

June 10, 2021

To: Budget Committee, Frankie Petrick, Administrator / Budget Officer and Shelby Knife, Asst. Administrator

Below are questions I have that intersect or may lay outside the budget review, but I think are very pertinent before asking the district taxpayers to consider supporting an increase in the Local Option Tax. I request this document come before the entire budget committee that includes the YRFPD board of directors.

(In regard to actual vs. accrued budget items. Know that accrued must be included but can skew the budget's future forecast if the accrued is not realized as a result of not receiving grant awards, sales not occurring or bringing in less than you anticipated, and unexpected expenses).

Before going out to ask voters to support an increase in the Local Option Tax to help pay for increased operations costs / additional staff and equipment replacement, I see three areas that need to be addressed internally first. (and there may be more...)

1. I read that no raises are being requested this year and that the District Adm. (Frankie) has chosen to take a reduction in wages to deal with the exceedingly tight budget. My question though is does the district need two administrators? My understanding was that Shelby was originally coming on board to learn the administrative job and ease into that role when Frankie retires to assure a smooth and seamless transition. But that has been going on for years. If it is essential to continue to have two administrators? If so, that administrative expense needs to be justified to the taxpayers.
2. A. I read the history of the creation of the SLA and it being a nonprofit and its being a worthy and unique endeavor. However, does the SLA's present structure and functions still fit with the evolution and growth in demand on the YRFPD? For example, only two firefighters and paramedics are available on a 24-hour basis and also must cover the ambulance calls leaving the YRFPD unavailable for long periods of time with calls being covered by other fire districts. Of course, hiring additional personnel would solve that with an increased in the Local Option Tax. However, would any internal changes between the SLA and YRFPD help with financial support to the YRFRD?  
B. Is SLA paying the fire district \$150 a month a sufficient compensation?
3. Selling the old firehouse and returning those funds to operations are essential but I understand as only a stopgap to the long term need for increased funding. I suggest sell the fire station first before asking voters to support an increase in the Local Option Tax as part of your internal effort.

These questions cannot be adequately answered at the Monday meeting, or should they be. The answer to these questions will take time by the board and administrative staff to address. By having clear answers to these questions and maybe others too and demonstrating that internally the YRFPD board /adm. staff have made the most efficient and effective use of their public funds, going out for an increase in the Local Option Tax will be likely supported by the majority of the voters in this fire district.

I want to add that my questions by no means reflect any criticism toward the staff and board. You all have been performed passionately and at times with herculean efforts, some of you for many years, providing a safe and compassionate service to the citizens of south county.

With Gratitude, Joanne Kittel, Budget Committee Member