

Mr. Chairman,

With your permission, I'd like to address the committee and the audience at the beginning of this presentation rather than at the end. I realize that I'm not a voting member of the committee, but I have been engaged at the center of this issue and I hope that maybe there are some things about how and why this came about that may make the process tonight run a little smoother.

May I address the committee?

Thank you.

I appreciate this opportunity because I think it's important for both our employees and our citizens to have a clear understanding of what is going on tonight...and just as importantly, what is NOT going on tonight.

Several weeks ago the city was contacted by Delta Environmental to discuss the possibility of making a presentation to this committee concerning privatizing residential sanitation services. About two weeks ago they made known their intentions of being placed on this committee's agenda for that very purpose. When the administration was made aware of their intentions, I asked for a meeting. The purpose of that meeting was very simple.

I knew that any such proposal would have to be carefully considered, and that the mere mention of privatizing residential pickup would create a host of questions...questions that I knew would find their way to my office. So I felt like I needed to have as clear an understanding of their intentions as possible early in this process. They honored that request and came to meet with us last Wednesday, July 29th.

After hearing an overview of what they intended to present to you this evening, I informed them that I was

going to notify Royce Leonard, our Sanitation Superintendent, to inform him of the details of our meeting.

We contacted Royce and within two hours had ~~fully~~ briefed him on what was discussed and what was going to be proposed. We advised Royce to have a meeting with his Supervisors and with his full staff to make them aware of the interest and the impending presentation. We did that, because quite frankly, it was the right thing to do. When I ran for Mayor, and every day since I have been in office, I have said that any business we do will be done in the open. Anything less than transparency is unacceptable.

We did not want our employees to hear about this meeting from the press, the internet or some ~~back~~ ^{other} channel communication. We wanted them to know what we knew...and WHEN we knew it.

So that takes us to tonight. We are all here to listen, and to learn. I feel like we owe that to the citizens.

But I also feel like we owe it to the citizens to take into consideration the level of service they have and what level they might expect.

And quite frankly, we owe it to our employees who have invested so much of themselves into their job to weigh every possible option of how we might perform better as a city run department, and how that might affect our ~~bottom line.~~ *Budget Process.*

These are the things we discussed with Royce both PRIOR TO and ON last Wednesday.

A couple of questions have come up early in regards to the potential of privatizing residential trash pickup. One of those has to do with whether or not citizens would have to start paying for pickup. The sales tax that was

passed that eliminated costs for picking up domestic refuse is still in effect; so there would be no charges from any company for picking up residential garbage.

Another question is in regards to the level of service that our city employees currently provide to elderly and disabled citizens who have a hard time with curbside pickup. Our employees do an excellent job in providing assistance to those folks. That is a question that will have to be answered as we hear from different companies. I can tell you that I have a great interest in making sure that our citizens are receiving the best service possible...and I don't think any of us are interested in anything less.

So with that being said, I yield the floor back to the Chairman, and thank you again for your time.