

Good afternoon.

Thank you all for being here this afternoon. I want to give you an overview of my proposed 2014–2015 budget. Although I cannot go into great detail in a press conference, I believe it is important to let everyone know what my priorities are for the City of Clarksville. Remember, there is no greater sign of a government's priorities, than its budget.

Before I provide information about the budget, however, I want to thank the department heads and all the City employees for their support, professionalism and cooperation in assisting me through this budget process. As many of you know, the departments have presented to me their requests for departmental budgets in open presentations over the past couple of weeks. All of those presentations, and the accompanying PowerPoint presentations, are available on the City of Clarksville website.

If you have had an opportunity to watch the recordings or if you saw the presentations live, you know the department heads and their staffs have committed a significant amount of time in reviewing their department's needs and goals. They have done a remarkable job of putting together a detailed review of their department's current status from a personnel, physical, and capability perspective as well as bringing exciting ideas for new projects to the table. As you will see, I have listened. This proposed budget contains funds that will continue to meet our obligations, allocations for new projects that will create tremendous opportunity for the City of Clarksville, and, most importantly, continue to provide the infrastructure and framework for growth our citizens deserve.

There are a couple of facts about my proposal which apply generally to the budget and which are very important in looking at the City's overall financial picture. First, the funds provided for in the general fund budget is right at 85 million dollars. The overall budget for the City of Clarksville, including the enterprise funds like Gas & Water, CTS and CDE and the component agencies like the Museum and TRC, is just over 360 million dollars.

Second, we have recently been advised that our credit rating companies, Moody's and Fitch Investors, have rated Clarksville again as Aa2 and AA with outlook stable. We are excited to announce that we have maintained these excellent ratings because it means that Clarksville is recognized by the experts as being fiscally sound. This is a great sign that Clarksville is ready for investment and a good opportunity for investors.

The last thing I want to mention in general is that my proposed budget, as it has been for every year that I have been Mayor, is a balanced budget. We have, as City

leaders, a moral and legal obligation to make sure that sufficient funds are available in an unassigned fund balance. The City is required to maintain 20% of the annual expenditures in this fund and this proposed budget meets, and in fact exceeds, this requirement. A simple way to say this is that we have set aside sufficient “just in case” or rainy day money.

If you asked me to provide a theme for this year's budget proposal, it would be addressing the needs of our growth while maximizing every dollar and opportunity. We do that by continuing our wonderful working relationship with partners, by applying for grant monies as they come available for projects throughout the City and by carefully planning the City's growth and projects. That is the best way to protect the citizen's investment in our City through their tax dollars. Be assured that I take the responsibility as guardian and steward of the public's trust through their investment very seriously. I believe that is job number one for all public servants.

I also want to be very clear that this proposed budget does not call for any tax increases. With the leadership of our department heads and the commitment of every City of Clarksville employee, I believe we will continue to be able to provide for a growing Clarksville in a measured and responsible way with the funds already available.

Now, I promised a few highlights so here they are.

One of my priorities with every budget I have proposed, is to make certain that our public safety departments have the resources they need to continue to provide our citizens with the highest level of service and protection. In this year's proposed budget, there are allocations for building a new fire station at Exit 8 in the Industrial Park in partnership with the County, the State and the IDB. Money has also been allocated for the purchase of a new truck and equipment for this fire station so that it will be operable as soon as construction is completed. I have also allocated funds for the construction of a new police station in District One. As you will see, this is a joint venture with the School System as they are donating the land. And, at Chief Ansley's recommendation, I have included funds for hiring eight new police officers, along with the required police cars and equipment, to continue to make sure we are keeping up with our growth as a City.

I am also allocating significant funds to grow and improve our infrastructure – especially our roads. Maximizing tax dollars requires finding resources outside the City when possible. A couple of weeks ago, I accepted a check from the Commissioner of TDOT for over \$800,000 which will go to install sidewalks, bus shelters and other safety measures to make access to public transportation more accessible for our citizens. This is one of many road projects you will see over the course of the next couple of years, including a major project on Madison Street that will improve safety and reduce

traffic congestion. Oh, and by the way, that project isn't in this budget because TDOT has agreed to pay for the entire thing.

My proposed budget also includes projects at the Dunbar Cave intersection, the intersection at Trenton Road and Needmore, widening Rossvie Road and realigning Dunbar Cave and Cardinal Lane. I am proposing funds for the design of the City's first roundabout and funds for the design of a new road that will run from Cardinal Lane to Professional Park. And now that the MPO has approved a long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan that includes the potential for development of an East West Corridor, I am proposing funds to begin the first phase of the required environmental studies on the "South Hampton Extension" which runs from Wilma Rudolph Boulevard to Trenton Road.

I have also proposed the allocation of funds to address drainage issues around Clarksville and the assessment of our storm water program under current regulations and financial constraints. Finally, as many of you know, we have spent a significant amount of money to comply with the terms of a court order requiring ADA sidewalk improvements in our existing sidewalks. We believe we will be in full compliance with those requirements by the end of this fiscal year. So now we have the opportunity to build new sidewalks in accordance with our sidewalk ordinance and I have allocated money for that very purpose. I hope to begin working through the parameters the ordinance provides to identify those specific places where our first new sidewalks should be installed.

