



## Letter: Granite City should have planned better

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The CATO Institute reported as far back as 1993 that although cities have a multitude of problems, too little money is not one of them. A 1988 private audit of nearly bankrupt Scranton, Penn., stated the "the city government appears to exist for the benefit of its employees instead of the people." They concluded that cities were not under-financed, but often over-budgeted.

Regrettably, these conclusions could describe the operation principles and skewed priorities of too many ailing cities. Nowhere is this more evident than in Granite City.

The mayor is quoted as saying "the city is living month to month." No consideration was given, no plans laid on the table to reduce personnel, contract out services or eliminate services. The only acceptable solution was to increase the sewer fees 10.78 percent. One alderman was reported to have said "we (the city) should take care of this as soon as possible, starting July 1."

City Council Wastewater Treatment Committee Chairman Bill Davis is quoted as saying "he didn't know if the increase was permanent or not." Absurd, of course it is permanent.

Councilman Jackstadt stated "we need these infrastructure improvements done in the city sewer system."

This is the same rhetoric we heard the last time the rates were increased. Many of sewer repairs that were needed then are still awaiting attention.

If the city was serious, they would hold these funds in a separate account to be used for infrastructure improvements only. If the city was serious, they would have studied other alternatives before declaring the fee increase the only solution available to their financial problems. If the city was serious, they would have a written detailed plan on how, when and where these funds were going to be spent.

Under the ruse of infrastructure improvements, I am afraid the sewer fee increase is nothing more than a source for funding pay increases for city employees as they arise.

In a haste to "do something" the city took the easy way out again and placed the burden of their financial mismanagement on the backs of home and business owners.

O what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive.

*John L. Culiberk Sr., Granite City*