

List of Ideas for the City to Save Money or Bring in Revenue

1. For scheduled appointment no shows for inspections, fines should be issued (\$50.00 fine 1st offense, \$100.00 each additional offense) – SCOTT AND ANN MARIE - **This is being done. Tim Taraila will firm up the policies.**
2. Code Violations and Housing Inspections- If violation is not corrected within 30 days a \$50.00 re-inspection fee should be assessed for second inspection in addition to any summonses issued. – ANN MARIE - **I will draft an ordinance for future review.**
3. Stronger collection method to collect unpaid summonses (60-65% of all summonses are unpaid) –ANN MARIE - **Tim Taraila is working with the Finance Department and Customer Service to send unpaid summonses to a collections agency to collect on unpaid summonses.**
4. More enforcement of fire lane and handicap parking. – JEFF AND RAY - **Officers and two civilian employees already regularly enforce these violations. Law Enforcement is vested with authority to enforce laws for public safety and to deter violations. Law Enforcement is not a for profit entity, and must be careful not to cross the line of imposing fines intended for deterrent purposes and start misusing fines as a means of revenue generation.**
5. Enact a yard sale/garage sale permit. (Most other communities charge \$5.00 fee) – ANN MARIE - **This would raise little revenue and would be costly to enforce, as yard sales typically take place during the weekend when code enforcement staff is not working. In order to enforce this appropriately, the City would have to have staff paid overtime or earning comp time to work on the weekend.**
6. Enact chronic nuisance property ordinance that includes higher violations fees for those who are chronic violators. To include press releases of problem properties and also implement a program that will have the city repair the violation and place a tax lien on the property for the cost. Properties classified as “chronic nuisance” will not be able to re-new rental permits with large amounts of unpaid violations (this will avoid mailings and casework) –ANN MARIE – **Tim Taraila is working on a policy to attach any unpaid fees or fines with the rental license renewal that is mailed out in December. If the fees/fines are not paid, then a license will not be issued.**
7. All unpaid fines and fees should be paid through a tax lien on the property. – ANN MARIE WITH CONSULT OF BILL PEPPER - **Bill Pepper is on vacation this week, so I will discuss this when he returns.**
8. **Charge additional fees for copies of violations, permits, maps ECT.... – TRACI We are currently seeking how other municipalities charge for additional fees for copies of violations, permits, maps, etc.**

9. Increase late fees assessed for all rental and business licenses that are not renewed by the renewal date, in additions to any other fees or fines. – ANN MARIE - This would require a code amendment. For both of these, the code currently specifies 10 percent per month. If Council would like this increased, we will draft an amendment to increase the penalty.
10. Require merchant licenses at all events on the Green. (Old Dover days, African American Festival, 4th of July, Art festivals, or even Music Venues on the Green.) – ANN MARIE - This would require a code change. Currently the code specifies that if vendors are paying a fee to participate in an event organized by a non-profit, they do not need to have a City of Dover business license. This is one way that the City supports community events, and the revenue gained by changing this would be minimal in comparison to the perception that the City is withdrawing support from these events.
11. On-call personnel for the Water Department per week are now at three persons per week....needs to be changed to one person on call a week. – TONY DEPRIMA – I have discussed this idea with the Public Utilities Director and he agrees that we can bring this crew down to two men. A one person crew would not meet our safety standards.
12. Limit late notices for Electric bills to one instead of sending duplicate copies. (currently sending multiple notices) – TERRY - Currently there is only one late notice sent. It is blue. We are trying to work with H.T.E and IT to determine if the notice can go on the bills instead of the letter. This would mean extending our due date by six days. Until we resolve the notice on the bills this cannot be implemented. Cost savings are about \$12,000.
13. Keep flower budget to a minimum for the upcoming year. – SCOTT AND BILL COOPER – We are keeping the flower budget to a minimum since there were no line item increases. In addition, we are considering eliminating some flower beds to save money but this equates to a service cut.
14. Sell pulled bulbs instead of giving them away each year – SCOTT AND TERRY - Staff is not in a position to sell pulled bulbs. It would require additional handling to get to an area to sell since we cannot sell on the side of the road for safety reasons. In addition, we would have additional cash handling requirements placed on us by Finance if Public Services staff handled the sale. Using the city's procurement officer would add additional costs. Changing the current practice would be viewed hostilely by the public and would likely cause a lot of negative feelings. I do not recommend pursuing this idea any further.