I also want to mention that this budget allocates funds for a major Riverbank Stabilization project. As I've said before, this is a project that will mean safety for our community as well as economic development to the riverbank and downtown area.

We are also relocating some of the employees from the Building and Codes Department to offices at the Gas & Water office on Madison Street. Those are employees who are involved in the planning and permitting processes and are being relocated to create a one-stop shop for citizens and companies who need the services of these departments. This is an important step in making Clarksville a more business friendly city and will help us improve the services offered by both departments.

The Parks and Recreation Department is important to Clarksville's unparalleled quality of life and increasingly offers a component of economic development. I have included funds in this year's budget to begin the design and planning for an athletic complex that will include space for soccer tournaments and practices, lacrosse, field hockey, and, through a partnership with the Nashville Predators, Clarksville's first indoor ice rink. This facility will be a new state-of-the-art addition to our parks system and will provide new opportunities for economic development for local hotels, restaurants and other Clarksville businesses. I have also allocated funds for the purchase of additional

land at Liberty Park for the purpose of adding more parking and there are funds to continue to expand our very popular greenways.

As has been reported, we have continued to work on the feasibility study for a new Performing Arts Center. This budget proposal includes funds that will continue to plan for this center. The information we have received from the study to date confirms my belief that a performing arts center will serve as an anchor for downtown development, will draw audiences locally and regionally, and can address the needs for meeting and educational space.

This budget includes allocations for the Two Rivers Company, the group dedicated to assist with the economic development of the downtown area. These funds are slated to be used to study, plan and seek innovative ways to spur downtown development in line with an economic growth model. It also includes the City's portion of a detailed study of the Clarksville- Montgomery County area and the most critical economic indicators. This study is being conducted in conjunction with the EDC, including the Clarksville Chamber, Aspire, Montgomery County and the Nashville Chamber of Commerce and will provide information vital to our continued growth and prosperity.

These are just some of the projects you'll be able to see. What's going on behind the scenes is equally impressive. New training programs for employees in our public safety department, human resources and IT will continue to prepare our employees to provide the best services possible to Clarksville's residents.

One of the first initiatives I took on as mayor was bringing our employee pay scale into compliance with a pay study that had been conducted for the City of Clarksville. Maintaining a well-trained, dedicated and responsible workforce is essential in our being able to meet the demands of a city that is growing in both population and opportunity. This year, my proposed budget includes a 3.05% general wage increase for city employees.

According to the new Clarksville ordinance, the City's HR Director must conduct a market-place study comparing our employee's salaries with wages paid in comparable communities. When this initial analysis is completed, our Finance Director then conducts a review of the City's general finances to determine if we can afford to offer a raise to our employees.

After these reviews were completed, a recommendation was made by Mr. Wyatt and Ms. Matta, and I wholeheartedly agree, that this proposed wage increase for all eligible employees is an important part of this year's budget. This is the right thing to do and it's also the legal thing to do.

It's important to understand that maintaining a strong, dependable and dedicated workforce is vital to continuing Clarksville's growth and prosperity. More importantly to the taxpayers, it also saves money. With the City of Clarksville Employee Health and Wellness Center and the City's move to become self-insured, we have already decreased our medical expenditures for employee health care by approximately \$2 million dollars as compared with 2 years ago. That savings results from lower costs for medical diagnoses, care, treatment and pharmacy costs and does not include the money associated with improved attendance and productivity. The bottom line shows that when we treat our employees right, we maximize the taxpayers' money.

Since I was elected Mayor, I have made every effort to make the budget process open and transparent. We began by making the hearings open to the public and making sure they were accessible on the City's website. Then we added them to our Channel 3 rotation, offering residents with CDE Lightband another option to watch the budget process. This year, we have added live streaming so that the working sessions and votes can be viewed in real time, as they take place.

This afternoon, I will provide copies of the detailed budget to the Council members for their review as we move ahead with the process. On May 12 and May 15, we will hold working sessions in City Council Chambers for the Council members to ask questions about the proposal. Passing a budget in Clarksville requires a public hearing and two City Council votes. The public hearing and the voting days are scheduled for May 29 with the second reading on June 5. Again, the public is welcome to attend any of these meetings or join us via live streaming. The budget will also be placed on the City's website for anyone who wants to review it in detail.

The governmental budget process can be confusing. Believe me, I know. There is no question that the accounting requirements for government entities are unique and sometimes challenging. I think that's a good thing. Maximizing tax dollars means protecting them and that, I believe, is crucial. But at the end of the day, I believe that passing a budget is the most important thing any governmental body, whether it's the US Congress, the Tennessee General Assembly or the Clarksville City Council must do. Adopting a budget requires a purposeful and cooperative effort. We are, through our budget, setting our priorities, identifying our goals and planning our future. Nothing could be more important than that.

Thank you for being here today. I'll be happy to take a few questions.