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City Manager

CITY OF WORCESTER

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TO THE WORCESTER CITY COUNCIL

COUNCILORS:

The following provides a detailed summary of the impacts to City services based on the loss of 129 City-side positions required to resolve a \$7 Million budget deficit and to submit a balanced budget recommendation for Fiscal Year 2012.

Worcester Fire Department

The reduction of \$2.2M from the WFD Budget will result in the loss of thirty-five (35) firefighters (27 firefighters, two (2) captains and six (6) lieutenants). This is in addition to 4 (four) vacant firefighter positions. These staffing losses will result in the closure of two companies, consisting of one (1) ladder company and one (1) engine company. Overtime has been reduced by \$500,000 to mitigate further lay-offs.

This effectively will change the budgeted strength of the WFD to 367 uniformed personnel (from the current budgeted strength of 406). This is the budgeted strength number I intend to use for the foreseeable future in successive budget recommendations. This sets a new level of response for the City, and will compromise the present average response time of 5 minutes, 49 seconds. The Chief will realign the remaining 18 companies and use "brown-outs" as necessary. Brown-outs require movement of multiple personnel which affects the continuity of operations of the Department and breaks down the backbone of the Department, the basic company unit. Though brown-outs have been used in the past, they can only be sustained for short periods of time, such as summer vacation period.

Worcester Police Department

The reduction of \$2.5M from the WPD Budget will result in the loss of thirty-five (35) police officers (27 police officers and eight (8) sergeants). This is in addition to 2 (two) vacant police officer positions and four (4) civilian staff positions. These lay-offs and demotions will result in further consolidation of divisions and a reduction in some services to the community. The brunt of these changes will be in the Traffic Division and the Community Impact Division. Overtime has been reduced by \$500,000 to mitigate further lay-offs.

These changes will require the Traffic Division to be incorporated into the Community Impact Division and will eliminate the traffic night shift. The Traffic Division's enforcement functions will be reduced and the priority will be accident re-construction



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and investigation of collisions involving fatalities or near fatalities. Limited enforcement will be prioritized to high accident locations and violations with a direct link to collisions.

The infrastructure to support community policing will be eliminated from the Community Impact Division. The officers currently serving the Neighborhood Watch Program will remain while the School Liaison Program will be reduced to two (2) officers from a sergeant and four (4) officers. The Neighborhood Watch officers will continue to service the existing groups and will work through the Crime Analysis Unit to disseminate crime and disorder information to patrol and investigative personnel. The Anti-Violence Team will remain intact. All other personnel will be re-assigned to fill the vacancies in the Patrol Division and the Service Division created by the layoffs.

Priority staffing will be given to the Patrol and Service Divisions in order to maintain a safe and effective response to calls for service. There is no anticipated reduction in the Investigative Divisions because we have streamlined and consolidated the operations of these divisions through attrition. The internal impact of these changes will result in approximately 100 re-assignments and shift changes which ultimately will affect the morale of the Department.

The Department priorities will continue to be responding safely and effectively to calls for service, a proactive investigative strategy, and a commitment (significantly reduced) to community policing.

Department of Public Works and Parks

The reduction of \$700,000 from the DPWP Budget will result in the elimination of 19 full-time employees. This staffing reduction is compounded by the loss of five (5) positions due to early retirement. These staffing reductions will result in the closure of two (2) Yard Waste sites (Clark Street and Foley) on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Four (4) positions will be eliminated that currently support the *Keep Worcester Clean* Program, including two (2) Nuisance Inspectors. Staff will be unable to respond to complaints relative to litter, overgrowth, trash, bulk items on sidewalks, or graffiti removal. In the Traffic and Parking Programs, there will be six (6) positions eliminated, including two (2) Parking Control Officers and two (2) Traffic Laborers. Parking enforcement will be limited to the Downtown only, which will result in a loss of approximately \$120,000 in parking violations. These reductions will also eliminate the installation of all street, advisory and regulatory signs and instead this function will be outsourced to a private contractor based on appropriation.

These reductions will also negatively impact the Downtown Streetscape Programs, and eliminate all Downtown street and sidewalk maintenance, including sweeping and litter collection. Trash receptacles in the Downtown will only be collected three times a week versus the current six times a week.

The City's Parks, Cemetery, and Recreation will be negatively impacted. The reduction of three (3) Parks Laborers will eliminate all maintenance at 15 parks and playgrounds; this includes litter removal, mowing, trimming. Likewise, all service requests for maintenance associated with Veterans' Squares and Monuments will be eliminated.

