



WEST LAKEVIEW NEIGHBORS

THE VOICE OF WEST LAKEVIEW

West Lakeview Neighbors Meeting November 9, 2015; 7:00pm; Mystic Celt; 32 people present

Patrick Doloughty, board member, called the meeting to order at 7:08.

He reminded everyone to renew their membership in order to vote at the January meeting.

State Senator John Cullerton - No good news, state budget has not been passed. We're spending about 90% of the budget. We're over spending. The governor wants his business reforms passed. Hopefully right after the first of the year a budget will pass, less votes are needed. Collective bargaining is an item, as is workers compensation. One bill, on police and firemen's pensions, that requires a new payment schedule, will be vetoed by the governor. CPS has gotten better but pension is a problem, a bill passed that sends money from Springfield to Chicago. The House must now pass this bill.

State Representative Ann Williams - CPS is top item, talking to parents, schools, aldermen. About 10% aren't funded. Few are MAP grants, low income students in higher education; the childcare program for low income families are not funded now. Turnaround budget, the governor is holding the budget hostage.

Question - the governor refers to structural changes, what are those?

Answer - wants to change school districts, wants to take away rights for unions to strike. These are not "structural changes". He acts like the budget is not his problem.

(Williams) Collaboration is needed. The governor hasn't taken any opportunity to stop the impasse from taking place.

(Cullerton) \$4.8 million was the bill that passed

Question - What structural change can we make?

Answer - Get money from Springfield. We get screwed in the school aide formula. The Senate will try to pass one again.

(Williams) The pension equity of funding is difficult to pass. There's only 35 reps from Chicago.

Question - Is there any way for a graduated income tax?

Answer - 3.7% is now the flat tax rate, IL doesn't tax retirement income

(Williams) The rate is very low.

Question - Is the strike possibility O.K. to you?

Answer - It's terrible, hope CPS helps in Springfield. Good education is critical to this neighborhood.

(Williams) CPS is re-evaluating the ratio on special ed classes.

Comment - The legislature has spent more money than it raises.

Reply - We had a drop of income two yrs since '09. We raised property taxes for 4 yrs. to pay down debts. People want to increase education spending. 3.3 billion was cut from Medicaid. Pensions are higher than most states. We have been paying down our debt.

(Williams) One of the governor's cuts was to lower community care. We're down to critical human services.

Question - How is this resolved, what can we do?

Answer - The state and city are still doing well. Businesses are moving into the city. Income taxes are lower. The governor has an obsession with the unions. You can come to these meetings and let us know what you think.

(Williams) My colleagues are looking for common ground.

Comment - Shocked that a bill was just passed that the school aid formula has not been changed.

Reply - There's a formula in place. The House has not passed it yet

Chicago lost 66 million under the current formula.

(Williams) Change the formula and quit depending on property taxes. CPS is seeking additional funding and that's a short term solution.

Question - What are you doing with 8 billion?

Answer - trying to balance the budget into 10 areas, pensions, local government, all state employees, elementary schools, higher education, aid to disabled kids and seniors. Total income is 33 billion, we're spending about 38 - 39 billion. The pension is 18% of the budget right now. State has 5 pensions, payments are being made.

Question - Jobs are coming here. How are we attracting manufacturing jobs?

Answer - (Williams) In Jan. we went to a low, flat income tax.

Question - Why change the formula equation?

Answer - It's not taking into account poverty areas in other parts of the state.

Representative Williams announced a meeting she will be chairing, on the topic of an elected school board, this Weds, 6:30, Athenaum Theatre.

44th Ward update and new staff introduction - Chris Jessup is Alderman Tunney's Director of Public Safety and Business Affairs. In the last month Anita Alvarez has made the 44th Ward a priority on robberies in our neighborhood. Senior bldg. planned on Ashland will be approved by the end of this yr
Julia Levar is the new Director of Communications, schools and parks, e-letter, web site.

Question - Any effort to deal with rats?

Answer - Denise in the office works on rat problems.

Question - Garbage can fires?

Answer - unconfirmed report is that it's young children

Question - Garbage pick-up for larger units

Answer - Bldgs over 4 units

Question - What about the shortage of cops at the 19th

Answer - The CAPS meetings should be about safety and issues in the beat, they can't really answer questions about more manpower.

Community Donation Ideas – Patrick stated that in the past WLVN has donated to other non-profits in the neighborhood, and asked if anyone knew of worthy causes that should be in the mix.

He told everyone to reach out to any board member or the web site, with ideas or organizations that should be considered.

Revised Snow Removal Ordinance - The fees have increased, from \$50 to \$500. It now includes businesses plowing. Snow that falls during the day needs to be cleared by 10pm, during the night by 10am. Any residential is done by residents. In front of the CTA is done by the local SSA. If the SSA doesn't do it, each business is responsible. Call the Alderman with any complaints about the CTA.

Next meeting tentatively January 11th.