Call a Spade a Spade: You Be the Judge

TRENTON: Mayor Tony F. Mack wants Trentonians to know that he remains fully focused on moving the City of Trenton forward despite the constant efforts of a rogue coalition of City Council members. “Their efforts to denigrate the Office of Mayor will not succeed. Our roots of commitment remain firmly planted and we are more than prepared to deal with the winds of political theater,” stated Mayor Tony F. Mack.

How does Trenton succeed when you have a rogue coalition of City Council members who are more focused on degrading the Office of Mayor? Our City has very real issues that could use the same amount of attention and commentary that is dedicated to attacking the Office of Mayor.

Factual Timeline:

On **October 3, 2011**, City Council member Phyllis Holly-Ward, on the steps of City Hall, endorsed the now failed recall effort. Councilwoman Holly-Ward was quoted as saying, “Find out what is going on with the recall, the headquarters is located at 830 Lalor Street…as citizens you have to know you deserve better.”

Councilman George Muschal was quoted, by the Trenton Times, later that same day, saying, “We need a change and we need it now. I support the recall 100 percent.”

On **October 18, 2011**, City Council member Marge Caldwell-Wilson directed a verbal threat to Mayor Tony Mack. She made it clear that she would join the recall effort if the Mayor did not make a decision she thought was best. She is quoted, by the Trenton Times, stating, “This councilwoman will go on the record saying that if the mayor doesn’t accept the $22 million with the conditions, I will help them get signatures.”

On **February 23, 2012**, City Council member Zachary Chester introduced an ordinance to cut the salary for the Office of Mayor from $126,460 to $80,000. This ordinance was introduced with four votes (Caldwell-Wilson, Chester, Muschal, & Holly-Ward).

On **February 23, 2012**, the three-member City Council budget committee (Caldwell-Wilson, Holly-Ward, & Chester) introduced a budget amendment to cut funding for staff in the Office of Mayor, thereby reducing support services available to the Office of Mayor. These service cuts involved: secretarial assistance, constituent services, communications, and granting writing. The budget amendment was introduced with the four votes (Caldwell-Wilson, Chester, Muschal, & Holly-Ward).
On November 1, 2012, Trenton City Council voted 4 (Caldwell-Wilson, Chester, Muschal, & Holly-Ward) to 3 (Bethea, Reynolds-Jackson, & McBride), to adopt Ordinance 12-30, “an ordinance to fix the compensation for the Office of the Mayor…” The justification for this salary change is: “the City Council finds that it is in the public interest that the compensation of the Office of Mayor be adjusted and fixed at an amount commensurate with the current economic circumstances of the City of Trenton…” The salary reduction from $126,460 to $60,000 amounts to a 52% reduction. This proposed ordinance further states: “an emergency having been declared…this ordinance shall become effective upon final approval and publication” and provides a date of July 1, 2012 as the effective date.


**Facts vs. Public Statements:**

Mike Schneider: “Is the Mayor coming to work every day?”

Council President Phyllis Holly-Ward: “I haven’t seen him…Well he doesn’t necessarily report to City Council so I couldn’t tell you, you would have to ask the Business Administrator. In all due fairness I don’t report to City Hall every day so I wouldn’t see him.” Council President Phyllis Holly-Ward - NJTodayOnline with Mike Schneider – October 8, 2012

“I just have not seen him publicly or effectively carry out the duties and responsibilities of mayor. We’re making the position a part-time job based on the work that’s been done. While we’re right in the middle of the budget cuts we have to look at everybody.” Council President Phyllis Holly-Ward – Trenton Times – October 16, 2012

“This has nothing to do with the corruption and pending charges against this mayor. It has to do with this mayor’s absence.” Councilwoman Marge Caldwell-Wilson – Trenton Times – October 16, 2012

“We’re going after him for not doing anything. We have to prove he’s not doing anything. What proof do you have that he’s not? If you take somebody’s pay away and you don’t have proof, that’s a lawsuit waiting to happen and we’ll lose on the end of it.” Councilman George Muschal – Trenton Times – October 18, 2012

“The salary is attached to the mayoral seat based on certain responsibilities. Either those responsibilities are carried out ... or you’re not carrying them out and you don’t deserve the salary.” Council President Phyllis Holly-Ward – Trenton Times – October 18, 2012

“He has not earned this salary, he does not deserve it and if he was thinking of the taxpayers of this city and he cared about the people of this city, he would step down and not be an embarrassment to the people of this city… I’m telling you our mayor did not earn his salary.” Councilwoman Marge Caldwell-Wilson – Trenton Times – November 1, 2012

There is something wrong here! The public statements of three City Council members (Muschal, Caldwell-Wilson, & Holly-Ward) make it clear this salary cut has everything to do with performance NOT the economy. Ordinance 12-30, that was adopted on Thursday, November 1, 2012, mentioned nothing about performance. **Why are they misrepresenting their intentions and misleading residents?**
OUR FACTS & QUESTIONS:

1. If the City of Trenton’s *current economic circumstances* require a 52% reduction in the salary for the Office of Mayor, then why not propose similar reductions for City Council members and other senior management?

2. Last year there were 50 City employees that made more than the Mayor’s salary of $126,460. In addition there were 103 City employees that made less than the Mayor’s salary but still made more than $100,000.

3. Trenton City Council has a budget of $261,407 for the current fiscal year, which includes salaries of $22,360 ($860 increase from last year) for the City Council President and $20,000 each for Council members. Since the economic climate is so dire that it requires a RETROACTIVE pay cut for the Office of Mayor then can we expect 52% reduced salaries for members of City Council? When will that ordinance be presented and voted on?

4. The City Clerk’s Office, which falls under City Council’s purview, has hired a Deputy City Clerk ($48,063) and plans on hiring an additional Clerk Typist ($22,463) for the FY 2013 budget.

5. AGAIN, if the City of Trenton’s “current economic circumstances” require a 52% reduction in the salary for the Office of Mayor, then why has this Council not acted with the same *urgency* in reducing their own salaries and budget and those of other areas within the City?

“Ordinance 12-30 was written by a rogue coalition of City Council members and if they are truly serious about delivering economic relief to City taxpayers then the sacrifice that they are calling for must be shared. How do you ask someone to make a sacrifice that you yourself are not willing to make? **I will NOT be a sacrificial lamb laid at the altar of dirty politics.** Let’s call a spade a spade and recognize that this ordinance is not an act of fiscal prudence. This is about a failed recall attempt. This is about certain Council members not being able to stand on their own record. This is about a mayoral race that is 18 months away. Shame on certain City Council for misrepresenting their intentions and misleading taxpayers,” stated Mayor Tony F. Mack.

###