

EDITORIAL

Dallas school budget unnecessarily raises taxes

It's not exactly a confidence game, but the budgeting scheme used by the Dallas School District appears to be less straightforward than some taxpayers might like it to be. As it has in other years, the budget for the year that began July 1 projects the district's fund balance — essentially its savings account — to end the year nearly \$1 million smaller than it began. But recent experience suggests that won't be the case. In the past three budget years, the actual fund balance at the end of the year has averaged \$928,000 more than was projected. The biggest miss was in the 1999-2000 budget, which projected \$3.8 million left at the end, but actually finished with nearly \$5.2 million.

If this was just an isolated case of extremely good fortune, there would be no reason to question the process or the figures. But in the same period of time, taxes have increased by 28 mills, more than 16 percent, while the fund balance has grown by \$1.4 million. This is known as conservative accounting, usually the best kind, but in this case it seems to be taken to an extreme. For example, the budget contains \$500,000 in "budgetary reserve," which the business manager says is unlikely to be needed. A similar account has been in place each budget for several years, and given the healthy balance, has yet to be tapped.

Granted, the district has taken on massive construction and renovation projects that have touched or will involve every building in its portfolio, but there has been no obvious negative effect on the budgets. That would lead to the conclusion that some of the district's money would be better left in the pockets of taxpayers than in savings accounts that yield — well, you know what the interest rate is like these days.

The most recent 8-mill hike in the property tax rate will generate pretty much all the unneeded half-million-dollar reserve, and it could easily have been foregone, given the consistent pattern of more than adequate revenues in recent years.

Publisher's Notebook

Ron Bartizek



It may be the best of times for U.S. women's tennis, and that can only mean other players are getting catty. "I think people are going to get bored by it," said Amelie Mauresmo after being overwhelmed by Serena Williams. She was referring, of course, to the prospect of another all-Williams final, this time at Wimbledon. "You know, I can't count how many people since yesterday told me, 'We don't want a Williams final,' or whatever." Obviously, Mauresmo had been looking into a mirror as she conducted her poll, or else sharing a latte and crying towel with Justin Henin, who fell just as hard to Venus Williams.

Just a suggestion girls; if you don't like Williams vs. Williams in the finals, play better. Doh.

Speaking of contrasts between Americans and others, what do you make of our expanding waistlines, even as commercials for diet plans and exercise equipment have become as ubiquitous as fast food joints? Meanwhile, we hear the French and Italians maintain their youthful figures while munching on goose liver and guzzling wine. Our dilemma has become so great that nutrition experts are now seriously reconsidering the Atkins diet, which experts have disparaged as if it was concocted by a voodoo doctor, not an M.D.

Dr. Atkins' high-protein regimen appeals to the carnivore in each of us; since red meat is at the top of his food pyramid, even if it's bathed in butter. If breakfast is the highlight of the day, the good doctor says it's okay to treat yourself to Eggs Benedict, as long as you leave out the muffin. That's because he believes the weight-gain culprit was carbohydrates in any form, including bread and sugar. And it turns out he may be right, or at least not entirely wrong.

I'll make a wild prediction here — a chart of the growth in Americans' average girth tracks the size of the largest french fries container at a fast food joint. And guess what potatoes have in abundance; carbs!

Letters, columns and editorials

The Dallas Post attempts to publish opinions on a variety of topics in many forms.

Editorials, which are the opinion of the management of The Post, appear on the editorial page and are written by the general manager unless otherwise indicated. Any artwork represents the opinion of the cartoonist, and columns are the opinion of the author.

Letters to the editor are welcome and will be published, subject to the following guidelines:

- Letters should not exceed 500 words.
- No writer may have more than one letter published during a 30-day period, except as a reply to another letter.
- Letters must be signed and include the writer's home town and a telephone number for verification.
- Names will be withheld only if there exists a clear threat to the writer.
- The Post retains the right to accept or reject any letter, and to edit letters for grammar and spelling, as well as to eliminate any libel, slander or objectionable wording.

