



# MATT HAAG



**Rochester City Council Member At-Large**  
**June 2012 Newsletter**

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## City of Rochester 2012 – 2013 Budget Overview

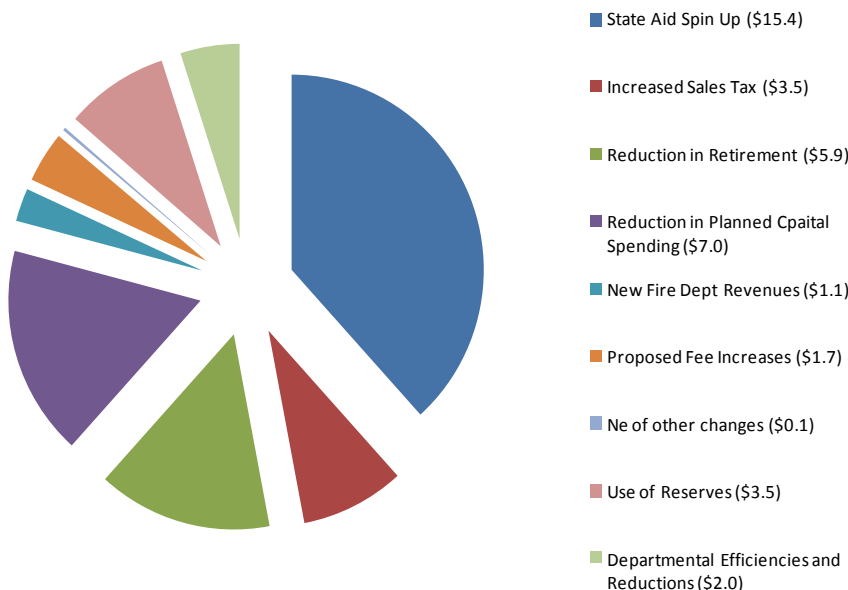
The City of Rochester’s operating budget for the 2012-2013 fiscal year will total \$488 million which is a 2 percent increase from the current year or an estimated, \$9.6 million. The City started this fiscal year, facing a \$40 million budget gap. However, thanks to countless hours of work by the City administration’s finance staff, a budget is being presented that **effectively closes this gap without raising taxes and without cutting any vital services for the City**. This year we were lucky to have an unexpected one-time cash influx

in the amount of \$15.4 million dollars from the State as directed by Governor Cuomo, as well as improved sales-tax revenues due to increased consumer spending. This combined with the decisions by the mayor and city council in last year’s budget all contributed to the closure of this gap. A key feature of this year’s budget is that the City has decided to freeze the tax levy. The City has also decided to use just \$3.5 million from City reserve funds.

I could not agree more with the Mayor’s statement from his budget address that, “We need to wean ourselves from tax

increases and find other ways to fund our cities.” He went on to note, “I cannot promise that we will never raise taxes – that will depend on the choices that our future brings – but we don’t have to raise taxes this year.” One of the biggest issues that continues to face the City is that the state needs to find new methods to finance the needs of cities, including a more equitable funding formula for upstate cities. In fact, even though the average property value rose 4.3 percent in the City’s last assessment; the tax freeze will lower the rate of taxes by 3.6 percent for the typical homeowners. The services that we rely on to make our community a better place to live and raise a family will remain intact, there will be no closures to recreation centers, libraries, or neighborhood service centers. As Mayor Richards has stated, “We will continue to invest in our community; its cultural and social well-being, as well as its infrastructure, public safety, and economic future.” A big part of what makes a City an attractive place to live is the cultural institutions, the activities, and the services that are provided to its residents. I believe this is a

**How the 2012-2013 \$40.2 Million Budget Gap Was Closed (\$ Millions)**



critical investment in retaining and attracting residents.

The City continues to shape its workforce and as a result is cutting our work force down to its lowest level in 40 years. To be fully honest, there will be increases in water rates and other fees which will total about \$21.45 for the typical homeowner.

Another positive is spending is structured in a way that current staffing levels will be maintained for both the fire department and police department. There will be new recruit academies starting in August, of equal importance these classes promise to be the most culturally diverse in the City's history.

City Council will hold its annual hearings for the budget on June 6, 12, and 13. The City Council, which conducts one of the most extensive public reviews of any local municipal budget, will convene a process that includes lengthy departmental review sessions, as well as an opportunity for public input before the final budget votes are cast. The council will also have an extensive review of the Rochester City School District Budget this year as well. The Council's budget hearings will be broadcast live on cable access channel, City 12, and they will be available streamed live online which is accessible from the City's website [www.cityofrochester.gov](http://www.cityofrochester.gov). All of the hearings are open to the public and interested citizens are welcome to attend. The budget review is scheduled as follows:

### June 6<sup>th</sup>

9-9:10am – Council/Clerk  
9:15-10:45am – Administration  
10:50-11:55am – Finance  
12-12:55pm – Break for Lunch  
1-2:45pm – Department of Environmental Services  
2:50-3:20pm – Library  
3:25- 5pm – Department of Recreation and Youth Services

### June 12<sup>th</sup>

9-9:30am – Undistributed  
9:35-10:50am – Police Department  
10:55am-12:30pm – Fire Department  
12:35-1:25pm – Lunch  
1:30-2:05pm – Emergency Communications  
2:10-3:10pm – Information Technology  
3:15-5pm – Neighborhood and Business Development

### June 13<sup>th</sup>

2pm – Rochester City School District  
5:30pm – Formal Public Hearing with City Council and Board of Education

After the review of the proposed budget, a final copy of the proposed spending plan for the City of Rochester as well as the Rochester City School District will be voted on at the City Council meeting on Tuesday, June 19, 2012.



### Local Farmer's Markets Opening for the Season

Though it may seem like it for those of us on council, the budget isn't the only thing happening in June. Many of our local community farmer's markets are starting back up. Fresh produces, meats, cheeses, in an outdoor market are always a signal that summer has begun. The **South Wedge Farmers' Market** launches its sixth season on June 7, from 4 to 7 pm. The market welcomes Mayor Tom Richards, who will preside over the annual Lettuce Toss to open the season. Local farmers and producers will again bring "the food less traveled" to market -- the finest local fruits, vegetables, meat, eggs, wine, baked goods, and more, including organic products. There will be live local music, activities for kids, and community groups each week. The market is held Thursdays through October 18 at 100 Alexander St. at South Clinton (behind Boulder Coffee). EBT customers are welcome. The market is a project of the South Wedge Planning Committee and is grateful for the generous sponsorship by the Genesee Co-op Federal Credit Union.

### And Don't Forget, You Can Follow Me on Facebook:

It's a great way to hear what's going on around the City. Search Matt Haag and choose to "like" my page. Also, keep me informed of what's happening with your neighborhood or group; I'd love to hear from you.

Thanks,