9 million in "sewer rents" and "refuse and garbage charges"? For example, how will these funds be deployed in the next 12 months? The next 36 months? The next 5 years? If you present a rational plan that links the money collected to tangible improvements, the public is far more likely to support it.
6. Last summer the mayor surveyed the public regarding how we should use the \$41 million in American Rescue Plan funds. That was over 6 months ago so I'd like to know how, exactly, that money has been spent so far? The public should be provided with a detailed accounting.
7. The 2022 budget uses \$5 million of ARPA funds to "offset" total costs.
 - a. How exactly will this \$5 million hole be filled when the ARPA money runs out?
 - b. How much of the ARPA funds would be needed if all discretionary costs are removed from the 2022 budget?