

I am a second generation native of this great city and have been paying my property taxes for 32 years now. A few of you know me. I can't stay silent this time and just let these cuts happen. Violent crimes are on the rise every day, some gang related, some culture clashes, some just because of unemployment and the economy. It's in All our neighborhoods. Now is not the time to be cutting manpower in our police department. The fire department has taken many hits over the last several years. It's to the point that the trucks can't operate with any less men on them. The last round of cuts we even lost the heavy rescue truck that has served both Deering and Downtown for many, many years. Oh yah, they both have also given up several raises over the last few years so as not to overburden us taxpayers. I am filing my protest here with you and asking you to PLEASE stop the layoffs. Please stop playing politics with our safety and the safety of the men and women who work so hard to keep us safe. They have given up more than their share already.

Driving around the city I have seen hundreds of new homes popping up in spots that were empty fields or woodlands. Occupied or not they all generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in property taxes that weren't there before. The property that has been here has plummeted in value, most below their assessed value, but you don't see our taxes going down. Being the highest property tax rate in the State I begin to wonder why we can't ever seem to make it work... ever. It's always the same; ' taxes going up and were cutting your services. I blame our City Manager. The only developing going on in this city is with the Hospitals and the University (which doesn't help with property taxes). Other than that we have not moved since Joe Gray took over. Congress Street has been an eye sore with no plans in site. Every time someone offers to come in and breathe a little life into the area and maybe start something, the powers to be say "no thanks." I lost track of the thousands spent on researching and developing the State Pier into a cruise ship dock and where are we? The same place we were when Mr. Gray took the helm only way deeper in debt. We had a cruise ship pier before, lost a bundle on that one too. Poor management. Pretty poor showing for one of the highest paid city managers out there. Not the 'CLASS A' performance we see from our police and firefighters. That is where I want MY tax dollars to go.

Nothing personal because I don't even know the man but it is time we had some new blood in there with fresh ideas. Someone who can do the job with what they are given without always cutting. That's easy, anyone can do that. Not that I am running for the job but one fresh idea I had was a ' fair share' tax on the freeloaders in the city. There are around 200 pages of exempt properties listed in the assessor's office and getting bigger every day. Just because a residential condo is owned by the hospitals real estate office, it shouldn't be tax free. All these properties enjoy the same services as their neighbors and should pay something for it. Much like the fair share clause for State workers who don't want to join the union. Just a thought. May help divert the layoffs.

When a ship runs aground you blame the captain and get a new one. All these cuts tell me we are not only aground, but sinking and it's time for a new captain who can get us sailing again. Please, I ask again, stop the lay-offs. Sincerely; Don Burdwood; 191 Coyle Street; 772-5893 burdwood191@yahoo.com

P.S.

I just don't think you can comprehend what these people and their families have already given, just to get on the job. A job this city said was available. Most jobs you just start working the next day. They spent three months of physical and mental stress which is second to no other job in the city or anywhere else.. To just cast them aside with a promise of MAYBE we'll take you back next year is not only incomprehensible, but pompous and cruel. Shame on you all. I'm only one vote but none of you get it next time. Don Burdwood