

City Council

Mayor Neysa Hinton City Manager
Vice Mayor Diana Rich
Sandra Maurer
Jill McLewis
Stephen Zollman

City Administration

City Manager/City Attorney Larry McLaughlin
Email: lmclaughlin@cityofsebastopol.org
Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, MMC, Mary Gourley
Email: mgourley@cityofsebastopol.org
7120 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA 95472
Phone: 707-823-1153



**CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
MINUTES FOR Regular City Council Meeting of June 20, 2023
As Approved by the City Council at their regular meeting of July 18, 2023**

Please note that minutes of meetings are not meant to be verbatim minutes and are meant to be the City’s record of a summary of actions that took place at the meeting. The vote/action is the required information of the meeting actions that took place. Approved minutes are available on the City Council Meetings page.

<https://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/Meeting-Event.aspx>

Meeting was held in Person and Virtual /Remote Participation
Zoom Link used for providing public comment/Live Stream is utilized for viewing only of Meeting

The public is advised that pursuant to Government Code section 54957.5 all writings submitted to the City and City Council are public records and will be made available for review.

6:00 pm City Council Regular Meeting

Call to Order: Mayor Hinton called the Regular Meeting to Order at 6:09 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present: Mayor Neysa Hinton
Vice Mayor Diana Gardner Rich
Councilmember Sandra Maurer
Councilmember Jill McLewis
Councilmember Stephen Zollman

Absent: None

Staff: City Manager/City Attorney Larry McLaughlin
Assistant City Manager/City Clerk Mary Gourley
Administrative Services Director Ana Kwong
Engineer Mario Landeros
GHD Toni Bertolero
Interim Fire Chief Jack Piccinini
Planning Director Kari Svanstrom
Police Chief Ron Nelson
Public Works Superintendent Dante Del Prete

STATEMENTS OF ABSTENTION BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Emergency Circumstances – means a physical or family medical emergency that prevents a member from attending in person.

- a. The member requires the legislative body to allow them to participate in the meeting remotely due to the “emergency circumstances” and the legislative body takes action to approve the request.
- b. The legislative body requires a general description (generally not exceeding 20 words) of the circumstances relating to the member’s need to appear remotely at the given meeting, this shall not require a member to disclose any medical diagnosis or disability, or any personal medical information that is already exempt under existing law.

Limitations:

May not be used by a member to teleconference for a period of more than three (3) consecutive months or 20% of regular meetings (4 meetings for City Council) within a calendar year, or more than two (2) meetings per calendar year if the board meets less than ten (10) times per calendar year.

Members participating remotely must do so through both audio and visual technology and must publicly disclose whether any individual over the age of 18 is present at the remote location with the member and the general nature of the member’s relationship with the individual.

Required Procedures for Remote Participation under AB 2449

1. Notice and General Description. A member shall make a written request to participate remotely at a meeting as soon as possible. The request must state whether the member is claiming “just cause” or “emergency circumstances” and shall include a general description explaining their need to meet remotely. Members must make a separate request for each meeting in which they seek to participate remotely.

Mayor Hinton requested: “Due to a medical procedure earlier this afternoon, I am requesting per AB 2449 that I participate in tonight’s (June 20th, 2023) meeting virtually. I will use both audio and video capabilities throughout the meeting and am submitting this request in writing with this note to the clerk, and will additionally make a statement and request a vote at the beginning the tonight’s City Council meeting for a vote of the full Council when the meeting is in session following roll call.”

2. Action on the Request for Remote Participation due to “Emergency Circumstances”. The legislative body must take action on a request to participate remotely due to “emergency circumstances” at the earliest opportunity. If the request does not allow sufficient time to place proposed action on such a request on the posted agenda for the meeting for which the request is made, the legislative body may take action at the beginning of the meeting in accordance with the requirements of the Brown Act for taking action on items of business not appearing on the posted agenda.
3. Limitations on Frequency. A member cannot participate solely by teleconference based on emergency circumstances for more than three (3) consecutive months or more than twenty (20) percent of the agency’s regular meetings, or more than two meetings per year if the agency meets fewer than 10 times per year. A member participating remotely under the “just cause” provision is limited to two (2) remote meetings per calendar year.
4. Required Disclosures for Remote Participation. A member participating telephonically shall publicly disclose at the meeting before any action is taken, whether any other individuals 18 years of age or older are present in the room at the remote location with the member, and the general nature of the member’s relationship with any such individuals.
5. Audio and Visual Participation Required. A member of the legislative body participating from a remote location under the AB 2449 rules for teleconferencing must participate through both audio and visual technology during the entire meeting. A member’s notice and general description of need to appear remotely must include a

statement that the member will participate with both audio and video capabilities turned on throughout the meeting.

Mayor Hinton opened for questions.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: I just want to follow up. I don't know when it was sent, but I still don't have it in my in my inbox. I just want to put that on the record.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: Just in response to that. I did not know as part of the procedure that I was supposed to send something in writing until right before within the last half hour and so I did so at that point.

