



# KEENE CITIZENS GOVERNMENT REVIEW NEWSLETTER

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO KEENE CITIZENS TO HELP THEM UNDERSTAND AND REVIEW KEENE GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND BUDGETING PROPOSALS WITH AN EYE TOWARD SENSIBLE SPENDING AND CONTROLLING PROPERTY TAX

## THE CANDIDATES—BLUNT TALK ON SPENDING

All Mayoral and Councilor candidates were asked the following single question by the Keene Citizens Government Review:

**Councilors, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**What specifically would you recommend doing to hold down spending and, thus, prevent high tax (rate) increases?**

It should be pointed out that not all candidates responded. Those that did not respond will also be listed with an indication of not responding. The ability or inability of a candidate to effectively communicate should also be taken into account when measuring the candidates worthiness to represent its citizens. The question is a difficult one and we commend those willing to respond to it. This publication will not be making recommendations and will let the responses speak for themselves. Here are the candidates responses:

### MAYORAL CANDIDATES

<b>Beauregard, William A.</b>	<b>NO RESPONSE</b>
<b>Bendzinski, Joseph</b>	Since the Mayor is not a voting member, he must depend on the body of elected City Councilors. As mayor I can only advise financial responsibility. There is no specific thing I can do outside judicious budget review, point out the cost of a specific issue, and through the use of technology we may be able to do a job more efficiently. Finally when a necessary service, job or task must be done - we get the best value for each dollar spent.
<b>Filiault, Randy</b>	<b>NO RESPONSE</b>
<b>Lovieno, Joseph</b>	<b>NO RESPONSE</b>
<b>Pregent, Philip Dale</b>	What can the Keene city government do to alleviate the increase burden on taxpayers? The Keene City Government has been working diligently in the last two years since the enactment of a maximum budget increase control. The Keene city budget has been below the maximum levels of the Boston Consumer Price Index in both years. Due to unfunded mandates on federal, state and county levels, as well as increased health care costs, worker's compensation and general construction costs, alleviating the increased tax burden has become a difficult challenge for the city. I believe that maintaining the budget control currently in place, and by planning ahead for major projects so that financing can be in place when the project starts, this will help eliminate a spike in city spending; also, continuing to keep a high bond rating for the city will allow the city a lower cost on borrowing for city projects. Working with the city manager, and all departments, we can keep the budget as low as possible.
<b>Wilson, Wayne</b>	I believe that Keene should get rid of its excess land and get it back on the tax rolls. I also don't think that taxpayer's should not pay for unnecessary items.

### COUNCILOR CANDIDATES

<b>Redfern, Chuck</b>	<b>Councilor - Ward 1</b>	<b>NO RESPONSE</b>
<b>Slack, Pamela Russell</b>	<b>Councilor - Ward 2</b>	<b>NO RESPONSE</b>
<b>Richards, David</b>	<b>Councilor - Ward 3</b>	<b>NO RESPONSE</b>
<b>Lane, Kendall W.</b>	<b>Councilor - Ward 4</b>	<b>NO RESPONSE</b>
<b>Miranda, Julia</b>	<b>Councilor - Ward 4</b>	I'm not only interested in preventing tax increases, I'd like to actually lower taxes. Many politicians say this, but I'm serious. To prove it, I'm giving all of my tax funded paychecks back to sixteen lucky Ward Four taxpayers that vote in this election. There is only one realistic way to cut taxes and it's to transition programs to voluntary funding methods, while voting down government increases. The truth is, no one knows how to spend your money better than you. A vote for me is one for personal responsibility! See more of what I have to say at <a href="http://vote.freekeene.com">vote.freekeene.com</a> .
<b>Georgina, Cynthia</b>	<b>Councilor - Ward 5</b>	<b>NO RESPONSE</b>