Department of Inspectional Services

The reduction of \$240,000 from the Inspectional Services Budget will result in the elimination of four (4) staff positions and two (2) clerical positions. This staffing

reduction is compounded by the loss of three (3) positions due to early retirements. The Department has had a 27% staffing reduction in three years.

The priority in light of these reductions is to ensure critical life safety issues are addressed. We will re-align staff within the Housing and Health Inspections Division to continue the proactive work that is being done in our neighborhoods to ensure compliance and to address problem properties. The loss of four inspector positions, however, will require the re-distribution of approximately 3,700 annual inspections/re-inspections to remaining inspectors. The Building and Zoning Division is at minimum staffing levels necessary to meet the aforementioned critical life safety issues and mandated inspectional requirements.

Reservoir and water distribution point sampling will be transitioned to DPWP. Water, Air, Hazardous Waste complaints and Title 5 review will continue to be handled by remaining IS staff. Work above the capacity of this unit will be undertaken, as necessary, by staff from other IS divisions. In addition, the DPWP transfer will allow for the remaining staff position to assist in meeting the FDA and State requirements for semi-annual food protection inspections. Insufficient staffing levels over the last three years have created a backlog causing inspections to occur twice (2) every 18 months versus every 12 months as mandated. All food complaints have and will continue to receive the highest priority. The ability to conduct egg addling in the spring for Geese reduction will also be eliminated.

Staffing level for the Lead Inspection unit will be reduced to one (1), and inspection requirements above the capacity of one inspector will be prioritized and coordinated with the Lead Abatement Program within DNHD.

Additionally, attendance at Neighborhood Crime Watch meetings will be reduced to once every three months in some cases, and response times to consumer protection (non-safety) complaints and annual inspections, including oil trucks, gas pumps, taxis, and scales, will increase. The PRT and Nuisance Enforcement sanitary inspector positions will be sustained however, it will be necessary for these inspectors to take on other housing inspections to offset the loss of positions. This will inevitably impact their ability to conduct the proactive nuisance enforcement and PRT work.

Worcester Public Library

The reduction of \$200,000 from the Library's Budget will result in the elimination of four (4) staff positions. This staffing reduction is further compounded by the elimination of five (5) positions due to early retirements and one (1) position lost to a regular retirement. All in, these reductions will cut staffing levels by 17% from Fiscal Year 2010.

These cuts will require a reduction in the number of hours that the Frances Perkins Branch Library (Greendale) is open. This is necessary in order to maintain service at the Main Library. The Perkins Branch Library at Greendale is the fourth busiest branch in the State and services patrons throughout the City, even though it is a neighborhood-based library. In addition, outreach services to Worcester Public Schools and other non-profit agencies will be reduced to re-assign those staff to cover service points at the three facilities.

The Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) – the average of the prior three years' budgets plus 2.5% will not be met. This will require the City to file for a waiver with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners to be eligible for State Aid. Without

State Aid, seven (7) additional staff will be lost, resulting in further reductions to service at the Main Library. Service levels will be dramatically reduced if this were to occur. In addition, without a waiver, Worcester residents would not be able to borrow materials from other communities' libraries.

Our goal is to maintain service levels at the Main Library, but even with level-funded overtime funding, we will be required to close the Main Library on ten (10) Sundays. The Library is currently open thirty (30) Sundays. With fewer librarians, there will be longer queues for patrons at the public service desks.

These cuts will also result in the purchase of fewer books, subscription databases and high demand materials, such as DVDs and audio books. Fewer materials limit students' access to project materials and required summer reading. It should be noted that, while we are meeting the State's minimum spending requirement of 12%, Worcester spends less on materials than other comparable urban libraries in New England (Hartford, Springfield and Providence). Worcester's materials expenditures of \$3.59 per resident are below Hartford (\$6.47), Springfield (\$4.27), and Providence (\$3.80). In addition, technology upgrades and regular maintenance of facilities will be reduced or delayed.

Clerical/ Administrative

In addition to the aforementioned cuts, clerical and administrative staffing positions will be eliminated from the following City departments: Treasury (3 positions); Assessor's Office (1 position); Law Department (1 position); Police Department (1 position – mentioned above); and Inspectional Services (2 positions – mentioned above). These reductions will have a direct impact on customer service, response times, waiting times, and financial compliance consistency in key financial and administrative departments in City Hall.

Respectfully submitted,



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