

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESIDENTIAL WASTE COLLECTION FEE**

### **Where does the revenue come from that makes up our City's General Fund?**

Municipal income tax receipts, 13% portion of the general property tax, local government tax, estate tax, fees and permits.

### **What is the General Fund used for?**

This fund is used for our Police Department, Fire Prevention and EMS, Service Department, Public Health, Senior Life Department, School Guards, Recycling and Solid Waste, Motor Vehicle Maintenance, Engineering, Bain Park Cabin, Planning and Design Commission, Board of Appeals, Traffic Safety Department, Mayor's Office, Finance Department, Legal Administration, Development Department, City Council, Civil Service, Municipal Lands and Buildings, Electric, Gas, Water and Road Salt Purchases.

### **Why are revenues down this year?**

Over 1 million dollars has been taken away from our general fund operating budget through cuts made by the Federal Government, the State of Ohio and Cuyahoga County. Expected revenue in income tax for this year is \$4,444,035 (down \$303,642 from last year). Expected property tax for this year is \$2,991,182 (down \$298,062 from last year.)

Local Government revenue (money allocated to municipalities from the state and county) is down \$83,013 from 2009 and Estate Tax, Fees/Grants/Permits are down \$464,435. Matters have become further challenged with the elimination of employees in the NASA buildings in Fairview Park.

### **Can other city funds be used to help the General Fund?**

No, other city funds such as the Recreation/Gemini Fund, Street Lighting Fund, Capital Projects Street Fund, Sewer Fund or the Fire Levy Fund cannot be used to help balance the General Fund. These separate funds are dedicated to the purchase of items needed for a specific purpose. For example, Streetscape Improvements or street trees are purchased out of the Capital Projects Fund not the General Fund. City Hall replacement sign was purchased from the Street Lighting Fund not the General Fund.

### **Why can't our property taxes cover the deficit?**

Because the City only receives 13% of the property tax receipts. The Fairview Park City School receives 64% of the property tax receipts. The remainder goes to library, port authority, health and human services and metro parks.

### **What have the city's employees done to help with this budget deficit?**

This economy has made it impossible to balance the city budget without significant changes in the city's economic structure. The city has made major cutbacks over the years, including not replacing retiring employees. The Service Department has been reduced from 41 employees to 27 employees. We have also eliminated and consolidated positions throughout city hall. All fees collected by the city have, or are in the process of, being reviewed for increases, including apartment fees, rental fees, building department fees.

The City's employees have taken steps to help reduce our deficit by **implementing a pay freeze and rolling back wages to 2009**. All employees will be enrolled in a **lower cost savings health care plan** beginning February 1, 2010. All employees will take **5 non-paid furlough days** and the Mayor, Chiefs, Directors and Department Supervisors will take **10 furlough days** and City Council has taken a **four percent reduction** in pay. Due to the loss of NASA, the above concessions still can not make up for the remainder of the deficit. This rubbish collection fee has been implemented to off set the deficit.

**What is the cost for the collection of refuse, recycling and disposal?**

The cost to all residential properties will be \$10.00 per month. These charges will be billed quarterly in the amount of \$30.00. Options are available to pay on-line, auto pay, U.S. mail, or in person. Choices will be available to pay quarterly or yearly.

**When will billing begin on trash refuse pickup?**

You can expect a billing statement to arrive the week of March 29, 2010. The first statement reflects the months of April, May and June 2010.

**Why is Republic Allied Waste collecting the fee?**

Republic Allied Waste is the city's service provider for trash collection. They will be responsible for the mailing and processing of these statements. Presently, Republic collects garbage fees from 130,000 residential homes. The city elected to have Republic collect the fee as they have a system in place for billing purposes.

**Can a resident "opt-out" of the program?**

No, this is not an opt-out option. All residential properties shall be charged a monthly rate to defray the cost of collection and disposal of solid waste and recycling. The fee is used to pay the refuse contract.

**What if I do not use the service or if I have only one bag a week. Does the fee remain at \$10.00 per month?**

Yes, the fee remains at the fixed cost of \$10.00 per residential home. This fee is used to pay the refuse contract.

**What if I choose not to pay this fee?**

All unpaid charges shall be certified by the Director of Finance to the Auditor of Cuyahoga County for collection as a special assessment.

**When can we expect this fee to expire?**

As stated in the Mayors letter to the residents, the City is faced with difficult economic conditions. Matters have become even more challenging with the loss of the NASA employees. A provision has been placed within this program to expire these fees on December 31, 2011. It is hoped that these economic conditions will improve our General Fund with increased revenue and that in the near future such cost containment measures will no longer be needed beyond the current period.