

Mr. Finley,

I wanted to share my regret that you did not take the time to contact me in regards to the editorial you wrote in the Detroit News on the Taylor Mayoral campaign. I think your readers and the residents of Taylor would have appreciated a balanced discussion. I also find it very disappointing that you even spelled my name incorrectly.

I was wondering, why do you reference police & fire pensions as "budget busting?" Are you not aware of Act 345? The Act designates an assessment for the purpose of funding police & fire pension benefits. Therefore, these benefits don't have such an affect on municipal budgets.

Contrary, Mr. Priebe's record of awarding 'Wall Street' like salaries to political cronies and the legacy costs that impact has on our budgets, does. In the last four years alone he has been responsible for doubling, tripling, even quadrupling future pension benefits of HIS political appointees.

There are three issues here: 1) Whether the services our police officers & fire fighters provide are worth more than a political appointees services. 2) The manipulation of Act 345 funds by prior administrations (starting with Priebe) for their own political gain. 3) P.A. 312 already accounts for a municipalities ability to pay in Sec. 9, clause 3:

423.239 Findings and orders; factors considered.
Sec. 9. Where there is no agreement between the parties, or where there is an agreement but the parties have begun negotiations or discussions looking to a new agreement or amendment of the existing agreement, and wage rates or other conditions of employment under the proposed new or amended agreement are in dispute, the arbitration panel shall base its findings, opinions and order upon the following factors, as applicable:

- (a) The lawful authority of the employer.*
- (b) Stipulations of the parties.*
- (c) The interests and welfare of the public and the financial ability of the unit of government to meet those costs.*
- (d) Comparison of the wages, hours and conditions of employment of the employees involved in the arbitration proceeding with the wages, hours and conditions of employment of other employees performing similar services and with other employees generally:*
 - (i) In public employment in comparable communities.*
 - (ii) In private employment in comparable communities.*
- (e) The average consumer prices for goods and services, commonly known as the cost of living.*
- (f) The overall compensation presently received by the employees, including direct wage compensation, vacations, holidays and other excused time, insurance and pensions, medical and hospitalization benefits, the continuity and stability of employment, and all other benefits received.*
- (g) Changes in any of the foregoing circumstances during the pendency of the arbitration proceedings.*
- (h) Such other factors, not confined to the foregoing, which are normally or traditionally taken into consideration in the determination of wages, hours and conditions of employment through voluntary collective bargaining, mediation, fact-finding, arbitration or otherwise between the parties, in the public service or in private employment.*

History: 1969, Act 312, Eff. Oct. 1, 1969.

Constitutionality: This act is clearly constitutional. Local 1277, Metropolitan Council No 23, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO v City of Center Line, 414 Mich 642; 327 NW2d 822 (1982).

None of which you discussed. Or, that fact that Mr. Priebe filed for 312 arbitration, with the Taylor Police Officers Labor Association and the Command

Officers Association. Nor, do you mention that the Council approved a contract with the Taylor Fire Fighters Union, brought to us by the administration, good through 2010. Also, why do you not discuss the fact those collecting police & fire pensions will not receive social security benefits?

Mr. Priebe began pillaging Act 345 funds 25 years ago by taking credits against the fully funded pension fund in order to give the appearance of lowering taxes. This short-sightedness has had as much to do with the current situation and the increases in the millage as anything. The City of Taylor has also captured Act 345 funds for its TIFA fund, which I find irresponsible and a complete disregard to the needs of Taylor's taxpayers.

I understand there are issues to be dealt with, but these are contractual issues. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Priebe is responsible for much of the costs the City of Taylor is incurring. In '95 he gave double promotions to members of the fire department in order to get HIS contract pushed through the union. In '92 HE negotiated the 25 year moratorium on pension discussions with the Police unit.

I find the use of percentages from Mr. Priebe's own campaign literature, without any investigation on behalf of the newspaper irresponsible. Are you aware the average fire fighter pension in the City of Taylor is \$47,000? Do the math, I did. Why have you not mentioned that Priebe, who retired at 46, has himself collected a pension of \$48,000 a year for the past 13 years costing the taxpayers \$624,000 to date and will likely cost Taylor residents another \$1,440,000 before it's done. Why did you not mention that Mr. Priebe did not make contributions to the pension fund for nine of the years of credit in which he has been collecting his pension, but received a loophole adopted by HIS council 'team'. Why do you not discuss that members of his 'team' and administration are receiving some of the highest of those pensions?

Frank Canning-retired police-current council candidate with team - \$87,758
Jac Desrosiers-retired police-current Director of Operations - \$80,273
Keith Weycker-retired police-husband of councilwoman Suzanne Weycker, member of the team - \$57,270
John Belanger-retired police-current Director of Taylor Cares program - \$50,353

It is disappointing to see such an editorial from a member of such a respected news source. The actions of this mayor have been borderline criminal for nearly 20 years. He is the one who is bleeding our municipal budget dry and has been doing it for 30 years. Personally, I do not see the issue of public safety as 'the special interests' you speak of, but giving away contracts and financial awards to campaign supporters as Priebe has for so long, is.

Out of curiosity, what good ideas do you think Mr. Priebe has come up with in the last 20 years?

Taylor needs a leader with who will look at the issues facing the city with fresh eyes and fresh ideas; one who is committed to operating the city in the BEST interests of its residents. On November 3rd I will be that person.

Respectfully,

Jeff Lamarand