

The FY 2019 budget

The FY 2019 budget I am presenting tonight includes growth and equipment for most departments, particularly in Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Therapeutic Recreation. Over the past five years the gains made in Public Safety came at the expense of these three departments. The money had to come from somewhere and I felt the need to reduce crime and honor the 2007 annexation commitments made to the courts took precedence. With the positive results our Public Safety expenditures continue to produce, coupled with the growth in FY 2019 budget, we can now increase the capabilities of these departments.

This budget also addresses the issues we are experiencing in the Court System and Economic Development. Finally, after years of being behind the municipalities we compete with, it raises salaries for both employees and Department Heads to a higher level, but on par with other cities.

Starting with Park and Recreation, the General Fund buys a lawn mower and a tractor. But the real excitement is the Capitol Loan (or Cap Loan) request we are making from the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA). We are requesting \$2,500,000 from MDA for improvements at all our parks.

If our request is granted Robinson Park, Northside Park, and Traceway Park will have new bathrooms, addressing a complaint from female fans and players over many years. We will also build new concession stands and complete upgrades to all ball fields and scoreboards at Traceway.

These upgrades will make a significant difference as we rebid the Women's Junior College National Championship. It is the only national title game played in the state and responsible for adding \$300,000 to our economy over a five day period in May. Money from this Cap Loan will be used to upgrade our baseball fields and give us a strong boost in our efforts to bring a "play up tournament" for the Little League World Series to Clinton, allowing us another economic opportunity.

This money will be used, along with partnerships from other sources, to build a soccer stadium - complete with dressing rooms, concession stands and seating. This stadium will be the home field for Brilla - the only professional soccer team in the State - and will be used for the older age group recreation and tournament leagues. Additionally, we can add three more fields for the younger leagues by changing the field set up from a north/south direction to an east/west direction. Once complete, I anticipate college and professional teams playing exhibitions games here, adding an Economic Development element to the stadium.

We are already working on the drainage issues at Robinson Park with hopes of burying the drainage ditches and creating more usable space. We are also in the early stages of putting together a plan to light the walking trails in all parks. Finally, we will add a dog park to Kids Town Park in this FY to allow man's best friend an area to run and interact with other dogs.

The Public Works budget consists of the Water Budget, the Sewer Budget, and the Garbage Budget. Public Works gains six part time summer workers, two tractors, two pick-up trucks, two

zero turn mowers, one dump truck, one backhoe, and one mini-excavator. They also have money to rehab 2 more water towers as we assure all areas of infrastructure are properly maintained.

Street paving continues to grow as we add another \$100,000 from the General Fund to the street paving budget. With the \$300,000 already transferred from the General Fund, we have \$400,000 in our paving budget. We will continue to add \$100,000 per year for the remainder of this term as we work towards a paving budget of \$1,200,000. Adding the \$400,000 to the \$600,000 generated from the additional milage added in FY 2018, gives us \$1,000,000 for paving in the FY 2019 budget.

Therapeutic Recreation receives \$7,000 to remodel bathrooms and purchase a larger, badly needed new van. Adding the \$19,000 spent from the FY 2018 budget in kitchen upgrades, new carpet, paint, and asphalt the Wood Center will be an even more attractive place to grow the programs managed by Chandra and make that department the finest Therapeutic Recreational facility in the South.

The Community Development department adds one pickup truck, the CPD adds five patrol cars, the CFD adds one pickup, one Life Pak Cardiac Monitor, and utilizes \$40,000 from then Cap Loan to make concrete repairs at Station 2. The Legal Department adds a legal assistant, and the Visitor Center adds a part time assist. This budget continues to address LED lighting in the City as we complete the Parkway lighting project this fall and begin a new LED lighting project from Northside Drive to Arrow Drive.

This budget also increases salaries, allows an avenue for critical improvements in our Court system, and hires an Economic Development Director. I added these items and believe we need to take these next steps to keep employees, protect our courts, and add retail to our City as we continue to grow.

