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Phone (708)758-2060
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Distressed Unit Appeal Board
c/o Stephanie Russo
200 West Washington Street
State House Room 212
Indianapolis, IN 46204

February 16, 2010

Re: Gary, IN

Dear Ms. Russo,

This is an addendum to the letter I sent to you February 16, 2010 regarding Gary, IN. A viewpoint from Opinion page of the Post-Tribune was included.

I have found another letter from the Post-Tribune Opinion page that is pertinent to this matter.

I hope that you will have the time to read and consider this matter.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Thoesen

Faint mirrored text bleed-through from the reverse side of the page, including phrases like "I have found another letter from the Post-Tribune Opinion page that is pertinent to this matter."

YOUR VIEWS

Privatize the airport or allow Gary to die

The only way to save Gary is to privatize the airport. Unfortunately the Gary School Board is holding this process hostage. The jewel soon will be another failed endeavor.

Gary has had its chances over the past decade and has chosen to continue with business as usual. Not only has the municipality failed, so have the citizens by allowing the political machine to completely decimate the city.

Not only are there no real small businesses there to support the city and its spending, the city and citizens continue the drumbeat of high taxes on those remaining. Most recently, some citizens have clamored for an income tax on nonresidents working in the city.

Gary had its chances in the King administration to bring vision and development. The Steelheads, RailCats, restaurants and banks were not enough to bring the citizens together. The RailCats still bring in thousands from the suburbs, but Gary residents fail to support their team. Gary is dying and just needs to die.

Resources in our urban areas are thin at best, so we should invest in areas or cities, like Hammond, that have a chance for survival. Gary's education system has collapsed, with a less than 50 percent graduation rate.

Gary can't even provide the basics like infrastructure, street

repair, security, clean streets and neighborhoods or invest in the basic quality-of-life issues like its park system.

Gary can't even support its golden goose, Don Barden and the Majestic Star Casino, with the needed casino infrastructure. Now it has to deal with a closed Clive Avenue bridge.

Yes, Gary has a rich history, but history is just that — history. As we enter another year of economic recession, businesses that don't have the capital to survive will die. Now is the time for Gary to die, so the rest of the region can move on.

Chris Morrow
Dyer

Balance school budget with administration cuts

Again, the school city of Hobart has a shortfall in its budget. Why must we always cut the budget at the children's expense, cutting teaching staff and other jobs that are extremely necessary?

I think we need to cut at the top first. It seems the administration never has any plans except the above method in budget emergencies. Why do we need them? Maybe we can lay them off and save the budget crisis.

Does our school system exist to teach or does it exist to support an administration? The one-room schoolhouse never had a budget failure or an administrative staff.

Marcel Thomas
Hobart



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Distressed Unit Appeal Board
c/o Stephanie Russo
200 West Washington Street
State House Room 212
Indianapolis, IN 46204

February 8, 2010

Re: Gary, IN

Dear Ms. Russo,

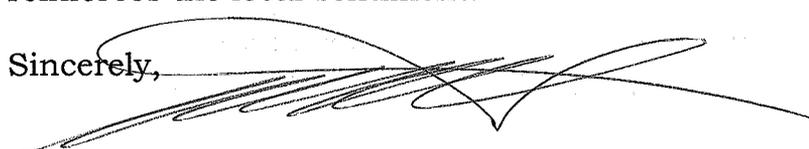
I am a resident of Gary, IN, Miller Beach area. My wife and I have enjoyed our neighbors and the beach for ten years. Side-bar, my wife's grandfather, Judge Ridgely, along with Judge Gary, co-founded the City of Gary.

I write to you, to STOP bailing out City of Gary. As residents, we know that, no one in city government is qualified to govern, and more important, be held accountable to it's citizens.

Let it go bankrupt, and have the State of Indiana install an administrator, and start to turn this once proud city around.

