



Greg
MITCHELL
7th WARD ALDERMAN

Dear 7th Ward Constituents,

On October 28th, 2015 the City Council approved the 2016 City Budget. As a new Alderman with less than 6 months under my belt, this was a huge vote to make, and I took it seriously.

I was confronted with a financial decision that forced me to ask myself “What is in the best interest of the 7th Ward, our communities, and our City?” Clearly this was an inherited financial situation but, as an elected official, a part of my job is to make difficult but necessary decisions.

Do I send a message, to our Police Officers and Fire Fighters, that even though you paid your fair share, the City will not live up to its obligations to the very same people we depend on to risk their lives protecting us? Or do I honor the City’s guarantee and reassure that OUR word and OUR promises mean something! The 7th Ward elected an Alderman with integrity to work for the betterment of the 7th Ward and the city of Chicago so I took a proactive stance and assisted in the crafting and drafting of the 2016 budget, which included stabilizing the promised pensions for our first responders by phasing in a \$544 million property tax increase and capping the garbage collection fee at \$9.50 per household over the next four years.

Being born and raised in the 7th Ward; and campaigning twice to become Alderman of the 7th Ward no one has walked more blocks, knocked on more doors, or talked to more of our neighbors than me! From my weekly Monday Constituent nights, to September’s (standing room only) 3- part Town Hall series, I listened to the requests of my constituents for more programs, resources, and services that directly affect our quality of life. So let me be clear, a yes vote for the 2016 City Budget was not a yes vote to “increase property taxes”, rather it was a yes vote to appropriately fund the required pension payments for our Police Officers and Fire Fighters. It was also a yes vote for:

- Investing \$16 million in afterschool programs,
- Transforming School-Based Health Centers into Community Clinics,
- Implementing a school modernization property tax levy that will support capital improvements to relieve overcrowding at schools across the City,
- Supporting summer jobs for more than 25,000 of our youth,
- Addressing the States cuts in early childhood development by investing to support preschool programs across the City,
- Adding Chicago Public Library Early Learning centers across the City,
- Installing learning gardens in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) providing outdoor classroom space that will provide daily hands-on nutrition and science education,
- Providing free dental care visits, free eye examinations, and free pairs of eyeglasses for CPS students,
- Constructing affordable housing units for seniors and programs aimed at supporting low-income seniors to make their residences more accessible,
- Adding senior: Fitness programs, Nutrition programs, Health and Wellness programs, Information and Access to Services including linkage to a wide array of community resources and programs, and Life Enrichment programs,
- Expanding Health Services to Uninsured Women,
- Moving police officers from desk duty to expanded bike patrol and specialized patrols in beats with the highest concentrations of violence, while providing officers with body cameras.
- Collaborating with 1000 Jobs to place 1000 qualified job seekers on a pathway to careers in manufacturing, and link residents that need additional skills to training and apprenticeship programs that result in full-time employment,
- Expanding CTA Second Chance Program that creates apprenticeship opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals,
- Improving Rodent Baiting.
- Adding additional tree trimming crews that will eliminating the backlog of tree trimming requests,
- Repaving 300 miles of Neighborhood and Arterial Streets,
- Replacing 90 miles of water mains, 22 miles of sewer mains, line 50 miles of sewer, line 14,000 sewer structures, and
- Install 15,000 water meters.

Again, I was confronted with an inherited financial situation that predated my election as your Alderman, but this forced me to think and act in the best interest of the 7th Ward, our communities, and our City.” I know some may question my vote but, I stand by my decision, because I know it was the right course of action toward building a solid foundation for ourselves and the generations to come I look forward to your continual support and direction as we move forward, together.

Sincerely,

Greg Mitchell

Alderman Greg Mitchell, 7th Ward