

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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MAYOR MICHAEL WILDES
VETO – Ordinance No. 09-20 and No. 09-21

These two Ordinances increase salaries at an inopportune time and remove benefits from lower paid employees.

Property taxes are rising everywhere in New Jersey. Most experts predict that property taxes will top 3% of property values within the next few years. Annual residential tax bills of \$10,000 are not uncommon. We need to cut costs, but responsibly and not just symbolically.

As with most communities in New Jersey, our police and firefighters have generous salaries and benefits; pay can be in excess of \$100,000, with ample time off, and cash benefits, etc.

It seems unconscionable given our current economic crisis, where so many of the citizens and residents of our very city are losing their jobs, to raise some officials' salaries and concurrently punish a selective group of employees, many of whom make an average of \$50,000 per annum, by taking about \$70 per month from them as a contribution for health insurance, mainly because they are vulnerable.

Moreover, it is insulting that the Council will pay an additional 12% to the City Manager in a separate retirement fund payment. This is the very same Council which gave away the single highest cost benefit in City history when they changed Fire Department shifts to allow fire fighters to work fewer than 100 days per year.

One need only look at the vast array of jobs ("assistants", "executive assistants", "administrative assistants", "confidential secretary", "administrative clerks", "clerk typists" etc.) and cumulative salaries delineated in Ordinance No. 09-20. The Council, then in Ordinance No. 09-21, attempts to make up for their giveaways by hurting loyal employees, some of whom have been with us for over 30 years.

I therefore submit my veto of these irresponsible ordinances. Only through our City Council spending less, attrition, and retirement will a true benefit to taxpayers be realized. Until the treatment of employees is equitable across the board, union and non-union, this sort of grandstanding by the City Council continues to be disingenuous and fiscally irresponsible.

MICHAEL J. WILDES
MAYOR