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December 2003

New Fire Station Dedication



Council President Matt Habash and Safety and Judiciary Committee Chair Michael C. Mentel join Mayor Coleman and Fire Chief Ned Pettus to dedicate the City's newest fire station.

The City's newest fire station is open for business. Council members [Habash](#) and [Mentel](#) joined other city officials to formally dedicate Station 34 – the first new station to open since 1994.

5201 Wilcox Road now is home to a medic and engine truck. Firefighters operating out of the station will quicken emergency responses in northwest Columbus and reduce reliance on suburban partners for assistance. "Public safety is and will continue to be the city's top priority," Mentel said. "That's why we must pursue ideas like fees on new housing starts to help keep top quality services apace with growth."

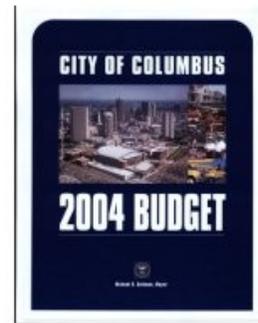
Habash Comments on Mayor's Proposed 2004 City Budget

The following is an excerpt of a statement from Columbus City Council President Matt Habash on Mayor Coleman's proposed 2004 budget:

"Mayor Coleman has worked very hard to provide a balanced \$ 532.4 million general fund budget for 2004. More than ever, Council will make decisions with key priorities in mind - protecting critical city services and creating jobs.

"Council has consistently kept neighborhood safety as the highest priority, cut less essential expenditures and, in recent years, reduced the general fund overall budget by nearly \$19 million. Yet, we also have continued support for economic development, helping to stabilize our job base, thanks in part to targeted investments in places like Linden, Franklinton and Northland. We also have made smart investments in family services and health care.

"We must continue to use our resources in creative ways, using public dollars to attract greater private investments. This approach has served us well, for example, in our tax increment financing districts, where about \$15 million in public funds helped generate more than \$2 billion in private investment.



"Likewise, we will remain dedicated to funding essential city services first and to finding ways to more effectively use the resources we have at hand." Look for more details in the month ahead.

Council will conduct one final public hearing on the Proposed Budget:

December 18, 5:30 Council Chambers.

View the mayor's proposed 2004 budget and offer comment at the following website:

<http://www.columbuscitycouncil.org/mayorproposed2004budget/>

Thomas gets tough on absent landlords

Council member [Patsy Thomas](#) joined Development director Mark Barbash to announce tough new rules designed to force absent landlords to take better care of their properties. A burned out property at 1090 McAllister Avenue became the 23rd abandoned, dilapidated structure demolished by the city this year.



"Tougher City Codes will help us do more to get rid of eyesores and fight negligent landlords who fail to take care of their properties," said Thomas.

The new regulations require owners to register vacant property with the City, comply with all exterior codes, and empower the Safe Neighborhood Review Board to hear cases relating to vacant structures and order action from the owner.

A burned out property at 1090 McAllister Avenue became the 23rd abandoned, dilapidated structure demolished by the city this year. Thomas sees this effort as an integral part of a comprehensive effort to fight neighborhood crime as neglected structures can attract drug activity and other criminal behavior.

Council rejects Pay Raise for the 2nd consecutive year.

For the second consecutive year, Council members declined a scheduled pay raise. Legislation considered tonight will freeze Council wages at the 2002 level and set potential wage increases of 2 percent for 2005 to 2007 – but only if Council members choose to accept the increases. "In light of the tight City budget, Council members wanted to demonstrate our willingness to make sacrifice, especially as we fight to save jobs and preserve City services," President Habash said. "That's more important."

Fighting for Kids

Help is on the way for the approximately 17.1% of Franklin County children living in poverty via the Leave No Child Behind Act. Designed as a comprehensive approach to the health, safety, and care of children, the Act makes nearly all Ohio children eligible for health coverage without regard to ability to pay. Nearly 12% of Franklin County kids have no health insurance.



Council member Charleta Tavares presents a resolution supporting the Leave No Child Behind Act to Eileen Cooper Reed of the Children's Defense Fund-Ohio.

The Act also gives Ohio flexibility and incentives to help 82,345 low income families get and keep jobs, provides \$67 million over five years to help families struggling with alcohol or drug abuse problems, and once fully implemented, promises Ohio \$1.4 billion in childcare funding.

O'Shaughnessy Holds Sidewalk Hearing

Council member [Maryellen O'Shaughnessy](#) will convene a public hearing to hear testimony on city sidewalks. Public Service Department staff will present an overview of current sidewalk codes; sidewalk assessments; enforcement procedures and related matters. Following their presentation, City Council will hear public testimony.



Sidewalk Public Hearing

DATE: Thursday, January 8, 2004

TIME: 5:30 p.m.

PLACE: Council Chambers

Speaker slips will be accepted until 5:30 pm.

Mentel Moves Ahead with EMS Review

In concert with the deployment of four additional "jaws of life" type vehicle extraction tools earlier this fall, Councilman Mentel pledged to form a working group to review the city's existing heavy rescue practices to ensure the best possible use of EMS resources. Joining Mentel in the effort are Safety director Mitch Brown, Fire Chief Ned Pettus, and Fire Union president Jack Reall. The group's first meeting took place December 4th. A report is expected next June.

Congratulations Charleta!

Councilwoman [Charleta Tavares](#) has been named Chair of the Steering Committee on Human Development for the National League of Cities. With 1,700 member cities, the League is one of the most powerful voices in Washington for the needs of cities. Charleta will serve a one-year term and brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the position.



Parking Ticket Scofflaw Collection Effort a Success

During 2003 City Council staff and the Parking Violations Bureau have been working with vehicle leasing companies to collect unpaid parking tickets. This work added more than \$225,000 to City revenues this year. Combined with a host of other new initiatives, PVB brought in nearly one half million more than expected in 2003.