15. Do away with duplicate trash pickups on same street (example: Trash pickups on Loockerman St are done on Tuesday night, and then returns again on Wednesday morning.) – SCOTT - Staff has considered this suggestion. We currently budget 4 hours of scheduled overtime per week to provide this service to the businesses on and around Loockerman Street. This service was requested by the downtown businesses a number of years ago due to blowing trash and general uncleanness when the trash was left on the street until the following morning. Staff runs the route again on Wednesday morning to get any trash that was placed out overnight.
The nighttime collection also reduces conflicts with traffic on Loockerman Street on Wednesday mornings and generally improves the safety of staff due to less traffic conflicts related to the evening hours. Elimination of the nighttime collection on Loockerman Street is a reduction in the current level of service. There would be a cost savings but this savings will create additional concerns in the downtown area. A detailed cost analysis can be provided if requested.
16. Do away with Trash Collection pickups outside the City Limits. Residents outside the city limits who do not pay city Taxes should not be having trash collection.- SCOTT - Out-of-City customers currently pay \$29.00 per month for the 90-gallon container service. We currently have approximately 980 customers in this classification. Elimination of the out-of-city customers will reduce total trash revenue by approximately \$341,000 (980 X \$29.00 X 12 months). There are no service contracts with these customers and service can be discontinued with relatively short notice if Council decides we should not perform this service.
17. Implement Volunteer Ambulance Service that is Non-Profit or start City run ambulance service that is not contracted out (long term goal). – WAYNE & TERRY - This is not recommended due to the costs associated with this service. The City would incur capital costs of two ambulances and equipment. Ambulances alone are estimated to be approximately \$125,000 each. Also, the city would require at least an eight person staff to rotate 24/7. If you estimated entry staff at \$30,000 and benefits at \$15,000 annually, payroll would be \$360,000. This does not include uniforms, administrative supplies, and material. The city would need to provide a location for staff and operations which would add additional expense. Billing would require at least one additional staff member or a contract expense. We may also be tied into a contract with our current ambulance service.
18. City residents currently pay only \$5.00 for trash collection a month. Average rate for county pick up and private companies is around \$22.75 a month. This could be a huge revenue increase even if it is only raised to \$15.00 a month. – SCOTT - This proposal should be evaluated in greater detail and placed into the mix with the PAYT evaluation that is to be completed by city staff.

19. City currently maintains and cuts clearances in alleys. Residents should have to maintain their own properties. If not compliant with the city ordinance, they should be fined accordingly. The man hours as well as the expense it takes the city crews to clear these. Alley ways could be allocated to other jobs they need to do.- SCOTT & BILL COOPER - In some cases it is easier to cut the alley with city forces rather than try to rely on inspector to send violation notices and try and make endless follow ups with the property owners. In addition, when the city cuts the clearances the cuts are uniform.
20. City residents have not had a Tax increase in several years. With the city deficit, it is time –TERRY - The last tax increase was in July 2005 for FY 2006. This represented a two cent increase over the rollback rate for a new assessment. Currently a cent on the tax rate is estimated to generate \$289,457. A taxpayer owning a \$200,000 house would pay an additional \$20 annually or \$1.66 per month. For every\$1,000 of assessment the tax would increase ten cents.
21. Put ALL unnecessary projects on hold until the city's financial situation is corrected. Especially the Library project. – ZACH & MARGIE- Would not recommend placing the Library Project on hold. By placing this project on hold the City would jeopardize the 5.6 million dollars that the State of Delaware has appropriated to the City for this project. Along with this funding we are anticipating receiving 5 million dollars in the State of Delaware FY11 Bond Bill budget. The City has also just started a Fund Raising Campaign to raise 6 million dollars for this project. This Campaign cannot take place if the project is on hold. The City has a Library Reserve Fund that has about 3.6 million dollars in the fund. This funding is necessary for the City to meet matching requirements for the State Bond Bill. Placing the project on hold risks the permanent loss of \$11 million in state aid to build the new library. The library building project will bring jobs to the City of Dover; serve as a catalyst for downtown development; improve the quality of life for citizens by broadening access to educational and cultural development opportunities; take advantage of an ideal economic climate for construction due to lowered costs; position the City as a leader in alternative energy and demonstrate the City's real commitment to excellent services and quality of life.
22. Discontinue all studies that do not directly involve the current financial problem with the city. – TERRY - Studies are conducted for various reasons and should be judged on a case by case basis whether or not they are beneficial to the city.
23. Raise business licenses. Fees for venders at Dover Downs...now \$40.00, elsewhere it is on average \$150.00. ANN MARIE - Scott and I agree with this suggestion. We will research other locations and bring a proposal forward in the coming months.
24. Yard waste (branches, leaves, brush, ECT...) that is collected should be mulched by the city and used by the city or sell. Should not be hauling to dump and paying large fees to do so. –SCOTT - Separation of Yard Waste would be an increase in the level of service currently provided. While there would be a reduction in costs as the landfill, there would also be a increase in costs for manpower to provide additional handling of the materials. In addition, we would have to store the materials at a central location that may require permitting and additional facilities.

