

Wailing Wall comments from Budget Workshop #4
Pinn Memorial Baptist Church
Monday, February 23

- Closing of youth recreation centers. Summer youth programs. Abandoned houses not properly sealed. Vacant lots unkept.
- Illegal fire arms importation into Philadelphia.
- Cutting funding to the kids is giving them to the streets. Without guidance they could grow up to be future cop killers if they don't have the resources to mentor, libraries, and recreation.
- More parks. More recreation. More public libraries. Young people must stay engaged – idol hands are destructive hands. When these young people are old enough to vote, they will increase taxes if they have benefited from positive services.
- Why are so many of these so hard for non-drivers to get to? When do you raise GBR on businesses over \$500K?
- Mural Arts plays a role in the visual transformation of the city.
- Isn't the very concept of a "wailing wall" kind of condescending?
- It would be a mistake to cut homeless services. Then those who lose their jobs and need shelter will have nowhere to stay. Think about the children. Would you want your friends or relatives who lose their homes to be without shelter? Please do not touch the OSH budget. It will have devastating effects on our city and neighborhoods.
- Continue to provide funding for safety prevention and intervention services, Townwatch, school and after-school programs, and AVRCP curfew centers. Summer jobs for youth. Maintain Health Department budget.
- Mural Arts is building programs for junior high and high school students, youth-at-risk, and community beautification projects.
- Take God out of the equation and you'll always have a ball of confusion. Avoid prayer and you'll preyed on. Cut youth funding and you'll lose a generation.
- If the city is considering an increase in revenues to help address the budget deficit, a land value tax is perhaps the best choice. It requires no involvement from the state and can be implemented immediately. Assuming an annual deficit of \$200 million, a land value tax would yield \$120 million with an average increase for homeowners of only \$106.
- Collect the \$8 million in debt from the Eagles now! Philadelphia needs the money to help its residents.
- Keep the health centers open.
- In times when all of us are suffering, it is imperative that those suffering before the crisis are remembered – the homeless and low income. Keep shelters open – offer more services, not less. Cut somewhere else.
- There are golden opportunities to make libraries "self-funding," through the de-accessorizing or disposition of valuable antiques and artwork, using the services of talented subject matter experts. I belong to a small team of experts who have already tried to contact the Mayor, but have received NO RESPONSE. He is looking a gift horse in the mouth, but it isn't too late to turn this matter around AT NO COST TO THE CITY!

- Fairmont Park Commission needs to be available to the public. We need to know where their meetings are. Please address the homeless issue and take the mentally disturbed off the streets. We need our community centers open and arts and crafts for the children.
- Please remember support for neighborhood-based arts and cultural organizations are especially essential as safe spaces for youth and violence-prevention (in addition to economic development and community development engines).
- I hope the budget money will go to recreation all throughout the inner city of Philadelphia. Fairmont Park needs park benches, picnic tables, water fountains, playground equipment, and free concerts in the summer. Please address street cleaning in these areas. 40th Street Bridge needs fixing – this has been out for 20 years. This will create jobs.
- What programs such as recreation centers are being implemented in West Philadelphia, particularly Wynnefield area? When will property values be assessed for the Wynnefield area according to the housing market? Will there be any reduction on property tax?
- Think about our children, especially the homeless and those whose parents are in prison. Don't cut social services to the homeless, drug addicts, and those who need mental health. Be aware of crime rate among the angry and the unemployed. What about the people who owe the city money?
- Collect what is owed. Don't cut services.
- My son Richard needs a job, he was lay off.
- With the high rate of unemployment in the city of Philadelphia, why do we send our gas works payments to New Jersey for processing?
- Pay attention to your constituents. Come here not Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church.
- Please enforce regulations on recycling and trash.
- Stop 10 year tax abatements. We lose all of that money in three to five years. Also, do not send out a big fire truck for a medical problem.
- We should collect revenues, particularly from the sports teams. Don't cut essential services.
- Instead of progress, the city's proposal sets us back by decades. The children of the future need a place to have fun and receive mentoring programs.
- Eliminate Controller or IG office (merge).
- First, I would like to thank God for just keeping us, when we don't keep ourselves.
- Stop the tax abatement for selected buyers!!
- Please consider reaching out to foundations and others who are able and willing to help in lieu of cuts.
- Cut City Council number and staff.
- City/state/federal government need to offer citizens who volunteer 10 hours or more in community services a tax break (i.e. wage tax). Citizens who owe taxes should be able to work their tax bill off (i.e. contractor, lawyer, plumber, and city workers).
- Don't cut parks and recreation! If you do, it turns into problems with crime, trash, education, health, etc. Small investment = big return!
- Maybe different things can be open only like two weeks?
- Lower class size by creating two groups per day (7am-12pm and 12pm-5pm) for K-3.
- Please don't cut the health centers – they provide essential services to people who have nowhere else to go.