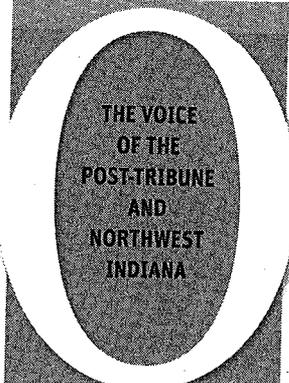
I include a letter to the editor from another Gary resident, which also reinforces the local sentiment.

Sincerely,



Joseph M. Thoesen

P.S. Like the definition of insanity "Keep doing the same thing over and over, but expecting a different result".



OPINION

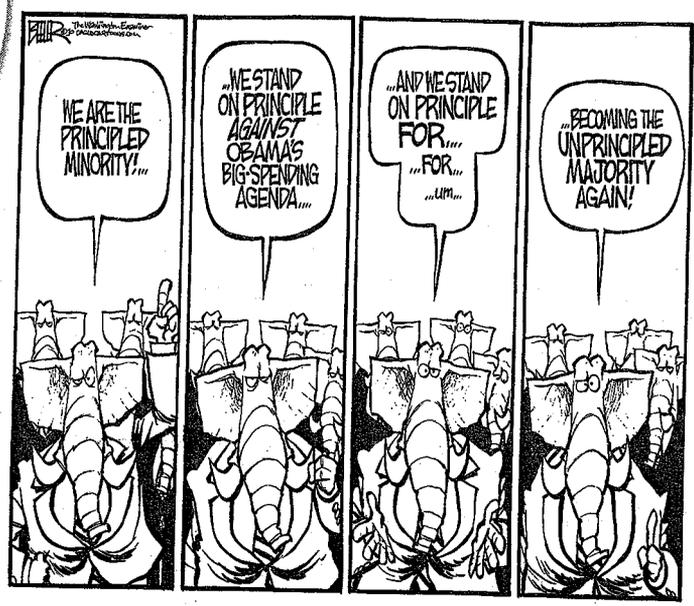
LISA TATINA
Publisher

PAULETTE HADDIX
Executive Editor

DIANE ADEN HAYES
Managing Editor

RICH JAMES
Editorial Page Editor

"I have no regrets proposing it. And I will kee
— GARY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER DARREN WASHINGTON, COMMENTING ON HIS PR



YOUR VIEWS

Gary can't survive on its current course

It was disturbing to hear that Mayor Clay gave the citizens of Gary an ultimatum: Either you accept what I do and plan, or "beat it."

Yes, the mayor has told the state that he will close fire stations and other public services, but he has failed to remove the administrators suggested by the report, such as the deputy mayor, while continuing to hire more cronies.

If one follows the dictates of Clay, Gary will be left as a ghost town before long. It's sad to read how surrounding cities view Gary as one deeply corrupted and unwilling to accept help from its neighbors. Moreover, this administration feels it can hang on while help arrives from downstate.

You can tear down all the houses you wish — and you really need to do so — but that's all for nothing if Gary leaders fail to change their understanding of the residents. We sit here, 10 years into the 21st century, with nothing but dreams.

I don't dislike the mayor, but as a citizen I have a right to disagree with where he's taking this city. We're already in the pits. Is there any place further down to go?

The state should not send any more money up here unless it's under the control of a receiver. The state already has acted prudently regarding the township assessor's office; now it's City

Hall's turn to learn how to run a city by direction.

Roy Xavier Roddy
Gary

What if president was dealt this hand?

I look at President Obama's first year in office and say, "What if?"

What if the banks had taken the money we loaned them and had figured out (with the president) a way to extend home mortgages and lower mortgage rates to help people save their homes?

What if the banks had figured a way to loan money to small businesses that had been pretty successful up to last year?

What if Congress, realizing our country is in trouble, had voted to raise the percentage of yearly income tax on all earnings of \$100,000 and above to 45 percent, including all dividends and bonuses?

What if the press lauded the president for all the good projects he has accomplished, as well as those not completed?