Letters may be mailed to the office, or sent by e-mail to: dallaspost@leader.net

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Step into my abode. Photo by Ron Bartizek.

LETTERS

Peacemaking begins on the highway, too

Editor,

Peace begins at home and on the highway. Well, that is not exactly what my friend, Reverend Dr. Herb Frey, said to me many years ago. He simply said, "Peace begins at home." Dr. Frey was referring to the need for peacemaking to begin within each family unit among spouses, parents, siblings, and caregivers in general as we pursue our daily routines. The advice is socially fundamental in building peaceful, sustainable communities. Indeed, we cannot effectively build national and international peace initiatives unless we establish working patterns of peacemaking in our own families and communities based on rules that everyone is willing to play by.

Dr. Frey's advice barged back into my life recently as I was trying to negotiate the complexities of traffic on Back Mountain highways and byways. I was flabbergasted by how many people were driving recklessly in the brief hour I was out and about. Blatant crashing of stop lights at just about every intersection, speeding, rude and reckless maneuvering, startlingly loud jake-braking by trucks — these are increasingly common and dangerous behaviors by what seems to be a significant proportion of the auto and truck drivers. It suddenly occurred to me that these people are all committing violent acts against the general community.

Now, one response might be to blame Kingston Township police authorities for lack of effective

enforcement. While I do not doubt that they could perform their job enforcing traffic codes in a more thorough and consistent fashion, in their defense they must have the cooperation of the drivers who must obey the rules. If the majority of drivers are purposefully disobeying the traffic rules, we could never have enough police officers for enforcement. Communities need rules—and people need to obey the rules. Otherwise, chaos and pain are the result.

At the core of American democracy that we recently celebrated is a nation of morally defensible law and ethics. As citizens, we are individually and collectively obligated to obey these laws or change them through due process. This includes the traffic rules of the

road. When you get behind the wheel of your vehicle and behave recklessly, you have forfeited the intrinsic right to claim that you are either a citizen or an American. You are just another rude human who is terrorizing innocent people. I daresay that any driver you would ask on the road would have nothing good to say about the terrorists' actions of 9/11. Yet, many such people think nothing of terrorizing their community when they drive.

Peacemaking begins not only at home but on the highway. The Kingston Township police cannot do this for you. You are the only one that can make a difference.

James M. Case
Trucksville

Thanks for support that will save lives

Editor,

I want to thank everyone that played a role in the success of the Lehman Ambulance AED Golf Tournament held at Four Seasons Golf Club, June 15, 2002, for my senior project, from the Golfers who stayed through the rain, to all the hole sponsors

and local businesses that gave support, to all the friends, relatives, and the public who found my story touching and were willing to donate to see Lehman township get a heart defibrillator. The incredible response by the community totaled over \$7,000, a sum which will likely purchase three heart defibrilla-

tors, exceeding my original goal of one. A special thanks goes out to Mr. Ron Wenrich and Mrs. Allie Hefferan (Lehman Ambulance); Mrs. Diane Kane, President of the American Heart Association; The Times Leader, The Citizen's Voice, The Dallas Post, Ron Giordana and Elliot Wyler at WBRE/Operation Heartbeat

for giving television coverage, pursuing my story, and encouraging me to reach my goal. Thanks once again and remember that AEDs Do Save Lives.

Angelo Georgetti
Lehman



70 Years Ago - July 8, 1932

JOSEPH SCHOOLEY HEADS KINGSTON TOWNSHIP BOARD

Joseph B. Schooley was elected president of Kingston township school board at a four hour meeting at the Trucksville school house. The motion to elect Mr. Schooley was made by Mr. Nichols and seconded by Mr. Hill.

New Laurel Country Club which has been opened near Loyallville in Lake township is expected to become one of the outstanding recreation and club centers of this vicinity. The project is sponsored by a group including Virginia D. Harding and Harry C. Harding.

