

Bruce Philpott

1. Why are you running for Council?

I have two major reasons for running for council. The first is to restore a financial policy that stops deficit spending and restores fiscal solvency. The second is to preserve the historical character and quaintness of Glendale's neighborhoods.

**The city of Glendale started its deficit spending in 2002 and hasn't looked back, bestowing substantial pay increases and pensions to a workforce that has grown six times faster than the general population in the last ten years. As of January 2009, the total deficit spending stands at over \$300,000,000.**

**To avoid financial collapse, Glendale had to cut back services, deferring infrastructure maintenance, and borrowing to the hilt. Glendale over extended and over spent during the last seven years when the economy was robust. Now, while its revenues are in decline, its expenditures continue to increase. The cause, in large part, is due to over generous compensation packages and pension benefits gifted to an over-sized city staff. As a result and contrary to logical thinking, as municipal spending goes up, city services continue to decline.**

We are raising taxes, fees and permits at an alarming rate. The council is desperate to find new sources of revenue at the expense of taxpayers and business people. True to their word, in August, 2008, the council raised fees and permits from 10% to 400%, according to their own records. They even created a whole new set of inspection fees beginning at \$360. According to recent surveys, Glendale has the highest electric rate in the state; water rates were increased 12.4% in January, 2009, the first of a three part increase that by 2011 will complete a 35% overall increase. This is taking place while ratepayers continue to fall behind in their payments, causing the city to shut off services at twice the level one year ago. Seniors on fixed incomes cannot afford these unfair and gross increases at a time when many are just able to stay afloat.

Regarding the issue of preserving our unique neighborhoods, too many of them have been subjected to design and size changes that undermine the historic architecture and styles. We also need to divert some of the savings I propose to neighborhoods that are in desperate need of community parks. While I am a strong advocate of private property rights, I recognize that some hillside properties are not suitable for building homes, and those that are must respect height limitations. The city should avoid the kind of legal exposure it incurred recently when poorly engineered run off damaged multiple homes, causing a multi-million dollar payout. Adopting story poles so that adjacent

residents can get a clear understanding of the height of proposed construction whether new or remodel, was a good decision by the city council.

2. What unique qualities do you bring?

For two years I served as the assistant city manager for the city of Pasadena. During my tenure I assisted in the preparation of the city's budget. I also served for two years as police chief with the largest general fund budget. This experience gives me unique skills in ferreting out waste and finding alternative ways of delivering costly services. As a forty-year resident of Glendale, I would be pleased to represent taxpayers and voters by applying my budget skills to benefit their interests.

In addition to a 28-year career in public safety, I also have owned small businesses. I know what it is like to struggle to meet a Friday payroll and deal with government oversight. I also taught in neighboring public schools for ten years.

3. Who would you like to replace? Why?

Two of the three incumbents have shown fiscal irresponsibility and have gotten us into this free spending policy that ignores the larger financial picture. Mr. Yousefian is the only incumbent who understands the big financial picture and has attempted to help his colleagues understand the dire consequences of their folly. Mr. Najarian and Mr. Quintero are the two incumbents who have been supporting these fiscal policies by their voting record. They continue to take city union money and must share in the responsibility of contributing to what Dr. Frates of the Rose Institute at Claremont McKenna College said was the largest transfer of wealth from the private sector to the public sector in modern history.

We must restore a fiscally conservative council in these times of financial instability and downturn. It is the only way to get us through these tough times.

4. What are the 3 main issues facing Glendale Government?

The first and foremost is to restore the fiscal health of the city. We have to stop deficit spending and build prudent reserves. My experience with municipal budgets will enable me to identify the excesses and to set priorities in spending programs. It won't be easy but we must eliminate deficit spending by cutting expenditures to the level of revenues. We will stop deficit spending and, once again, be able to set aside prudent reserves for the city's infrastructure. The city council has gotten into the precarious pattern of issuing new long-term bonds to pay for their reckless spending habits. Beginning in 2002, this long-term borrowing is an historic first. At the rate of

\$30 million per year, it is being transferred into accounts that pay for on-going services and programs. This is immoral because these services will continue to be paid by our children.

The second is to improve the quality of life of our citizens by preserving the character of our neighborhoods, restricting over development and by lowering all utility rates, fees, permits and surcharges to the 2002 level. This will put \$2,000,000 annually back into our personal and business ledgers. We must also establish more neighborhood parks in south Glendale.

The third main issue facing Glendale is the city government itself. The recession demands that we evaluate the way we do things and find more cost-effective solutions. Government people get into a “group think” mentality that limits their range of creative thought. I propose that the city of Glendale host a statewide cities conference on “Exploring New Ideas in Local Governance”.

5. Who will you deal with on those issues?

I believe that Mayor Drayman and council member Yousefian are capable of making the hard decisions to restore fiscal solvency. They both understand what is happening to our economy and are willing to bring city spending in line with this reality. They both advocate preserving the nature of Glendale neighborhoods in their historical context and also recognize that a robust business community is important to the overall financial health of the city.

6. Your thoughts on the Downtown Specific Plan.

The plan allows for high-density development using a mix of retail, office and residential units. It has already begun and several large high rises are in the pipeline. While this will be healthy for the city in terms of expanding revenues and jobs and concentrating residential growth in areas where they are not necessarily reliant on cars and parking, the footprint for this kind of development should not be increased in any direction beyond the existing boundaries. We should not burden developers by imposing outlandish fees or require that they construct helipads on rooftops of these high-rise buildings.

We must also embrace new technologies that will reduce our demand on energy and water consumption and incorporate them into our local standards.

