



## **Office of the Mayor**

**Hon. Stephanie A. Miner, Mayor**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE: April 8, 2013**

**CONTACT: Alexander Marion**

**Press Secretary (315) 448-8044**

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# **MAYOR MINER RELEASES FISCAL YEAR 2013-14 CITY BUDGET**

*Budget Does Not Raise Property Taxes or Water Rates*

*Miner: In the Face of Tough Times, We Must Make Smarter Choices*

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – Mayor Stephanie A. Miner today submitted the Fiscal Year 2013-2014 budget for the City of Syracuse to the Common Council.

“Given the ongoing fiscal constraints of the City of Syracuse, the 2013-2014 budget represents a major accomplishment for the city. We have held the line on taxes, reduced the workforce through attrition not layoffs, and closed what was a significant gap in our funding,” said Mayor Miner. “In the face of tough times, we must make smarter choices. This is a budget which reflects those difficult but important decisions.”

The 2013-14 budget contains a total appropriation of \$665,987,059. Of this amount, \$298,800,689 (45%) funds City operations and \$367,186,370 (55%) is allocated to the Syracuse City School District. The City’s budget will have a negligible increase of .23% or \$700,500 over the current fiscal year. The School District’s budget will increase \$7.8 million or 2.2% over the current fiscal year. The School District spending plan was passed and sent to the administration by the School Board.

### **2013-2014 Budget Highlights:**

**Taxes:** There is no increase in property taxes or water and sewer rates.



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**Planning Merger:** A net cost savings to both the City and County will be achieved by merging the City of Syracuse Bureau of Planning and Sustainability into the Syracuse-Onondaga Planning Agency.

**Land Bank:** The budget includes an allocation of \$2 million to fund the newly created Land Bank as requested by the Land Bank's board of directors. The city is expected to see an increase in revenues from the payment of back taxes as long-time delinquent property owners pay up to avoid the Land Bank's more aggressive foreclosure policy.

**Departmental Expenditures:** The City of Syracuse operating departments will see a \$4.1 million, or 3.1% decrease in spending from the 2012-2013 budget. The majority of these savings come from the Police and Fire departments. The fire department will consolidate operations with the closure of Station 7 rather than pay for a costly rehabilitation of the structurally distressed facility. No firefighters will be laid off. Instead, they will be relocated to nearby firehouses as part of a departmental realignment.

**Pensions and Healthcare:** The City's pension bill will rise to \$33.4 million. This represents a \$4 million increase from the previous year. The Mayor has announced the city will not participate in a state authorized borrowing program.

The City's health care expenditures for both active and retired employees also continues rise. The City's healthcare bill for retirees outpaces that of active employees by \$5 million. Mayor Miner recently announced \$600,000 in savings negotiated with two of the largest providers of hospital care, Crouse and University hospitals.

**Employment:** For the fourth consecutive budget, there are no negotiated increases in wages for any bargaining unit.

**Say Yes:** The City will invest \$1 million to support the Say Yes to Education program through which more than 1,000 graduates of Syracuse City School District high schools to attend college tuition free.



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**General Revenue:** Sales tax, State AIM aid and property taxes compromise 82% of total City revenues. Sales tax is the only area of growth. It is projected to increase \$3.6 million from the current year to \$79.1 million. State AIM aid will remain at its current level of \$71.8 million and property taxes at \$33.5 million.

**Booting:** Syracuse expects an infusion of \$575,000 in revenue from switching to private vendor PayLock to boot chronic parking ticket violators.

**Building Permits:** The city expects \$200,000 increased revenue in building permit fees as a result of record setting development across the city.

The budget also includes several initiatives that came out of discussions the administration and Councilors have had in recent months in an attempt to cut costs and raise revenue.

- The administration has begun a review of city parking programs and will involve Councilors early on in those discussions. A primary goal of the review is to reduce the expense to the city taxpayers for the eight parking garages the city controls.
- The Division of Code Enforcement will begin levying additional charges to chronic property code violators who cancel or miss appointments with city inspectors visiting those properties to clear complaints. This has become a too common occurrence as the city is more aggressive with code inspections.
- The administration will review all city issued permits in the coming months. It will work with the Council which also identified this in its Fiscal Plan, to increase fees where warranted.

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