

Initial Public Comments on Lake Park Budget FY '26

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FY '26 budget. In addition to my suggestions below, and as the budget document is hundreds of pages long, I seek specific information about where in the document the cuts or savings are delineated. Like elective surgery, I seek elective line items that do not necessarily have to be conducted this next year. I'm thinking like the Strategic Vision Plan costing \$20,000 or the Community Center concept study costing over \$100,000. I am against having to secure any more loans or depending on uncertain developer-related income to pay our bills. I seek quantifiable cross-outs demonstrating our capacity to make bold decisions and protect our financial integrity.

My ideas are quantified below, as simplistic as they may be:

1. Freeze ALL town expenses. Approve a budget neutral one year AUSTERITY plan with exceptions to contractual obligations. Don't budget for something you don't have guaranteed revenue for. There is no certainty about revenues from Forest Development. Manage the town's budget as you would your own family's if you knew you were not getting a raise. No vacations or new stove; thus new expenditures and contracts.
2. ...Or, freeze all wages and salary increases with exception of union contracts, public works staff, the Town Manager, and the Mayor and Commissioners...
3. ...Or, no merit or COLA increases for any staff making over \$100k. That savings would be substantial.
4. Richard has indicated no new positions in the proposed budget. That's a start but far from satisfying the need for cuts in our budget.
5. Meeting after meeting I perceive sanitation expenses out of control. I support no new equipment or staff slots beyond what was previously approved.

Spending taxpayer dollars is very personal. It hits home even more than the feelings related to growth and development. I have supported you in acting boldly around P-3 and the PADD proposals. Similarly, I ask or demand courage to protect our town from further financial erosion and fragility.

Thank you.