

Opinion: S. Tahoe's budget is not the whole truth

To the community,

I have read City Manager Tony O'Rourke's letter to the community on the budget. He projects a deficit of \$5.2 million and average deficits of \$3.4 million "between fiscal years 2012 and 2016." The problem with the numbers is they can't be verified. And there are lies, damned lies, and statistics.

The city manager said the numbers "showed the need to reduce city expenses to live within our means." To do so, he proposes a number of moves. He would eliminate 26 city employees. He would bid out city services.



Bill Crawford

But who knows other than the city manager which 26 city employees will be cut. Will he on a whim swing his ax? On bidding out city services, will the city go bid shopping? If so, the end result will be bad news. And who will have oversight on the contracts? Who will see that the contracts aren't one-sided in favor of the contractor, or that the contracts aren't breached? The city attorney?

And presently, the contract on the ice area is in a muddle because the city wants to turn Measure S non-taxable bonds into taxable bonds. It can't be done without voter approval because in 2000 voters approved non-taxable bonds.

Part of projected deficits is a line item of \$1.8 million that will go to the state to keep "city development activities" alive. What activities? The \$1.8million needn't be in the budget. It's padding to inflate the deficit. It's there to "justify" swinging the ax and bidding out more city services. It is dishonest.

Finally, if the projected savings don't eliminate the projected deficits, what will the city do? The city manager hasn't a clue because he's flying by the seat of his pants upside down. He is a stunt pilot. The five years this and the five that is smoke and mirrors, pure poppycock.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe