

Dear Mayor Byrd, City Council Members, and City Manager Hodgen:

I attended the budget work session yesterday and found it very educational. Prior to that meeting I did not know that Harrisonburg had Financial Management Policies that went into great detail about many aspects of the budget. As always happens when I watch the City Council work, I was impressed by the time and effort spent by the Council and staff on making good decisions for our community.

I urge you to allocate dollars in the 2014 budget to fund energy-efficiency renovations to our city buildings. and also to establish a dedicated staff position within the city to further develop energy reduction, energy efficiency, and sustainability practices. I have seen the letter sent by the Harrisonburg Green Network and fully support the request made by it.

Regarding energy efficiency, my understanding is that in fiscal year 2012, we spent over \$229,000.00 in electricity and natural gas costs on the Public Safety Building. Although I know this includes the ECC on the fifth floor and that many parts of the building are in use twenty-four hours a day, this is over \$19,000 a month in energy costs for just one public building. A large portion of dollars spent on energy costs are dollars that are given to large energy companies that have no concern for our City, the valley, or our quality of life. Dollars spent on energy efficiency upgrades promote jobs in the area, help spur innovation, and contribute to increasing our quality of life.

We should not only make our public buildings more energy efficient, but we should have at least one City of Harrisonburg employee whose specific job is to research and implement energy reduction, energy efficiency, and sustainability practices. Whether that job is called “energy systems manager” or “program engineer” or “sustainability coordinator” is less important than that we have a knowledgeable employee doing that job. The City has many buildings, projects, and programs that would benefit from such a position.

Thank you for all that you do and for your attention to this request.

Thomas D. Domonoske