Showers did not prevent crowds from attending the Fourth of July celebration at Noxen. The festivities included a float parade, two ball games and athletic events.

60 Years Ago - July 10, 1942

SCORES OF LOCAL MEN ARE DRAWN FOR INDUCTION

With increased calls from the Selective Service System for replacements, the two local draft boards drawing selectees from this area are hard pressed to fill

their quotas. A total of 205 men from Draft boards in Shickshinny and Wyoming have been called for physical examination.

Installation of a new fire hydrant on Davenport street had been authorized by Dallas Borough Council. This brings the number of hydrants installed during the year to five and will afford protection for property valued at more than \$53,000 in the vicinity of Jackson, Parrish, Davenport, Water, Pinecrest and Huntsville Streets.

William Cairl, former wire chief of the Commonwealth Telephone Copany, has been promoted to first lieutenant in the Signal Corps.

Years Ago - July 18, 1952

SIXTH ANNUAL LIBRARY AUCTION TOPS ALL OTHERS

Off to a slow start because of the threat of bad weather and in competition with the Republican National Convention, the Sixth Annual Library Auction crashed through to a spectacular ending establishing a record gross income of more than \$10,300.

Four YMCA playgrounds received proper initiation, in spite of the rain and wet grounds. The newly organized playgrounds are at Lehman, Dallas, Shavertown and Orange.

Mills Brothers Three Ring Circus will arrive at the show grounds on Route 415 northwest of Dallas to present two shows. Among the feature acts are the Wang Hong Schu troupe, clowns from England, Australia, Italy, Chili and the United States and aerial artists.

40 Years Ago - July 12, 1962

SUTTON MADE PRESIDENT; HOGOBOOM APPOINTED TO LAKE-LEHMAN BOARD

Williard Sutton, vice president of Lake-Lehman School Board was elected president at a meeting of the Directors following the resignation of Edgar Lashford who is leaving this area.

Pvt. Leslie Dickson, USMC, son of Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Dickson Dallas, completed four weeks of advanced combat training with the First Infantry Training Regiment at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Two thousand horse lovers crowded the new showgrounds on Route 118 to see the eighteenth annual Lehman Horse Show. Site of the whos was donated by James, Joseph and Thomas Park.

30 Years Ago - July 6, 1972

THE FLOOD OF '72, AFTERWORD: LITTLE HELP FOR NEEDY FLOOD VICTIMS

According to a write up and pictorial done by the staff of Greenstreet News Intermediate, there seemed to be little help done for the victims of the '72 Flood. Some of the articles written are as follows: Red Tape Holdup: President Nixon sent Vice President Sprio Agnew, to view the aftermath of the Susquehanna in Pennsylvania. But the Vice President later told newsmen that he thought the damage estimates of Gov. Shapp and his administration were exaggerated out of all proportions.

The Red Cross was all but non-existent, even a week after the flood. There were no Red Cross workers to be seen anywhere except in a few remote spots.

As late as a week after the flood waters spilled out of their banks, most government officials still didn't have the needed answers for flood victims. Elliott Knauer, the Pennsylvania Deputy Secretary of Public Welfare, could not answer the questions posed by tv newsmen, neither could Congressman McDade, who, before a group of farmers provide needed answers.

20 Years Ago - July 7, 1982

LAKE-LEHMAN TAXPAYERS SUBJECT OF DEBATE AT BOARD MEETING

Taxpayers of the Lake-Lehman School District were the subject of debate at a special meeting of the Board of Directors. It appears the board is unable to determine when it is safe and expedient to allow the voters (or visitors, as they are called on the agenda) to have their say during the course of a public meeting.

The Cross Mountain View Guest Home, Inc., Sweet Valley, was fully licensed to pursue a personal care boarding home by the department of Public Welfare. Alberta Cross is the owner. First Eastern had been the target of speculation since an FBI disclosure that an investigation is ongoing at that institution. Bank officials admitted the investigation involves two former employees, leaving anyone who has recently left the institution's employ, suspect.