25. Cease using Post card survey reminders at city inspections. Use Emails and post in-house memos. – ANN MARIE - I am not sure what this is referring to.
26. Start charging the public for Lock jocks being performed by Police Officers and Animal control officer. (unlock vehicles with keys locked in them) For many years there has never been a charge for this service. For 2009 so far from Jan1 to May 14th, there have been 621 lock jocks. In 2008 there were 1590 calls for service for lock jocks. With this service come liability issues for damage while providing this service that could cost the city money. Most Locksmith companies charge on average \$50.00-\$75.00 for this service. The city could issue a bill in the form of a DCO (add this service on the “other” line on the DCO), for the customer to send payment to the city within 72 hrs just like parking summons’, if not paid within that time, it doubles just like all the other city ordinances . This would be a substantial form of revenue for the city on an annual basis. – JEFF - The Dover Police Department is one of the few agencies in the state that still provides this service. In our ongoing effort to strive for public support and community policing, this one act that provides us a great deal of appreciation and praise. If, due to limited resources of manpower we may opt to discontinue this service, however there are private vendors that provide this service for a fee and once again, the Police Department is not a for profit entity.
27. City inspections are currently using two systems to log inspections complaints. The HTE and the CRN. Both are accomplishing the same task duplicating work. It is suggested that utilizing the old complaint forms and doing away with the Customer Resource Management system would save city a lot of money. Not only because of the man hours spent duplicating entries, but also the cost of keeping the on-line system updated and running on a daily basis. –ANN MARIE, KAY, TERRY - See comments below:

Kay - As far as the CRM and HTE system are concerned, I am not familiar with the HTE System and what the requirements are. One thing that the CRM program does allow is to make sure issues are being responded to in a timely and professional matter. It allows someone to oversee what is being done that I do not believe the THE system would allow. I did find last year when some of the guys were complaining about the amount of time it was taking that the ones who complained had only had a couple (literally 2 or 3) in that month. Perhaps we could scale back on (saving time) all of the grass complaints etc that the guys find when out in the field, but then follow up using the CRM with the constituent complaints. I think things are being handled a little more timely, but that will not be much of a savings (other than time).

Ann Marie - There is some double-entry involved in CRM and H.T.E., but CRM is complaint tracking, which we don’t have in H.T.E. The purpose of each is different, and I don’t think either can replace the function of the other. If it’s important to track complaints, then I don’t think we can eliminate CRM. I know we can’t eliminate H.T.E.

28. The city uses outside Companies to monitor alarm systems within the city. Rather than contracting other outside agencies, the City should use their own dispatch centers (Electric or PD) to monitor them. This would eliminate costs for Security systems. –ED AND JEFF – The Police Department does not contract any outside vendor to monitor any alarm systems related to the Police Department. Our dispatch center has alarm and camera systems for our buildings that they regularly monitor. I believe that alarm companies charge fees to install, maintain, and monitor alarm systems and I don't know if there would be any cost savings associated with monitoring the alarms ourselves.
29. There are a large number of extra phone lines within the City that are being paid for but are not in use. Eliminate costs for those lines by removing them altogether, and only adding lines, on an as needed basis. – MARK CALLAN - We only add lines as requested by departments. I have started investigating which existing lines could be eliminated.
30. All standard vehicle maintenance work on City vehicles should be done by City Mechanics, rather than contracting outside Dealerships to do the work. However, all major warranty work should be done by the appropriate dealerships that apply. This is a huge expense for each Department and can save a substantial amount of money annually. Even if the City were to hire another mechanic to share the new work load, the cost of his annual pay would be far less than the Vehicle Maintenance costs each year. –ED & Police Dept - See comments below:
Police Department - We have been in contact with Ed and advised that he does not have the personnel to accomplish this unless his workforce is increased.

