

Madam Chairman,

I would like to read a statement before the tax issue is voted on tonight.

I believe that what we are doing here is allowing the people to choose the direction of our city for the future. We are not forcing a tax increase on our constituents. We are simply asking them to make their choice.

Cathy, I have been successful in business because I learned one golden rule. That is to hire smarter people than I am in their field and then to trust their judgment. That is not to say that I do not think for myself. It seems to me that you either by wisdom or by fate have done just that on this Council. I believe that each of us serves on committees that uniquely mirror our backgrounds.

I supported Frank Legan when I was running for my Council seat. I was asked on numerous occasions why. My answer was always the same. He has an excellent finance background and would be an asset to us on Council as a whole because of that. After the meetings that I have attended and the countless hours that I have reviewed the budget, I also have come to the same conclusion. Let the people give us direction of how they want the future of Highland Heights to look and perform.

If the tax measure fails it would force us to cut departments' personnel and programs. If the tax measure passes there would be the discussion of what projects are the most important and which to accomplish first. Either way it is their decision. I believe that this Council must work together to educate each citizen on the ramifications of their vote. We also must motivate people to vote. It is my belief that if you don't exercise your right to vote on the subject, then you should not comment on the outcome.

Currently the Finance Department believes there are less than 650 people in our city that would be affected by this tax. It may even be less than that number because some of these people, such as myself, have multiple W2's. If an individual is making \$100,000 per year he would have to pay an additional \$500.00 per year in taxes. I think the majority of the 650 residents or less would gladly pay the money so the city would get 2 million dollars per year to spend on roads, drainage, master plan, park and the capital improvements that we so desperately need.

I also believe that this issue becomes a tandem element and a critical ingredient to increasing our market share of businesses over the short and long term. The delay of this tax has caused the city to operate in the red the last few years. I think that it is our responsibility to let the voters know exactly where this city financially stands right now.

I have a copy for all of you if you want to see an article from the Sun Newspapers dated October 27, 2005 in which I was quoted as saying: "Pilla would raise the income tax from 1.5% to 2% only as a 'last resort', but also understands he 'can't let the city go broke.'. He said reimbursement incentives could be worked out with local businesses."

I know that all of ward 3 does not subscribe to the Sun Messenger. Therefore, I would like to add that I mailed this article to each and every resident in my ward. So I feel confident that voting for me they knew where I stood on this subject. One thing I learned in business is to make the tough decisions where I had to and to live with the consequences. The other was to always be honest and to present the honest facts to our residents. I said in my county commissioner race and again in my city council race that "I am not a politician I am only a citizen."

As a citizen of Highland Heights and a person that will be paying my portion of this tax if it passes, I strongly suggest that whether you are for or against the increase, I suggest you vote yes and allow the Citizens of Highland Heights to cast their own opinion in November.

Thank you,

James G. Pilla, Councilman, Ward 3