City staff commented we also just recently received it, and my apologies, the email was send to City staff but was directed to City Council in the email itself and staff's error for not forwarding it. Staff will forward it right now to the City Council.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I just want confirmation from staff that the procedure that we're following here so long as we have a motion and vote and supportive it does allow participation by Mayor Hinton.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin stated that is correct.

Mayor Hinton opened for public comment.

Linda Berg commented as follows: Certainly this is interesting that this exists and I appreciate the Mayor going out to public comment prior to passing the motion. I'm hoping at this City Council meeting that any time people are recusing themselves, that it'll be done up front rather than wait until that item pops up during the agenda.

MOTION:

Vice Mayor Rich moved and Councilmember McLewis seconded the motion to approve the request from Mayor Hinton for Remote Participation utilizing AB 2449 due to "Emergency Circumstances".

Mayor Hinton called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote.

VOTE:

Ayes: Councilmembers Maurer, McLewis, Zollman, Vice Mayor Rich and Mayor Hinton
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

City Council Action: Approved the request from Mayor Hinton for Remote Participation utilizing AB 2449 due to "Emergency Circumstances".

Minute Order Number: 2023-149

SALUTE TO THE FLAG: Mayor Hinton led the salute to the flag.

PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS: None

STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: Conflicts of interest may arise in situations where a public official deliberating towards a decision, has an actual or potential financial interest in the matter before the Council. In accordance with state law, an actual conflict of interest is one that would be to the private financial benefit of a public official, a relative or a business with which the Councilmember is associated. A potential conflict of interest is one that could be to the private financial benefit of a Councilmember, a relative or a business with which the Councilmember is associated. A Councilmember must publicly announce potential and actual conflicts of interest, and, in the case of actual conflict of interest, must refrain from participating in debate on the issue or from voting on the issue and must remove themselves from the dais.

Mayor Hinton stated she had a conflict of interest for Item Number 6 as well as Agenda Item Number 8 for Discussion of City Manager budget proposal as she may have a potential conflict as she may know someone who may be applying.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA (FIRST COMMENT PERIOD):

Up to Twenty (20) Minute Time Limit (Two Minutes for up to ten speakers). Additional public comment will be held at the end of the discussion and action items for up to an additional twenty (20) minutes. Mayor has discretion to allow for additional time beyond the 20 minutes allocated for public comment dependent upon the subject matter or number of speakers.

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Process for calling on Speakers: Mayor or designee shall ask for public comment as follows: Speakers to be called on in an alternate manner (One speaker in person to be called on first; then one speaker remote to be called on second with additional speakers to be called on in the same manner) based upon the time limit.

Paul commented as follows: I'm here on behalf of the EMF safety network. As you know, we measured the RF levels for the cell tower in April. We were dismayed and shocked at the results: The RF levels of the library City Hall, the Senior Center, the apartments across the street and much of the downtown were 1000s of times higher than the maximum safety levels established by science, which is about 30 microwatts per meter squared. The research also clearly states that the levels of RF radiation that were exposed to downtown are devastating to human health and the environment. That what the science says really, no doubt, there's 1000s of studies that say the same thing. Most of us don't feel the ill effects. Now, this is a cumulative situation where it takes quite a bit of time for these ill effects, which are outlined in the table. Such as immune suppression, neurological damage, early onset dementia and cancer, we realize that cities are really constrained of what you can do because of the SEC regulations. There are, however, some actions that you can do, these are modest, they're not going to cost a lot. You can take these to limit public exposure to RF radiation: the first would be to obtain from cell phone providers for the cell tower at city hall. the frequencies, the power output, and any other data of the cell tower and then give this information to the public. The second would be to retain an electronic engineer or electrical engineer. The third is to review the city's contract with Crown Castle to see if there's a change that we can get out of it. See if we can lower the output and also examine the potential liabilities for harms resulting from the cell tower.

Myriah commented as follows: I'm here for a couple of reasons tonight. The first is to publicly report that the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Association are in the process of joining forces for the betterment of all businesses in Sebastopol. We've taken the first steps in the process and have begun discussion on how this will look moving forward. The new SDA President and I have spent time the last two Tuesdays walking the streets and visiting businesses to let them know of the merger and to address any concerns they may have regarding their business and how we may be able to help this collaboration bring strength in numbers and more unified support for our business community.