Ed Baker - The Fleet Auto Shop mechanics are currently performing all non-warranty work on City vehicles with the exception of the Police Department vehicles. The idea of the garage performing services on Police department vehicles was contingent upon hiring two mechanics to assist with the maintenance for the vehicles.

Currently the shop does not have proper staffing, funding for additional equipment, or the required space to provide the necessary services for additional vehicles. With these factors being considered, this proposal would not be a cost effective measure.
31. For the future, have one City polling place. Since only 10% of registered voters actually come out and vote, there's no reason to have multiple polling places. – CITY CLERK - I agree that this would reduce the cost of elections; however, many council members feel strongly that it is very important for the district polling places to be convenient to the residents.
32. Blue letters – Don't send a blue letter to customers until their account is past due for 3 days. Only send one. – TERRY – Blue letters are timed to allow customers sufficient time to take any necessary action to avoid disconnection. We are currently trying to use a new software program that will be able to place disconnection information on a bill with a past due balance. This would eliminate the blue letter altogether. There are some issues with this method – the process is complicated by programmer knowledge of the software, and date of disconnection will need to be extended about a week.

33. Don't provide an energy audit to customers for free. I can't believe we're going to, for free, go into a customer's home to show them where and how to reduce our revenue. Charge something for the service. – RON - **Senate Bill No. 106 was enacted by the State Legislature in 2009 that mandates a 2% electricity consumption savings and peak demand reduction by 2011, increasing to 15% by 2015. The energy audits are one of the tools that Dover will use to achieve this mandate and should be more cost effective than installing control equipment at each service location. Lastly, as a public entity we have the fiduciary duty to assist and educate our customers in energy consumption.**
34. If we make the computers at the library "For Library Functions Only", we can reduce the number of necessary computers, power consumption, maintenance, etc. It's turned into an internet café. Very little "library" stuff is done on them. – MARGIE - **A public library's core mission is to provide access to information, enrichment and reading. The provision of access to the Internet has become central to this mission in the years since the mid 1990's. Dover Public Library's computers are fully used by customers of all ages during all the hours of operation. Use of the computers for job seeking, resume creation, and resume submission has become increasingly in demand. So much so, that the Library is creating a twice weekly training program, beginning in September, to assist customers with learning how to do master these tasks. The computers are used for customer research, genealogical research, information seeking and communication. Later in the winter, the Library will implement a reader's advisory email service which will provide customers with suggestions for new books to consider. The computers located in the Children's Department are loaded with educational software which teaches, enriches, and develops cognitive and motor skills. Familiarity with computer hardware and software is increasingly a requirement for students of all ages and employers hiring personnel. The Library offers training classes in a variety of computer use and information seeking skills. Effective July 1, the Library eliminated the \$1 per day of free printing for customers and increased the per page printing cost to \$.15.**
35. Take our pickup truck and the Crown Vic that the tax office obviously doesn't need and give us a more efficient HHR. Two for one? – CHERYL - **I spoke with Ed Baker a couple of weeks ago. He had asked if I would be willing to "give" the Crown Vic to the IT Department. I agreed and to my knowledge, Mark Callan has also agreed. I will check Ed Baker on what I need to do to complete the process. As far as taking the pickup truck and the Crown Vic for a more efficient vehicle, I would like to defer to Ed Baker.**
36. Install motion sensor lighting in more places – restrooms, lounges, computer room, mail room, etc. – ED - **Have a memo or policy to have employees turn off lights in these areas, as opposed to purchasing and installing sensors. This would create a double cost savings.**
37. Install low energy lighting fixtures city wide. This would be an initial expense, but it would save in the long run. – ED - **This suggestion is already in force, fixtures are already being replaced (city-wide) to meet low energy requirements.**

38. When library's training laptops are due for replacement, don't replace with City money. \$40,000 and they're seldom used. Make them find more money if they have to have them. – MARGIE - The Library's laptop training lab is used several times each month. They are well attended by the public. A sampling of the classes recently held this spring and summer are: Computer Basics, On-line Health, Keyboarding Basics, Intro to Scanners, Microsoft PowerPoint, Searching the Internet, Email Basics, Online resources for Fund Raising. Computer hardware and software becomes obsolete quickly. Updating and replacement is essential to ensure operational and maintenance efficiencies.

