

As Brad has done in the past, I just wrote a statement so it is clear.

Let's discuss the \$227,400 allocated to the Chamber for this last year's economic development, which was an additional \$50,000 from previous years.

These are some facts:

Based on the report distributed on December 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, Springdale's sales tax must include no less than \$613,163.53 to break even with 2010's collections.

While other cities grew, for Springdale there were no new building permits in the second quarter.

When Arvest Ballpark was built, lots of new, private development was promised and projected. Please remember that great project is funded by all of us as taxpayers. While beautiful and great fun, it has not brought *any* new projects to Springdale, although we spent fifty million dollars building it and adding infrastructure.

Fayetteville, Rogers and Bentonville are living in the same challenging economy. In my opinion, Springdale should be the city of first choice for any investor. It's obvious we're not.

"Retail growth shined" – with their report, that's their words - with 330 new business licenses issued, according to this same report. Upon closer examination, the twenty-four new restaurants are actually fourteen. Five were listed in 2010, and of the remaining nine, one is new, two opened and closed this year, and six have been open five years or more, possibly under new ownership. Not exactly an accurate reflection of new business.

Of the remaining new business listings, one was listed twice, five are related to Head Start programs, one is Springdale Kiwanis Baseball, eleven are non-profits, and I think that number is not correct, I think it's more than that and at least one business is in Fayetteville.

Circle of Life Hospice and Dickson Street Bookstore are new business. Not a lot of revenue producers that I see.

Important to our community? Absolutely. But we're discussing economic development – meaning revenue.

And that's just after a really quick review.

Last year, this city was promised invoices. After two or three months of exactly the same report with only the month changed, even those stopped.

CJRW, the advertising firm the Chamber contracts with, does not provide any invoices, yet they are paid.

For years this has been all about accountability and transparency. For me, that has not changed. Each of our city department heads must provide receipts or invoices before a bill is paid. That is just good business practice. I'm asking once again for the Chamber contract to be reconsidered, until some real accounting and clear spending practices are created.

It is important that the value of a good relationship between our city and our Chamber continues to be mutually beneficial. Forming a business network whose goal is to further the interests of business is invaluable as each city vies for new opportunities, retaining and supporting and growing a healthy business climate.

I'd like a sub-committee of this council to be created, which will work with the Chamber leadership to ensure the citizens of Springdale receive proper documentation of government funds spent with the Chamber and accurate reporting of those dollars.

And that is my one statement.

I have no problem with the rest of the budget – with raises or anything else, but I continue to have a problem allocating these resources and an additional \$50,000 last year with not a lot of new economic growth. The report speaks for itself if you really dig into it. There's got to be a better way of doing this than we have done over these years.

So I'm asking for some support to at least create a sub-committee so that we can work with the Chamber leadership and the city to have a better accounting of those dollars.

We weren't able to give raises to staff last year, but we were able to give the Chamber a \$50,000 raise and there hasn't been much...

In the report -- there appears to be a lot until you dig into the report. It's not quite so accurate.