

I'm running for Mayor on a common sense platform and to offer better leadership on the tough issues facing our City. I believe our City is desperate for a fresh start and new direction.

Never before has there been such a need to explore all available options to address the critical issues facing our City. The current Mayor favors a tax and spend approach, proposing tens of millions of dollars in capital projects that would cause our long-term debt to skyrocket overnight. Middle class families, seniors, those on fixed incomes and local business owners simply can't afford this. They need a voice of reason on the ever increasing tax burdens being proposed.

The City Council needs a mayor who will provide better leadership, who will be innovative, open to new concepts and "think outside the box". The lack of leadership is apparent in the proposed new Public Safety Building, which will cost an astounding \$17 million in 2008, excluding operational expenses, and be built on city parking lots.

Incredibly, there was a proposal submitted to the City by a group of reputable private contractors, which is not even being considered. This proposal solves both the need for new space and downtown parking, at a fraction of the cost. The current administration has instead presented to the public only those options that would require public bid, which usually adds 20-30% to the project cost plus 8-10% more for architect and engineering contracts. Is it common sense to ignore all available proposals and instead proceed toward adopting a plan that would dramatically increase our long term debt?

Moreover, the current proposals don't provide for any parking and would actually result in the loss of present parking spaces. To deal with this problem, the current Mayor's proposed capital budget simply allocates another \$11.8 million, in 2009 and 2010, for a parking deck, to yet again increase our already strained bonding limit. Rather than consider a feasible solution that is now available to solve, in one step, the need for new facilities and parking, the tax and spend approach seems to be winning.

So what is the answer? We must "think outside the box". The private development proposal, with no up front costs, is a new concept to our City, but is used and accepted elsewhere. The complex would be legally owned by a newly formed not-for-profit entity, governed by a majority controlled board of City appointees. Its future direction, including whether to end the lease term or to exercise an option to purchase, is controlled by the City. At the end of the lease term, the city can gain ownership, by payment of \$1.

While I am wholeheartedly in favor of a new Public Safety Building, we must do a better job of controlling the current trend of piling up massive long-term debt. Our City needs a voice of reason, and fiscal responsibility. I ask you to let me be that voice, and to offer better leadership for a better Saratoga.

Sincerely,
Scott Johnson