

DEAR FRIENDS

Vol 12 No 9 At the Tucson City Council

July 7th, 1975

Greetings:

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The Mayor and Council
Tucson City Hall Bldg
Tucson, Arizona 85701

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Dear Mayor and Councilmembers:

It isn't New York City alone. It is almost every community. The handwriting is on the wall - desperate and unmistakable. Huge cost of govt, heavy taxes, immense debt, bankers exacting the highest rate of interest in the history of the nation. Big bureaucracies with low morale, inefficiency, waste and worse. The threat of layoffs and with it clamor for higher pay and more benefits.

The mayors of the cities met in Boston about their plight, and asked the Federal Govt for two billions in aid. It is a mirage - tragic - and absurd because the most disastrous govt is Washington itself.

The time has come to wind down govt in size, incest, in waste before these destroy the nation. It doesn't take much for society to become unstuck - to unleash hoarse shouting men who profess to be the leaders of police benevolent associations and firefighters, when unthinking passions are aroused that dump garbage on city streets and worse.

The City of Tucson must change as must all cities. Yet you continue to operate in an ever deepening rut. You pass a budget of \$166 million - frightening - equal to \$500 for each man, woman and child. A few appear at the budget hearing to protest and you shrug them off - odd characters who do not have polished deliveries and smooth rhetoric. Yet they care for Tucson as much as you do. Where are the so-called respectable folk - realtors, chamber of commerce, bankers, contractors - why don't they come to the budget hearing to suggest ways to trim and improve the budget. Is the budget so perfect that it cannot lend itself to more prudent spending and efficient operation. Or is it that they do not care for Tucson as do the few protesters who do appear.

City fathers and city mother, you cannot go on like this - like headless horsemen galloping off in all directions, without priorities, without even a sensible, orderly agenda. When a public servant assumes office, he does not become endowed with instant wisdom. To guide the day by day activities that affect the lives of 300,000 people requires much knowledge in diverse fields. You have to be grateful for any help, advice, suggestions you may get from citizens who care about the city. You have to be humble enough to realize how limited are your qualifications in running this huge \$166 million enterprise that has to be paid out of the sweat of the brows of the people.

The time has come to wind govt down - to improve operations all along the line. The answer is not more and more money, more and more debt, more and more taxes. There are more effective ways to do the job. The time has come to show initiative and enterprise, to undertake innovations promptly and vigorously. I hope you are up to meeting this challenge.

Sincerely,

I intended to address the above to the Tucson City Council at its July 7th meeting. However, at noon, when I had to leave, the agenda had barely moved. More time had been given to a minor zoning case than had been devoted to the entire budget hearing the previous week. The way it seems to operate, public spirited citizens who appear in the public interest are limited to 5 minutes usually, while those who have private matters like zoning changes, licenses, privileges do not seem to be limited in their presentations. I mailed these remarks to the Council, hoping they will read them. This copy is for your interest.

Joseph Zashin