



August 15, 2018

We would like respond to inaccuracies in recent news reports. It is not our intention to assess blame or finger point for this situation. But, it is necessary in this hyper-information age to address falsehoods and innuendos appearing in commercial news stories. They are damaging to reputations and they undermine the efforts of everyone working to help us in the road to recovery.

For some of us, we were born here, chose to return here and raise our families – other have adopted Pascagoula as their home. We work here; we worship here; and we are active in our kids' ball teams and schools. We devote time to charities and important causes and *all we want is to make Pascagoula better*. Inaccurate statements and innuendoes enflame emotions and could also make those in public service feel endangered – all because of baseless assertions.

This administration – the Mayor, Council, and city officials - continue to work tirelessly to lead the city *out* of its financial crisis. This administration is responsible for ordering the forensic audit and going public quickly with its devastating findings. When you take off a band aid and find the wound requires stiches, you don't simply put another band aid on it. That's our mindset and that's how we are proceeding.

Following the results of the forensic auditor, and with the guidance of our financial and legal advisors, we have unraveled a mess created by others. Now, we are navigating a way out that won't completely thwart our city's efforts to grow and prosper; so we can continue to be a nice place to visit and live.

Here is one simple fact we ask everyone to remember:

Municipal budgeting is a zero based budgeting system. So parsing out quarterly expenditures and accusing this administration of overspending is more of the same "smoke and mirrors" that was created by prior unrealistic projections of income; comingling of funds from bonds with the general fund; and use of certain line items to create the perception of a balanced budget.

Moving forward during this budget process we encourage all citizens to *engage with us* – attend a Council Meeting; call your elected officials; use the AskTheMayor@cityofpascagoula.com mailbox and your questions will be addressed. Please visit the "Road to Recovery" web portal, with links to budget workshop recordings and related documents at: www.cityofpascagoula.com/roadtorecovery