It is important to keep up with other cities in terms of pay. We must assure we retain the employees we have trained and know our community so well. Usually a city will hold off on salary increases until the number of departing employee's affects the ability of that city to function. One nearby city has done that for so long they are offering increases of 5% at the higher levels to 20% at the lower levels - but with a twist. The employee's will receive ½ of that increase across the board and the other ½ based on a merit system. For example, the lower levels are eligible for a 20% increase, receiving 10% across the board and be eligible for an additional 10% merit raise. Another City is giving 3% raises across the board.

Clinton has been way behind when comparing salaries to competitor cities before, and I will not allow that to happen again. Now that the budget has been stabilized from the fiscal issues of 2013 and beginning to show growth, I will submit employee pay raises every year in amounts reflecting our City's growth - never using one time money - to assure a stable and competitive work force. Continental Tire will begin hiring soon and I do not want to lose people because of low pay. I believe Continental Tire will raise the salary levels in the area and we need to plan our strategy to remain competitive and retain our folks. I believe the impact on salaries from Continental is a good thing, but we need to be ahead of the curve at all levels by starting now and remaining consistent in the years ahead.

In the spring of 2016 I conducted a statewide salary survey of both employees and Department Heads salaries in order to compare Clinton's pay levels with other cities. The results of that survey proved Clinton had fallen behind, way behind. After the salary increases in this budget, no one can say Clinton is underpaying its employees. They can say, we are finally paying them in a fair way compared to the market place. I will talk the employee salary changes and the Department Head salary changes separately.

We took action to equalize income with the employees in FY 2018 and established a fair base. So, how do we assure the City employees are treated fairly and remain competitive in the future? I asked the Department Heads to develop a fair plan that would keep Clinton pay levels competitive and stop the loss of employees to other cities. They agreed upon a plan that would determine salary increases based on merit, not across the board. This way the department heads could reward employees based on their job performance. This was discussed and agreed upon by the Board of Alderman. A system of review was put in place to evaluate the job performance of each employee.

The FY 2019 budget allotted an additional 3% in each department salary line for increases. The department heads used the merit system to award increases ranging from 0% to 5%. No one, including the Board of Alderman or me, knows the day to day activities of the department personnel better than their Department Head. No one, other than the Department Head, can make the hard decisions - based on daily observation and yearly evaluation – to determine who gets how much (if any) increase.

I view the Department Heads differently. I did not attach a percentage growth to their recommended increases. As with the employee salaries, their salaries are primarily based on the market but consider others factors such as the additional responsibility, years of experience and education. The increases given to the department heads this year are high enough to put them near the top of the salaries given in other cities. I have been working towards this goal for three years.

So why did I raise the salaries to a more competitive level. We must pay our department heads if we want exceptional department leadership and experience. I would hate to lose a department head to a higher salary, then hire the replacement department head for more money than the one we lost made. That has already happened and I do not want that to happen again.

They are expected do the same functions as other cities our size and larger, but with fewer employees. For example, the populations of Clinton and Vicksburg are almost the same, but Clinton has 260 employees in twelve departments compared to Vicksburg's 500 employees in thirty departments.

I believe we should pay Department Heads based on experience and skill level; allowing for growth. I give all Department Heads additional responsibilities to expand their knowledge and increase their value to the market place. My belief, stated many years ago, is that Department Heads should start at \$65,000 due to the extra responsibility taken on from their previous position, and the high expectations I add to those responsibilities, then prove themselves, and move up based on the salary ranges in their field.

In 2013, current our department heads were paid in a range from \$35,000 to \$60,000, considerably less than Department Heads in other cities - with women paid much less than men. Since the completion of that salary survey, I have been moving Department Heads salaries upwards to get in line with other cities we compete against. I recognize these increases are higher than one might expect. But the starting point was much lower than it should have been.