- Suggestions for Health Department: Do not close any health centers, Strictly adhere to policy that health centers are only for documented citizens of Philadelphia, Small co-pay for prescription drugs at health center pharmacy.
- The recreation center activities need to be available for the children, for the camps, and pools. Keep library open, too.
- Drop DROP! This would save a lot of money. Keep health care centers open.
- I feel we could save libraries and other money by decreasing the number of people needed to be employed by the city, by promoting volunteerism, therefore, saving money, giving people a way to give back, and giving young people something to be involved in and to be proud of their city.
- Budget cuts is neoliberalism on the local level. We need to reconstruct our economy so it serves the people, not the rich!
- Cut \$200 million from the \$700 million expansion of convention center.
- The city can save money by reducing street resurfacing. Repave only those streets that really need it. The city should not try to save money on reducing EMS ambulances. There are too few EMS units now and they generate revenue through insurance billing. The city can increase its revenue through fair taxation of wealthy property owners but not increasing, but reducing senior citizens' property taxes.
- Community policing.
- Our organization helps each summer and we have seen such wonderful progress through the two years that we have been out at Tus(?)an. We are from Freedom Christian Bible Fellowship.
- If you close the recreation center, what will you do with all the inner-city youth that have nothing to do and no place legal to go?
- Be aggressive in collecting taxes from deadbeats.
- Essential services are essential! Protect services to the homeless – we can't afford the medical, judicial, and ethical costs of cutting beds and services.
- Please enact a just, fair revenue enhancer – the land value tax. Give everyone a tax abatement.
- The Mural Arts program benefits school children of Philadelphia by providing art instruction and after-school programs. Please continue funding for this important project.
- Philly will receive \$15 million to \$30 million in homeless prevention money from the stimulus plan. Move current general fund prevention money to shel(?) line items in OSH Budget, fill in gaps with prevention money.
- Build Southport, 25,000 jobs depend on it. New jobs.
- Casinos are a bad idea. Let's make our city known for healing addictions, not perpetuating them.
- The city needs to work more closely with other organizations to make up for cuts in certain areas. For example, if you cut recreation center hours, support organizations like PUFFA, PANA, etc.
- PNH residents have nowhere to go.
- Recreation is the way our communities share ideas. Our youth must learn to share their ideas socially, not physically.
- The DRDA has spent millions of money on funding the stadiums we now have in Philadelphia. Yet because of shortfalls, the authority needs to raise tolls and continue to

fund projects that do not address maintenance funds of the bridges. We are astonished that new projects are being funded in light of the toll increases and the part that sports owners refuse to pay what they owe.

- I want more information on all these choices – something more detailed I could read ahead of time.
- Automate municipal service building service functions as much as possible. Find efficiencies by updating work rules.
- Lower taxes. Build more schools.
- The giving out of pensions in advance of retirement, and giving only officials “double pay” is a disgrace. No wonder the pension fund is running out of money.
- I think we should keep Baker’s Park open because it is important to us! Please keep it open.
- Instead of cuts this is an opportunity for the council of mayors to demand a redistribution of revenue and wages that favor poor and working people.
- Do not reduce public health services. There’s already a large demand and even greater need with loss of jobs/coverage.
- Roll back BPT tax cuts and exempt small businesses with incomes under \$500,000.
- Convert wage tax to business tax.
- Roll back wage tax cuts and reinstate full working poor tax credit.
- Keep health centers open.
- No need for City Controller or Inspector General. Can we ask what they do?
- Create more multi-purpose centers. Combine library services, recreation, and career links with neighborhood schools.
- Woe is me, I’m a city worker, living in the city, paying taxes, volunteering in the community and now I must solve the problem of the budget. Woe is me!