7. Your thoughts on the Mobility Plan.

It is very important that Glendale have a seat at the table for any future plans for regional public transportation projects that affect its citizens. We must look at new technology and established “best practices” to find ways that will generate public support. Foremost, government must first reestablish a sense

of fiscal responsibility and accountability before it can ask the taxpayer to fund them. We are already behind the curve on issues of traffic and pedestrian safety and flow and we won't get movement until public confidence is restored.

The city has shown a willingness to reduce parking space for new development if the developer is willing to pay the city around \$30,000 per parking space saved. This is a shortsighted policy that again demonstrates how far the city council is willing to go to capture new revenue.

#### 8. How would you deal with the deficit? Raise Revenue?

A major part of my campaign is to restore responsible fiscal management and eliminate, once and for all, the massive deficit spending that has been occurring over the past seven years. This can only be accomplished by reducing payroll. The revenue sources that the city controls have already been raised to the maximum and they represent only a fraction of the amount of new revenue that would be needed to have a balanced budget. There is only one choice remaining, cut operating expenses and payroll.

This may be easier than most believe. Over the last ten years, our city workforce grew by 31%, while our overall population grew by 5%. By restoring the number of city employees to the level of our population growth, we will save \$40 million per year. This will allow us to become financially solvent again. We do not have to resort to giving pink slips. We can bring our employee numbers down to an affordable level through the process of attrition over the next few years.

I would also have the public vote on all future long-term bond debt. This city council has authorized \$332,000,000 in long-term borrowing since 2002 without voter approval. If elected, this would cease immediately.

Not only would I not raise revenue, I would roll back all utilities, fees, permits and surcharges to the 2002 level. I would also eliminate the newly added permit of \$360 for fire inspections on buildings below 75 feet.

#### 9. Contract negotiations are coming up for the GFFA and GMA. What would be your hot issues?

I would provide leadership on the council to instruct the city's negotiating team to break from tradition and take a posture of holding the line on compensation and benefits. We must stop handing over money the city does not have to employee groups at the expense of services. This trend of giving the unions everything they want must stop. We currently have the highest paid city employees and hard economic times should guide our approach to negotiations. This is not a slight to our city staff, most act and perform in a professional manner.

It has been management's policy at the negotiating table to give disproportionate amounts of compensation and benefits to union groups. Unfortunately, incumbents Quintero and Najarian have supported this.

My posture is to hold the line in negotiations for the next several years, but it will be very difficult if these two incumbents are reelected. They both have received large donations from the powerful union. To make problems even worse, the largest union, under an existing contract, will be receiving an 11% raise.

This manic display of fiscal irresponsibility will only stop when those council members who have endorsed these huge pay and benefit packages are removed by the voters. Our city manager counters with his claim that unless we pay these exorbitant salaries and benefits, the employees will go elsewhere and we will experience a high attrition rate that would be even more costly. This rings hollow because many studies have shown that government employees maintain their employment for reasons other than top pay.

We need to instruct the management negotiating team to give the union side a reality check. An entry-level firefighter today, at top step, receives \$94,000, with a 48% benefit package on top of that. Almost half of them have paramedic certification and receive an added 16%, bring them to \$109,000. With an average \$30,000 in annual overtime and other direct costs in the contract, the full cost burden to taxpayers is just under \$200,000 per firefighter per year. When you consider that more than half of all sworn firefighters serve in ranks above the entry level position and receive on average about 20% more in compensation, the numbers start to get huge indeed.

The city's contribution to retired employees pensions has gone from \$4 million in 2004 to \$20 million this year. Based on his life expectancy, the recently retired deputy department head will receive \$6 million in his retirement.

Cost controls have never been needed more and it starts with union contract negotiations. It is time to start to swing the pendulum back toward the center and give financial relief to the average voter and taxpayer.

10. What Boards and Commissions have you given testimony? Issues? Results?

I have spoken before the Civil Service Commission on the need to diversify the fire department, including Armenians and women. This is an on-going problem, best remedied by creating a community fire reserve corps program

and using this workforce as the primary source for appointment in the career ranks. There are successful models to follow.

I have made two presentations to the Design Review Board on residential building proposals that did not fit the neighborhood in either proportion or design. One went my way and one didn't.

I spoke to the Parks and Recreation Committee, pleading that they rescind their recommendation to the city council to hike park fees for organized youth sports such as Little League and AYSO. After hearing from others, including the volunteer coaches that the new fees would cause them to fold operations, the committee decided to rescind its recommendation.

I spoke to the Audit Committee on fiscal issues.

11. Do you support the City Manager? Why?

The city manager should be given a high mark for his technical knowledge on some issues, but he lacks the kind of vision and leadership a council looks for. He is not willing to tell the council that it is spending beyond its means. He finds ways to obfuscate the city's true financial picture. He has served the City of Glendale for about ten years now and has expressed his managerial talents to their normal limits.

12. What is your position on the Ballot Proposition for the Utility Users Tax, and Why?

I will be voting No, and I am encouraging other voters to do the same. It is a deceptive way for the city to increase revenues. The proponents argue that it will reduce the amount we pay in tax from 7% to 6.5%. This measure will actually increase the amount we pay in tax because it incorporates new language that will broaden the base of what is being taxed now. According to the city's own projections, passage of this measure will result in Glendale residents paying annually hundreds of thousands, if not millions, in new revenues. This effort to find new sources of revenue is another example of how desperate the city is in its attempt to find new ways to tax residents and businesses. Having spent more than \$300,000,000 more than it took in during the last seven years, the city council has demonstrated that it is not a good steward of our public money. Until they begin to reform their previous fiscal policies, we should not give them any more money to squander.

