

From: Don Tallerman <don@dragon360.com>

Sent: Thursday, November 21, 2024 8:29 AM

To: Shaut, Andrea <ashaut@kingston-ny.gov>

Cc: Noble, Steve <SNoble@kingston-ny.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Tax increase announced by Mayor Noble

Dear City Council members –

The Mayor's recent budget proposal, raising taxes just under 9%, is an outrageous increase. This increase is a hardship for homeowners and for business owners, making an already expensive place to live even more so. I'm writing to encourage you to explore ways to limit the increase to a more reasonable 2-3%.

The Mayor defends this increase by stating that the rate is still below the historic 2016 high. Saying that this rate is OK because it's not the highest levy in the City's history is not an acceptable justification. By the same token, pointing to the City's takeover of the ambulance service as the primary reason for the increase does not make it OK.

The annual budget process is a difficult balancing act – how to maintain services while deploying tax dollars to pay for them. However the City, like any person or company, must live within its means. And here's a fact that few people here seem to be aware of – Kingston is NOT a wealthy city. Our medium income of \$62,000 is far below the

state median income (excluding NY City) of \$84,000. We have very few large companies to pay a large tax bill and only so many homeowners who can afford to pay enormous City & school taxes.

The mayor has been able to make up the gap with an impressive flow of grants. But now, even with the grants, the Mayor remains keen to maintain our services, our large city staff, and upgrading a host of amenities such as Kingston Point Beach, Dietz Stadium, Andy Murphy Center, etc. Well, something has to give – we have to start saying NO. No to more staff, no to more city amenities & services, perhaps no to city run ambulance. YES to keeping taxes to a level where a company or family can still afford to call this place home.

The previous public hearing on the City budget was scheduled during the world series. I think it's fair that a second public hearing be held to allow for more voices to be heard on this matter.

Respectfully,

Don Tallerman
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