

City OKs 2009 budget

By Barney Burke, Leader Staff Writer

Wednesday, December 03, 2008

The only people who spoke up Monday night when the City Council passed its 2009 budget were Boiler Room supporters.

Youths as well as adults gave heartfelt testimony of the nonprofit organization's role as "more than a place for teens to hang out."

Chauncey Tudhope-Locklear, a Boiler Room intern, said he originally had a negative impression of the coffeehouse. But now, he's stocking condoms in the restroom, helping homeless people, assisting a knitting group and running a bike repair program.

A woman spoke of how the Boiler Room helped her brother overcome drug and alcohol problems, and go on to college. A man said he had preconceived, negative views of the place, but getting involved in the Boiler Room helped him deal with a drug problem.

"My life wasn't going so well," said another young man. "I was failing in school," he said. "They [Boiler Room people] helped me so much."

Councilor Laurie Medlicott said she was going to vote against the \$24,000 in funding until she learned the Boiler Room had broadened its mission. The Boiler Room now opens at 8 a.m. so that people staying at the homeless shelter at the American Legion Hall have a place to go in the morning. "I consider that a really valuable service," she said of the Boiler Room's expansion.

The Boiler Room vote was 7-0, but the 2009 budget passed 6-0 with Brent Butler dissenting.



Boiler Room intern Chauncey Tudhope-Locklear tells the City Council on Dec. 1 of the benefits provided by the Boiler Room. The council voted 7-0 to give the nonprofit \$24,000 in 2009. - Photo by Barney Burke