

Mayor Phil Goode Talk of the Town Letter for July 1, 2022

We all know that Prescott is a highly desirable community to live and work in. This is, in part, due to the high quality of core public services that the city provides to ensure the safety of our residents. However, community growth has impacted our ability to provide these public safety services. One of the issues we have been discussing at council is how to fund and plan for future public safety locations. I have met with Fire Chief Holger Durre, and Police Chief Amy Bonney about several issues including fire codes, ambulance response times, and enforcement priorities, to name a few. Both the fire department and the police department have been experiencing a significant increase in calls for service over the past several years. The last time we built a new fire station was in 1995, and the City has seen a significant amount of growth in our community since then.

To close this gap, the proposed FY 23 city budget contains funding to meet response time objectives not only through new stations. In a community as geographically diverse as ours, more than just new stations are needed to be effective and fiscally responsible. To do so, the budget proposes implementing new technology to efficiently dispatch units, more effective handling of lower priority calls, and partnering with the community to lower the risks we all face. This includes finding business friendly but effective fire codes, encouraging and facilitating aggressive wildfire mitigation, and leveraging public-private partnerships in emergency medical services more efficiently.

New fire stations and personnel are needed, but by also focusing our budget on initiatives that increase the efficiency of current and future resources, we can reduce the overall cost of catching up to the growth we have all experienced. Over the long-term this will ensure that the investments of taxpayer dollars are applied in the most efficient and responsible manner and focusing the city on meeting response time objectives that reduce the occurrence of negative outcomes.

Living safely in our beautiful city comes with a lot of responsibility for all of us. The city must do its part to effectively invest the tax dollars provided by our citizens and to implement wise initiatives that respect those investments. However, I urge citizens to also do their part. One way citizens can do so is by ensuring their properties are ready for wildfire and by supporting our public safety personnel. Yavapai Firewise provides resources for property owners to create defensible space around their property. Other ways you can be ready for emergencies is to check your smoke detectors, and if you are a business owner to make sure you are up to date on all of the safety regulations impacting your industry. As your mayor, I am responsible for ensuring that our policies are effective, available and responsive. As a citizen, I urge you to also do your part to keep Prescott as vibrant, beautiful, and safe as ever.