Instead, the health care bill the president wanted has been ruined by the Senate with thousands of pages of gobbledygook. Now the president is blamed, even though he has not received the bill.

Lastly, what if the country and media booed hatemongers instead of playing up to them? This is freedom of speech gone wild.

We have a brilliant, honest, hardworking president who is saddled with problems far

greater than President Hoover during the Great Depression. He had no air transportation or wars or the racial hatred of millions with which to contend.

June Brown
Gary

Community thanked by food pantry board

We wish to extend a heartfelt thanks to the wonderful Portage individuals, churches, schools and businesses for your generosity both during the holidays and throughout the entire year. It is important to note that all your donations go toward the purchase of food and other necessities, since there are no paid positions in this not-for-profit organization.

This past year, we never could have served 8,412 families (1,050 of which were new), totaling 26,429 people, without your continuing support. Unfortunately, this number represents a 30 percent increase over 2008 in families needing assistance.

A special thanks is in order to our many wonderful volunteers who braved the elements to open the pantry. Their dedication is amazing, and Portage is very fortunate to have so many people willing to contribute both time and effort.

Again, thank you to everyone for stepping up as the economy seems to keep slowing down.

Bill Fekete
board president
Portage Township Food Pantry

Russo, Stephanie

From: Gary Votes [garyvotes@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2010 3:48 PM
To: D2ogg1@aol.com; Dan Lowery; Tom Eaton; Ted Prettyman; Jon Seidel; Carol Smith; Carole Barnes; Eric Reaves; Nora's Miller Email List; Andy Young; Russo, Stephanie; Wendy Prettyman
Subject: GSD cutting off water service in violation of Regulatory Commission Order.

http://www.in.gov/iurc/files/43668order_012010.pdf

A Miller resident who refuses to pay her trash fee until such time as the Court has ruled that the City of Gary has a fee ordinance in place, had her water shut off today (Thursday) for not paying her trash fee.

The State Utilities Regulatory Commission has ruled that there is no provision in state law to terminate water service.

Pursuant to Ind. Code § 36-9-25-11.5, a municipal sewage entity "may require that the water utility providing water service to a delinquent user discontinue service until payment of all overdue [sewage] user fees, together with any penalties provided in this section, are received by the municipality." Such section does not provide for disconnection based on a customer's failure to pay trash collection fees.

Even after Janet Walker notified GSD that she would withhold trash collection payment but paid, in full, all of her water and sewer fees, she still had her water shut off by GSD.

How did this happen?

It was because the GSD received Ms. Walker's payment but instead of applying her payment to the sewer fee, they transferred money from that payment to trash collection fee so that it would leave her sewer bill unpaid.

It is really like taking a payment for sewer services and instead of applying credit to her account for sewer services, the GSD went out and bought donuts for the office pool.

You cannot do that! It may even be illegal to ignore the payment of the customer and apply it to a different account. This is what GSD has been doing since the trash collection fee began to appear on GSD sewer bills.

We have contacted the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission to keep them informed of GSD's illegal action. They are trying to circumvent the intent of the law and are taking money from customers and applying it elsewhere.

We were told that the IURC regards Ms. Walker's water shut off as an emergency and they will work with Indiana Water to have her service restored.

The order of January 20, 2010 states:

4. Commission Findings. Where a municipality has contracted with another utility to perform disconnections, the statute allows for disconnection of a customer upon non-payment of sewer charges, but does not authorize disconnection for non-payment of other, unrelated charges. I.C. § 36-9-25-11.5. The Commission must therefore ensure that any disconnection activity is limited to disconnection for non-payment of sewer services under I.C. § 36-9-25-11.5.

We shall keep you posted on developments....

Richard Barnes, Ph.D.
Gary, IN

Russo, Stephanie

From: Gary Votes [garyvotes@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2010 8:45 AM
To: D2ogg1@aol.com; Dan Lowery; Jerry Davich; Carole Carlson; Jon Seidel; Ted Prettyman; Times Times News; Tom Eaton; Carol Smith; Carole Barnes; Andy Young; Jim Nowacki; Nora Glenn; Russo, Stephanie
Subject: DUAB and the City of Gary...

