

Dave Pearson's Peoria Preview of 2012

Questions from Peoria Independent Newspaper

1. What challenges do you see for the city in 2012?

Staff is proposing more increases in water and sewer rates. Council must search for ways to mitigate those large increases. If council follows staff recommendations, water rates will have increased 12.5 percent over four years (including 2011) and sewer rates more than 24 percent in three years..

2. How do you believe the council should proceed to meet those challenges?

Staff needs to continue searching for ways to save costs in water and waste water services without jeopardizing quality or service.

Peoria has the highest water sales tax in the Valley - 3.3 percent. This money goes to fund general government. Most cities don't even charge a water tax. We should consider eliminating the water tax. An alternative would be to dedicate the 3.3 percent tax directly toward water and sewer costs, instead of raising water and sewer rates.

General tax revenues are projected to increase 2 to 3 percent each year. These new revenues would go to offset reductions mentioned above to the general government fund.

A hidden charge is levied on every Peoria utility bill for public construction projects in the city. Although not technically a tax, it acts like a 1.0 percent tax on every water and sewer project. Council should exempt all utility construction projects from the "Art tax". I support public art in Peoria but it should not be paid for with water and sewer fees. I would vote for public art projects out of the general tax fund.

The current Arts Master Plan recommends raising the "Art Tax" from one to two percent - without a vote of the people. If followed, it would raise water and sewer rates on Peoria residents. Council should offer a charter amendment requiring that any proposed "Art Tax" increase be submitted to the voters.

Taken together, these measures would greatly mitigate large projected water and sewer rate increases.

3. What challenges will the redistricting present for your district?

The U.S. Justice Department just approved changes to council districts boundaries for the next decade. My district stays largely the same.

4. What will you do to meet these challenges?

I will continue assisting neighbors with their concerns while reaching out to new Ironwood District residents, HOAs and businesses. My website is *CouncilmanDavePearson.com*. Residents may email me at *info@DavePearson.US*

5. What can residents look forward to in the coming year?

Peoria is a great city with strong neighborhoods. We must continue to improve our quality of life by supporting public safety and our parks & trail system while encouraging more economic development in Peoria.

New Ironwood residents are now eligible to apply for SNAP Grants. These funds may be used to improve neighborhoods and pay for projects that help develop a sense of community. Please go to my city website at peoriaaz.gov for more information.

6. Is the city putting together contingency plans in case the state decreases shared revenues again? What are the elements of the plan?

There is no indication the state legislature will make a run at city state shared revenues. Peoria has one of the strongest financial plans of any city in Arizona. It has a fiscally prudent government. Unlike state government we have adequate reserves to deal with such fiscal emergencies..