<b>Clark, Terry M.</b>	<b>Councilor-at-large</b>	Of course, the primary answer is to avoid waste, duplication and major short-term expenditures. We live in a negative state tax environment and many things have changed in our economy, causing the spiraling cost of healthcare and housing for example. Yet, we still rely upon an archaic system of taxation. City officials and our legislators should continue to advocate a fairer state tax structure. Specific recommendations include moving the central fire station to 350 Marlboro St and trading other city owned property for the armory in West Keene instead of building new facilities. Also, there should be a special business tax district created to pay for city services at large downtown events.
<b>Duffy, James</b>	<b>Councilor-at-large</b>	<b>NO RESPONSE</b>
<b>Greenwald, Mitch</b>	<b>Councilor-at-large</b>	It is my intention to consider and research expenditures carefully. If it is correct to spend the money now, then do it and confirm the results. If the expenditure can be eliminated, or postponed, then that is what I will recommend. This will apply to both the operating budget and the capital improvements budget. I will think of every expenditure as though it is money from my own pocket and from my friends and neighbors (which it is).
<b>Lindsey, Steve</b>	<b>Councilor-at-large</b>	Many working families are already on their beam-ends, trying to pay their bills and keep their children fed. The time has come to trim our sails and batten down the hatches. To assist these hard-press families, every expenditure the city makes must be fully justified. Too much has been spent in the past, while times were good. We were like the proverbial grasshopper whooping in up while the ant slaved away, setting aside for the winter. Examples in this city include the boondoggle of 350 Marlboro Street. We need to live within our means. Specifically? There is a major push to build a new Central Fire Station. I would like to see the existing one renovated, with new, modern stalls added to the west side of the existing building. Renovation of existing infrastructure instead of building new vainglorious projects is one way to save. With that sentiment in mind, I favor keeping city hall where it is, at the center. That leaves us a problem over what to do with the empty part of the former grocery warehouse at 350 Marlboro Street. This was pointed out by councilor Chuck Redfern who supported moving city hall to Marlboro Street. I say move the SAU 29 and Keene school offices down there to more modest quarters. Sell the former post office building at 34 West Street. This would be a symbolic victory for the taxpayers and might even put the granite edifice back on the tax rolls. Or if not the tax rolls, moving the district court from its shared quarters with city government. School administrators should set an example of frugality by moving to unassuming quarters. Lastly, I will listen to my constituents. I will ask hard questions while on the council, as I was trained when I worked as a reporter for newspapers. I will be independent.
<b>Lynch, Margaret A.</b>	<b>Councilor-at-large</b>	I will be very careful when voting for anything that is going to spend money. I am not a spendthrift. I will try to be conscious of the problems of the taxpayer.
<b>McGee II, Kenneth M.</b>	<b>Councilor-at-large</b>	Thank you again for contacting me on this and giving me the opportunity to answer this very important question.  To hold down spending, I plan to approach the budget and capitol improvement program with a mindset of "we have already pushed our residents to their breaking point". First, I plan on listening to what the residents of our City are saying. Secondly, planning for major projects must be coordinated and done as a 'need', not as a 'want'. For example, having a major infrastructure improvement like the new roundabout at the same time our teachers are going through a major contract negotiation must be avoided. Finally, I plan on making sure spending is done once instead of multiple times. Repeating exhaustive studies on the same issue and then failing to act does not promote progress, it inhibits it. While a city may not be able to be run exactly like a business, we would be wise to use some of the principals of reducing this wasteful spending. Thank you again, and if any of your subscribers would like to contact me, I can be reached at 357-7256 or via email at <a href="mailto:kmcgee30@ne.rr.com">kmcgee30@ne.rr.com</a>
<b>Roberts, Kris</b>	<b>Councilor-at-large</b>	<b>NO RESPONSE</b>
<b>Sutherland, Robert</b>	<b>Councilor-at-large</b>	There are several issues facing the City, however each needs to be considered with improved fiscal responsibility. Every City budget and project currently under consideration should be reviewed and reprioritized to meet lower spending goals. The taxpayers of Keene are facing broad macroeconomic issues such as slow income growth, increasing healthcare and education costs and a softening real estate market. The city must prepare for the next recession and aggressively cut wasteful spending and properly prioritize initiatives. Additionally, more aggressive measures can be employed to restrict new hiring, enable low-cost technology for registration and information services and abandon ill-timed costly projects. The City cannot afford to hire more people and build more roundabouts when it is challenged to fund schools and fire protection services. Budget surpluses should be returned to the taxpayers, or used to offset the following year's budget. I also believe the City is hoarding too much land in the downtown area that can be sold and developed, and should consider aggressive disposition of its land, properties not currently used for City business and leasing of its unused space to generate more revenues and free space for development and business growth.
<b>Venezia, Ruth R.</b>	<b>Councilor-at-large</b>	<b>NO RESPONSE</b>