Here is an article by Jon Seidel that should not go unnoticed. An obvious error by DUAB for not having closer oversight, and/or the City of Gary in their desperation to pay their bills.

All this at a time when DUAB is coming to a conclusion about Gary's second request for property tax cap exemptions and higher property taxes for the people of Gary (the highest in the state of Indiana already!).

Based on experience of the first year, and the faulty numbers presented by the fiscal manager, PFM, they should just forget about any additional "relief" for the city. Gary has once again demonstrated it's inability to govern responsibly and in good faith.

=====

Tax fund pay back muddled

(<http://www.post-trib.com/news/lake/2041577.gduab0211.article>)

February 11, 2010

BY JON SEIDEL, (317) 631-7400

INDIANAPOLIS -- Gary government units that successfully petitioned a state tax appeals board last year might need to return some money, Auditor Tim Berry said Wednesday.

It isn't clear how much cash is at stake, Berry said, nor is it clear where that money will go. He said credits granted by the Distressed Unit Appeals Board to the city of Gary and other Gary units appear to have been miscalculated.

The odds of that error favoring the Gary units, he said, are poor. However, he said, a full review of tax distributions for 2008-pay-2009 is under way to make sure there are no further errors.

The state review began earlier this week after Curtis Whitaker, an accountant for Calumet Township, contacted the state to discuss the potential error. He said tax collections for the township were lower than he had expected.

Whitaker said his own review of tax distributions suggests money meant for units that did not petition the DUAB, like the township and the Gary schools, ended up going to the taxing units that did petition.

A spokeswoman for the Gary schools said Tuesday their tax collections were unexpectedly low, but she declined to speculate on where the money went.

The Indiana Distressed Unit Appeals Board intended to give \$23.5 million in relief last year to the city of Gary, the Gary Stormwater Management District, the Gary Public Transportation Corp. and the Gary/Chicago International Airport.

Most the money, \$22.8 million, went to the city of Gary.

Berry said the units that petitioned the DUAB haven't been contacted yet by the state. He said his office is waiting to contact them until after the review is finished.

It could be completed as soon as today.

Gary Controller Celita Green told the Post-Tribune last month the city received a check for \$54 million from 2008 pay 2009 tax collections. That's \$7 million less than anticipated.

The city budget was calculated on an 80 percent tax collection rate, but collections turned out to be closer to 72 percent.

2-3-10

To Duab

I am writing to you to encourage you not to grant an exception to Gary, In concerning the tax caps.

I live in miller beach, part of Gary, and we already pay a high percentage of the taxes in Gary & Lake County. Because I am a senior on a retired income, a large property owner, and owner of an older home, the tax burden is a hardship.

Since the state law change in 2002 we have seen the house settle in at a 300% increase. Similar percentages for our other vacant and business property. The only salvation to remain in Gary is the tax caps which we all fought hard for.

Gary, because of a declining population from 160,000 to 90,000, is literally being saved by U.S. Steel, Casino boats, and the miller area real estate. Miller pays over 47% of the property taxes. Most citizens in Gary have such small assessed values they pay very little.

Lake County needs an income tax, Gary needs an income tax, Gary needs to be accountable for all federal and state funds. Waste & graft & theft have been documented in the past. Presently, officials are trying but they are poorly trained & still not accountable. People in Gary won't pay their fair share. Let the federal people, the state, the county bail out Gary. Don't keep changing rules for the Betty and dumping excess cap money on us who have remained & are still trying!

Thank you for your hard work and considering those of us already paying unfair, very large, real estate taxes.

Sincerely,
Jerome L. Picbford
9001 Lake Shore Drive
Gary, In. 46403

P.S my taxes are over \$50,000.00