



Thoughts



They watch your feet, not your lips

“They watch your feet, not your lips” – Tom Peters. That statement pretty much covers the idea of Community Support for Social Services. The ***lips*** created a petition, filed a court action and continue to state that the “the city is judged on care and empathy for the needy”. But the ***feet*** demonstrate that the majority of the 50,000 or so local residents do not care one bit about support of social services. I have some rather large feet and am very disappointed in the 1800 people that signed a petition to extract money from their neighbors (by forcing city tax dollar allocations to selected agencies), but will not step up to the plate and donate.

A quick phone call to the City Finance Department can get you the data. Only 102 of the Citizens of the Little Apple actually donated money to SSAB through a City sponsored water bill donation program during 2012. Over 15,000 water meters are present in the city, yet only 102 customers actually donated. The total amount collect was **\$2,788**. The City Commissioners (well, at least four of the Commissioner’s) donated a composite \$65 a month to the program. The program was in place for about 10 months. This means that the uncaring, vilified City Commissioners donated 23% of the total amount collected. I wonder why the fifth and very vocal supporter of social services City Commissioner could not bother to spare a dime.

Clearly the advocates for increased support of Social Services do not envision that support coming from their own resources. If the petitioners of the ***Save Our Social Services (SOS)*** were genuine in their professed support of SSAB, at least 1800 customers would have taken part in the program. The organization acronym should be changed to ***SYSS*** – save *your* social services, as their ***feet*** indicate lack of ownership and they should not use the term our, it is somebody else’s problem, yours. Neither SOS nor the agencies receiving tax support exhibited any real effort in advancing the concept of community support through donations. That general belief that the *Government* instead of *Individuals* is responsible for social services seems to be the guiding principle of the current City Social Services Advisory Board. The SSAB has also made no effort to support, publicize or encourage support of the donation effort.

The City is still in the process of working through a court action that is attempting to force the City Commission to place on the ballot a vote to allocate 2% of the General Fund for SSAB agencies. Based on the 2013 general fund amount of \$25,993,571 – the SSAB allocation would have been \$519,871. The actual amount was \$459,508, about 1 mill. The 2014 budget

discussion at present will include the normal, business as usual request for allocation of anywhere between \$375,000 to \$500,000 in tax support for selected agencies. The same ten agencies will insist that they cannot survive without direct City tax subsidy. Yet organizations like **Flint Hills Breadbasket** and **Mercy Regional Health Center Community Clinic** seem to provide excellent service without asking for City tax dollars. I wonder why the ten agencies rely so heavily on City subsidy.

A hearty thanks to the 102 Little Apple Water Bill Customers that backed up their desire for social services support with their money. Voters be wary of those that run for local office that have more *lips* than *feet*.

There is no virtue in compulsory government charity, and there is no virtue in advocating it. A politician who portrays himself as "**caring**" and "**sensitive**" because he wants to expand the government's charitable programs is merely saying that he's willing to try to do good with **other people's money**. Well, who isn't? And a voter who takes pride in supporting such programs is telling us that he'll do good with his own money -- **if a gun is held to his head**.
-- P.J. O'Rourke

For tax year 2013 let's see some feet in the Little Apple, donate to the City Water Bill SSAB fund, the YES fund and the agencies that are part of the Manhattan Community Foundation. The citizens of the Little Apple will make the difference not the government. **Mr. K.**