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News Release

For Immediate Release

Mayor proposes City-County Planning Task Force

Springfield Mayor Bob Stephens proposed to Greene County leaders today the formation of a new task force comprised of City and County leaders to be formed to address issues of mutual interest to both organizations.

The group is charged with identifying current and anticipated similar fiscal and service delivery challenges and asked to suggest measurable solutions, including problems funding law enforcement. The Mayor asks the task force to present a report to City Council and the Greene County Commission by the end of 2013. Part of that report would be performance metrics selected to track progress on any identified solutions.

The City and County jointly operate several services, including: Springfield-Greene County Health Department; Springfield-Greene County 911 Emergency Communications; Springfield-Greene County Park Board and Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management.

"The City of Springfield and Greene County have a history of collaborating on initiatives to increase efficiencies and benefit our citizens," Mayor Stephens said. "It is in the spirit of collaboration that I propose this City-County Planning Task Force."

In spite of several years of recession, the condition of Springfield, Missouri is strong, the Mayor says. For five years in a row, the City presented a budget that is fiscally conservative, balanced, and that is balanced without using one-time grant money, without pulling money from reserve funds, and without borrowing.

"But we are facing issues that are not easy issues. These are not easy times," he acknowledges. The City is "not out of the woods yet" and faces budget challenges that need to be addressed. The County admittedly has urgent budget concerns.

"I realize the County is in the midst of developing the 2014 Greene County budget. It is not my intention to interfere with that process," the Mayor explains. "It is my hope the City-County Planning Task Force will be endorsed by both the City and County and can complete its work by the end of this calendar year."

The task force is expected to meet for the first time sometime within the next two weeks and will continue to meet every other week.

Task Force Membership:

Five Representatives from the City of Springfield

- City Manager
- Deputy City Manager
- Assistant City Manager
- Director of Finance
- TBD – will rotate based on topic(s) discussed

Five Representatives from Greene County

- County Administrator
- Prosecuting Attorney
- County Auditor
- Budget Officer
- Sheriff's Office representative or Highway Administrator

Topics for Discussion: Similar Challenges for the City and County

- Unfunded environmental mandates
- Stormwater funding
- Increasing employee and dependent healthcare costs
- Employee recruitment/retention/compensation
- Unfunded capital needs
- Life cycle capital replacement costs
- Fuel costs
- Facilities for courts
- Public health funding disparity and service impact
- Public trust
- Communication with citizens, including a need for more civic engagement
- Growth planning
- Economic / Business development
- Information systems

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