I believe when I show you the salaries other cities are paying, you will agree. The numbers I will show you are from two sources; first, the ranges were determined in the 2016 income survey I conducted and second, the 2017 Stennis Institute Survey. Understand, these number may not be the salaries the comparison cities are paying today because these Stennis numbers are one budget old and the study I conducted is two budgets old. Also know, not all cities participated.

First, allow me to explain the ranges and proposed salaries based on the 2016 salary survey.

| Position | Salary Range | Current Salary | New Salary |
|----------------|----------------------|----------------|------------|
| City Clerk | \$55,072 - \$94,250 | \$82,680 | \$92,680 |
| Community Dev. | \$39,500 - \$91,425 | \$73,861 | \$78,861 |
| Police Chief | \$61,630 - \$94,293 | \$80,000 | \$90,000 |
| Fire Chief | \$59,083 - 76,732 | \$80,000 | \$90,000 |
| Parks & Rec | \$48,846 - \$83,600 | \$65,624 | \$70,624 |
| Public Works | \$38,656 - \$111,592 | \$65,624 | \$75,624 |
| Therapeutic | No Range Available | \$65,619 | \$70,624 |
| Communications | No Range Available | \$65,619 | \$70,624 |
| Main Street | No Range Available | \$63,000 | \$70,624 |
| Visitor Center | No Range Available | \$65,000 | \$70,624 |

Let's be even more specific and compare the salaries I am proposing to other cities, using the data from the Stennis Institute, I'll start with the Police Chief;

Police Chief;

| | | | | | |
|--|--------------|----------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| | Meridian | Tupelo | Gulfport | Biloxi | Ridgeland |
| | \$83,500 | \$85,989 | \$91,152 | \$84,600 | \$95,243 |
| | Olive Branch | Oxford | Average | Recommended | Clinton |
| | \$100,006 | \$85,911 | \$90,000 | \$90,000 | |

Now the Fire Chief;

| Meridian | Tupelo | Gulfport | Biloxi | Ridgeland |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| \$82,216 | \$80,614 | \$81,417 | \$81,951 | \$88,400 |

| Oliver Branch | Oxford | Average | Recommended Clinton |
|---------------|----------|----------|---------------------|
| \$87,630 | \$80,000 | \$83,173 | \$90,000 |

Next the Public Works Director;

| Meridian | Tupelo | Gulfport | Biloxi | Ridgeland |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| \$83,709 | \$77,461 | \$81,914 | \$76,980 | \$100,068 |

| Olive Branch | Oxford | Average | Recommended Clinton |
|--------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| \$79,483 | \$125,772 | \$89,338 | \$75,625 |

Finally, the Parks & Recreation Director;

| Meridian | Tupelo | Gulfport | Biloxi | Ridgeland |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| \$78,767 | \$77,461 | \$72,891 | \$73,810 | \$95,243 |

| Olive Branch | Oxford | Average | Recommended Clinton |
|--------------|----------|----------|---------------------|
| \$79,643 | \$67,624 | \$77,920 | \$70,624 |

The Therapeutic, Communication, Main Street, and Visitor Center Directors were here when I took office in July 2013, 5 years ago. The Therapeutic Director holds a Masters Degree and Communications Director holds a Doctors Degree. The Main Street Director has been named Main Street Director of the Year in MS. The Visitor Center host 15,000 guest per year from all 50 states and 38 countries and is responsible for all the historic markers and military banners. Both Main Street and Visitor Center Directors have won numerous awards. I increased their salaries to \$70,624.3

This budget promotes Anna Hawk to the Department Head level, increasing her from salary from \$60,000 to \$65,000, as she takes responsibility for the promotion and activities of the Train Depot. While the funds for the construction of this project were raised outside the City budget, I am not willing to turn that investment over to someone and not give them the authority to manage it. The Depot will become a major center of activity in our community and should be represented at the Department Head level.