City wide Ideas to save money

1. Christmas lights on Loockerman are lit from November until Feb/March....Should only be on from November just after Thanksgiving to Jan 1. (Huge electric expense) – TERRY - There is no way except by engineering estimate to know how much the lights cost. They are plugged into poles that are attached to unmetered street lights (meters would be cost prohibitive). The request seems like a fair suggestion, I do not see why the lights cannot be turned off after January 1. They do not go on until the Tree lighting ceremony in early December.
2. If the City Manager implements the 8 hr per month furlough for bargaining Units, ALL non-bargaining, as well as City Administration should also have to suffer a decrease in hours each month without pay to equal the percentage that is lost by everyone else. – DONE
3. Take home vehicles should be made available to employees from each Department only when they are on call. Take home vehicles have been issued to Department Heads who are NEVER on call, as well as issuing other City officials or administrators take home vehicles. Though there is no budget for new vehicles now, the take home vehicles that have already been issued still have expenses such as vehicle maintenance, and gas expenses, as well as car wash expenses. This can be eliminated by getting rid of them. By eliminating most of these take home vehicles, the City could sell or auction them to make money as well as saving all the other expenses that goes with keeping them. – TONY – A memo on this as already been submitted to City Council.
4. All Departments should shut down all computers at night when not in use. - YES
5. No more catering or serving food and refreshments at City Council meetings and upper management meetings/training events. –TRACI AND AMT – I have informed the Planning staff that the City will no longer provide refreshments for the Planning Commission quarterly workshops.

6. City council and committee/board members should pick up packets from City Hall. No more home deliveries. –TRACI AND AMT – I do not see this as a costly service. Members of the boards, commissions, committees and Council serve either as volunteers or for a very small stipend. Many have full time jobs that would preclude them from picking up packets. Inspectors spend most of their day on the road and can easily fit this service in with their routine trips.
7. Re-Evaluate all part time positions and lay off all Non-essential part time and temporary employees. – KIM AND TONY - I would prefer to discuss this cost saving idea in a face to face meeting. I have prepared a summary of part-time, temporary and committee members for review. I will provide it under separate cover.
8. All non-essential city services employees go to a 10hr days (City Hall/Reed Street ECT) and close on Fridays. Many State and County offices are currently under that schedule to save power and utility expenses. – TERRY - I have sent a memo to City Manager
9. Eliminate Medicare Part B for city management – ON THE TABLE
10. Do away with the City Employee Appreciation gift each year. – HR I agree. By eliminating the gift to the employees and the fire fighters this would result in an average savings of \$8,500 per year.

Memorandum

To: City Manager
From: Terry Tieman
Date: 9/15/2009
Re: Employee Cost Saving Suggestion for Four Ten Hour Days

Pros

Savings on utilities, infrastructure
Employees save on gasoline
Reduced emissions and traffic congestion
Reduction in absenteeism
Increased productivity especially in areas involving construction projects
More family time for staff.

Cons

The longer work days cause child care problems for some employees. Child care expense often increases.
There would be one day less per week for the public to conduct business with the city.
Increased fatigue levels in staff.
Less family time for staff – not available for breakfast, or evening events.
Savings are not of the magnitude that would solve major budget gaps.

In the past year, going to four ten hour days has gained some popularity. Most notably, the State of Utah went to four ten hour days in August 2008. For Utah, the biggest savings came from reducing utility expenses. After six months Utah reported a 10-20 percent reduction in utility consumption at half the state buildings included in the report. The state expects to eventually save \$3 million in energy costs. There were also marginal savings in janitorial costs.

Utah reports that a majority of employees prefer the new work schedule. Their customer satisfaction level is about the same as it has been before the switch. Utah has tried to improve e-commerce so that customers can conduct more business on line. They believe employees are getting more work done, using less overtime and fewer sick days.