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OCTOBER 27, 2022
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

Cache County Council Unanimously Expresses Dismay with County Budget Process

The Cache County Council announced Thursday that actions by the County Executive have created tremendous dysfunction in County government and negatively impacted the citizens of the County.

During the Council meeting earlier this week, Cache County Executive David Zook presented a dramatically different budget than the draft the Council had been working with since early September. The tentative budget contains no line-item detail and appears to use aggressive sales tax revenue projections and building fee increases to close the \$2.4 million dollar deficit contained in previous budget documents. In addition, it seems vital county services such as road projects and maintenance have been significantly reduced. "Talk about confusion," said Councilmember David Erickson.

This new budget, which was emailed to the Council after the start of the meeting on Tuesday, was unexpected. Although the Council has been actively engaged in the budget process throughout the year, it has been challenging due to the lack of communication from the Executive. Councilmember Karl Ward commented, "In my six years on the council, this is the worst budget year I've ever seen as far as process."

After announcing the dramatically changed budget, Mr. Zook left the council meeting and did not return to discuss the changes or engage in productive, public dialogue with the Council. This has been a recurring theme throughout the year. He has canceled or refused to schedule budget committee hearings since early this year and has been absent for a majority of Council meetings. This hasn't happened in the County's history.

Throughout the year, council members have expressed dismay that the historically collegial relationship they've enjoyed with department heads has been severely curtailed. As a result, the information needed to develop a sound and responsible budget has been lacking. Even today, the Council doesn't have the detail needed to perform their budget duties in an effective manner.

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