

From: [Robert Daniels](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [Edward Lavalley](#); [Linda Senne](#); [Shawn Carvey](#); [Joe Welch](#); [Kathleen Weeden](#); [Tom Mattmuller](#); [Lenox E. Bramble](#); [Shirley Gibson](#); [Judy Gamel](#); [Jeff Shrum](#); [Frank Giddens](#)
Subject: Council Budget Public Meeting
Date: Monday, September 9, 2019 6:26:10 PM

Oct 9,2019 public budget hearing (2020 draft)

City Clerk please place my comments into the public record for this meeting.

Dear Staff, fellow Council Members, Mayor and Venice Citizens,

I find that this year's budget hearing is a special time for me as a 9 year elected councilman to issue a written response to many of the False statements being made by the Venice Taxpayer group (about 12 members).

First one statement from Mr. Rafferty was that Bay Indies taxes will be raised by the amount of 188% . This merely is a tactic to have the Residents at Bay Indies blame the City of Venice for the increase. Many thanks again to former Bay Indies HOA President for correcting this statement as it was their landlord property owner who will be raising costs because the Sarasota County appraiser reassessed land values and will be raising taxes..

This land tax increase has nothing to do with the City of Venice tax millage rate. No tax millage rate is being increase by Venice.

The second statement came from Mr Rafferty that we had raised taxes over 44% since 2010. His numbers included the voted debt tax for police station and road resurfacing that residents voted for.

I find that most of Mr. Rafferty's numbers do not reflect what is truth and continues to waste tax payers' money in paying for staffs' time to research these issues.

What needs to be understood in all of our budgeting is that we are always faced with a 10% health care increase, and a 3-4% employee annual raises to keep competitive with other employers. Also inflation reduces revenues. Finance has reported for the 3rd year that the budget is based on property tax from 300 new homes. Without that a millage increase would be needed.

Another item that Venice Tax Payer group does not recognize is the productivity cost savings by the City.

For example

...\$100,000 savings in new police station by processing supplies thru the tax exempt City procurement process

....\$25 million over 20 years health care savings, corrected prior council free heath care for

charter officers and council members

....Corrected the revenue loss in the Public Safety pension plan

which changed the union contract, removed the fire pension cost of living clause, and transitioned pension plan to move from a private plan to the Florida State Plan. This saved over a million dollars and improved both fire and police pension fund balance.

.....State Grants of \$3.5 million were awarded for roads and utilities. A consultant for this was paid \$180,000 over 3 years.

..... Red tide environmental funding was obtained for \$100,000 from the State and \$50,000 from Swift Mud

In summary many incorrect statements and false data were reported and reflected badly on professionals who work very hard for this City. Mr. Rafferty never issues a public statement of apology when he has made an error in his assumptions. Nor does he Ever recognize the positive actions the City accomplishes in obtaining outside revenue.

Our City finances have been audited every year per state statute and has won awards every year. Our bond rating gave the City a double A + out of a triple A rating. Moody evaluated our financialsrevenue, expenses, debts and etc and gave Venice an excellent Rating.

I ask each of you who should you believe the State of Florida, US bonding company, Moody's financial review or Rafferty's Venice Tax Payer Group.?

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