



# BRUCE HEALEY

February 10, 2010

## ALL'S WELL IN BLUE ASH, EXCEPT WHEN IT ISN'T

It's a snowy day in Blue Ash and I am delighted with the snow removal. That said, I have time on my hands, so I read the article on this site by Mr. Pfeffer, our City Treasurer. I want to thank him for what was a somewhat general, but forthright comment on the state of the Blue Ash budget.

What surprises me is the stark contrast between his tone and the semi-delirious siren song of financial stability sung by the incumbents in the last election for Council in Blue Ash. It seems to me we have a conflict of reality vs. mythology, Captain.

I am not surprised that revenue is down, or that we need to re-examine costs and expenses. What does surprise me is that this information was curiously absent from the words spoken by the incumbents. Life is strange sometimes, isn't it? If the challengers had won the last election, the incumbents would have been on the sidelines, deriding these budgetary woes as the result of an inexperienced council and their spendthrift ideas. Instead, we are to look at it as fiscal prudence at work. I don't buy it.

That said, this is neither here nor there. The incumbents won, and I for one want them to get the budget right. There is no budget correction without pain. If the Council makes sensible cuts, I for one will be happy to bear the pain. But I want to see pain in the areas it is needed. If I want to lose my holiday tummy, abdominals would help, but toe wiggles would be of marginal value. Similarly, I would like to see council look at areas where expenditure is rampant: Administration mainly. I would propose:

(1) When one City employee leaves for whatever reason, a written review of the position should be carried out with suggestions for ways to eliminate the po-

sition altogether. This would be a pre-requisite before searching for a replacement - if necessary.

(2) Buy smaller city vehicles and aim for a 10% year-on-year reduction in average MPG for ALL City vehicles, including Police & Fire.

(3) Aggressively retire debt.

(4) Introduce both-side printers.

(5) Reduce the office temperatures by 5 deg.F

(6) Introduce motion sensing light switches - no one there the lights go out.

And so on. These measures will bring sustainable long term reductions in some costs. I guess I am mystified that I can think of this on a snowy afternoon in Blue Ash while I watch our City clearing my street, but the guys writing the checks need cost analysis and a meeting. Where is our can-do attitude?