

Public Comment at March 16, 2017 Special City Council Meeting

I am here representing the membership of the Fostoria Area Chamber of Commerce and Fostoria Economic Development, which is over 240 businesses. While I represent our memberships, the Chamber serves as the collective voice for business in our community and works to advocate on their behalf.

During Tuesday evenings Council Meeting, the Chamber of Commerce and FEDC were specifically called out and asked to provide to Council and the Administration our opinions on the plans being discussed. As member driven organizations, we took the various plans and presented the highlights to our members and asked for their opinions, questions, and suggestions. We have produced 2 documents for you this evening, 1 is a list of questions that were posed to us (that we could not answer) the second is a list of the overarching thoughts and comments we received from our members.

Overall, as representatives of the business community we are setting Fostoria up to be a non-business friendly community. Our members feel that, again, with all of the plans being discussed the entire burden of the recovery is being placed on the shoulders of our existing residents and businesses. There is grave concern regarding the efforts (or what is viewed as the lack thereof) of the city to reduce costs in any of the plans being discussed.

Another concern of the membership is the only thing being discussed in the Council meetings is the millage while the plan consists of various other items that will also directly affect our businesses and residents, such as the water and sewer rate increases over the next 5 years. We had multiple businesses reach out to our offices after doing some initial calculations and are genuinely concerned about how these increases will affect their abilities to remain competitive in today's market.

Examples: 1 large water user in the community – minimum increase of \$34,000 a year before you calculate in usage and units

1 Manufacturing Company in the community – at the end of 5 years will be paying an additional \$40,000 in water and sewer just in fixed costs.

-There are many more examples like this, of which another company has submitted their own concerns directly to you via email today, so if you have not yet received it, please check your email.

We did ask our membership to reach out directly to council to express their concerns!

Please feel free to reach out to our offices directly if you have additional questions or if you can provide answers to some of the questions that have been provided to you this evening. Clarification and transparency will be critical as this process moves forward.

Sarah Stephens Krupp
Chamber/Small Business Director
Fostoria Area Chamber of Commerce