The salary of the City Attorney is currently \$95,000. Based on her 10 years of municipal experience I raised her to \$105,000. The full time City Attorney of a nearby community makes \$112,000. Full time municipal attorneys are not as plentiful as you may think. Most cities hire a firm and billed by the hour. Those billings range from \$150,000 to \$250,000 per year.

The Department Head salaries are now competitive and in line with other cities in the State. This will be the last increase for our Department Heads in this term.

This budget allots money for a full time judge. Prior to hiring, we will bring in an outside consultant to review our system, review our court process and systems to assure maximum efficiencies.

The volume of trials and pleas in our court system is growing as the number of arrest increase. This is due to many positive changes in the CPD such as the increase of sworn officers, better training, the creation of a patrolling division and a traffic division, as well as passive policing methods. The result is a substantial increase of cases in our City courts. Put another way, there is a direct correlation between an increase in arrest and a growth in court cases.

Additionally, all municipal courts are being challenged with new, burdensome regulations from higher level governments promoted by the ACLU and the Southern Poverty Law Center. Failure to comply with these complicated procedures put our courts at risk of having monitors from these two organizations observing our procedures to assure their version of compliance and then “stepping in” to “help” us out. Once in, they never leave and the rights of the criminal take precedence over the rights of the honest citizen. My pro-active actions in this budget give us the best chance to address these concerns and allow Clinton to develop a court system that can be emulated by others in the State.

Next, this budget adds an Economic Development Director in April 2019. Not a part time realtor, but an experienced individual with the contacts and relationships needed to get Clinton in front of the decision maker and influence their decisions. I have taken it as far as I can and there is no doubt in my mind that Economic Development requires a full time effort. I wanted to do this when I came into office, but the budget in 2013 would not support that action. I now believe the budget is strong enough to support this position and that the City will support this position.

I have heard that the definition of insanity is doing the same things over and over, but expecting a different result. We cannot continue to do the work of economic development the same way we have been and believe that our results will be any different. I have heard many people, including some on this Board, lament on the lack of a place to buy a ladies dress or a man’s dress shirt. Our past efforts have not succeed, it is time to try something else if we want retail growth.

The recruitment of retail is not as easy as some would make it out to be. It cannot be done “on the cheap”. A Mayor working the issue part time will not provide the coverage required. I know the various representatives of the companies you and I want in Clinton, but they are not always the decision makers. It takes years of work to develop a relationship that allows you to meet with the right people. Why not hire someone that already has that knowledge. Before hiring, we will get an outside consultant to assist us in reviewing our City’s economic potential.

We have done very well in industrial recruitment and we should all be proud of that, but you deserve better in retail recruitment. It is time to step up to the next level and hire the Economic Development expert we need to take us where we want to go.

Like any budget, a good budget is when no one is 100% happy. Some items were cut and some added to allow the City to move forward or in a different direction and not get mired down or complacent. Some think one line item got too much and another too little. But, anyone waiting for a budget they can agree with 100% will wait a long time. Frankly, there are things in this budget I am not wild about, but I understand that the Department Heads are the best in their fields and know what they are talking about. We must always recognize that the good of the whole takes precedence over the desires or agendas of a few.

I believe this budget, as presented, continues to move our City in the right direction. Since 2013 the budgets I submitted to the Board of Alderman have carried us out of significant financial issues while increasing the levels of public safety and City services. Our City does more with less and while not always perfect, we are steadily improving. That is a credit to the employees and Department Heads for the hard work they pour into this community each day.

We should be proud of our City - recently recognized as the “Most Educated City in MS”. Our income levels increased in 2016, placing us 5th in the state vs. our 2006 ranking at 21st. And developers are calling. Together, we are moving Clinton forward and people are giving us another look. Now is not the time to falter or slow down. As Satchel Page once said “Don’t look back, they might be gaining on you”.

Thank you

Together We Can Do Anything