Sidnee commented as follows: I'm here as a member of the EMF safety networks executive committee. I'd like to state publicly that we have recently submitted a cell tower report to the Council and staff on our findings regarding the levels of radiofrequency radiation, or RFR in the downtown Sebastopol area. One of the things we're proposing to the Council is to establish a subcommittee with citizen representation to study the issue of RFR and EMFs in our environment, and one of the goals of the subcommittee could be to make recommendations to the public on how we can all limit our exposures and be safe. This subcommittee will be at no cost to you unless you choose to hire experts. However, we know of several experts who will be willing to donate their time to address the subcommittee and the Council. We can all learn together and ask the important questions. What makes this so important? Unlike with other forms of toxins, wireless radiation, and EMFs are little understood by the general public. Every day our exposure increases, so does the exposure to our environment. We are all up against a powerful industry that controls the airwaves in many respects. I have with me a series of peer reviewed scientific papers. I'm providing summary copies for the Council tonight. We'll be submitting complete copies tomorrow. The effects from about 20 samples are for all forms of biological life, and perhaps most shocking to me is the estimation that 1/3 of all migratory bird species could be extinct within 10 years. If this toxin is known just now, time is not on our side.

Kate commented as follows: As many of you know, I regularly speak on why we need a well-staffed Police Department. Tonight I would like to say thank you to our public safety community of police officers and firefighters. Thank you to all the firefighters and police officers who put their lives on the line for my safety. Our volunteer fire department is over 100 years old and has worked diligently and professionally in our community, responding to fires, medical calls and accidents. We have one of the only large animal rescue crews in Sonoma County. Our fire service keeps our community and other communities safe during fire season. I want to thank our police department, which has been chronically understaffed for years but has managed to keep our community safe. Our police department has earned high marks when reviewed by independent auditors like civil rights attorney Jerry Threat. I appreciate the dangerous work our public safety community does. I appreciate the fact that these men and women go into life threatening situations to save people's property and their lives. I appreciate the excellence, the professionalism, the kindness and expertise of these departments and know that we all benefit from this wealth of knowledge and training. As we approach summer with large crowds at peace town, with fire season approaching. I am thankful for our public safety community. As we move into fall and our

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town grows with over 2000 students and the hills become drier and even more prone to fire I will be even more grateful. So thank you for your work Sebastopol, police and fire departments. We wouldn't be a healthy, thriving and safe community without you.

Richard commented as follows: I'm a retired physics professor with primary interest in astrophysics. But in the past decade, I've become interested in what radiation and especially non ionizing electromagnetic radiation EMR can do to humans. Its effects have been studied more than 1000 published peer reviewed scientific papers has been found to be potentially dangerous, especially for children. People in the radiation business use the acronym ALARA, which stands for it's as low as reasonably achievable to guide their work. This usually means two things. One, keep the sources you are using at as low a level as possible, and to stay as far away from them as possible. But what if you work or play at a place where the EMR is high? This requires mitigation strategies. As an extreme example, you could build a Faraday cage which completely surrounds the volume you're trying to shield with something that blocks you from the radiation. But you can always create a Faraday cage, how about the Sebastopol library, for example, the primary source of radiation is on the roof and it produces a hellacious level within the library. A lot of the EMR could be blocked by covering the roof with aluminum screen or the ceiling of the blocking paint. This could create a shadow from the EMR being emitted. It wouldn't block at all. But another dangerous source as has been mentioned previously. It might make sense to create special places and public building buildings where people who want to use their cell phones could go without endangering others. Outside is an interesting possibility. Of course, I encourage you to set up the citizens committee that has been proposed to study the problems and mitigation strategies of EMR. The safety of your citizens depends on it.

Linda commented as follows: Want to thank everybody for speaking tonight. I'd like to acknowledge the roles the Mayor and the Vice Mayor have played in squandering \$2.2 million for fraudulent Public Works and wireless water meters plus \$1.2 million. The shyster co voices foisted the wireless water meters boondoggle but in response there is a brilliant letter written by attorney at Ariel Strauss, dated June of last year, a single vote by either one of our current esteemed leaders would have saved our town more than \$3 million and a lot of preventable pain and suffering due to increased exposure to microwave radiation being emitted from beneath our feet in the sidewalks of Sebastopol in the form of a 3002 wireless water meters. The public has a right to know about this communication and the three to two vote. The City Council has condemned this public to more misspent monies and misplaced trust. You along with former Mayor Patrick Slayter are personally responsible for enabling the constant corporate profiteers to loot the city coffers of millions of dollars by approving the installation of these wireless microwave radiation emitting wireless water meters.

Kyle commented as follows: Prior to the May 16th City Council meeting, I can speak to at least two specific occasions in which this full City Council including Mayor Hinton spoke to the retirement of City Manager McLaughlin, and the direction in which this Council and city would take as to the replacement of that position. At no time during those at least two prior sessions did Mayor Hinton state any sort of conflict of interest at the May 16th meeting. Tonight there was an opportunity for Mayor Hinton to state her conflict of interest at the beginning of the meeting. Mayor Hinton did not do that. At that time, she did not state her conflict of interest. She waited until the agendized item which she was well aware of in advance prior to that meeting, that the item would be on that agenda before she recused herself. In her recusal she did not provide much detail just as tonight when she recused herself and stated a conflict interest. She has not stated much transparency or detail as to what that conflict of interest entails. In a June 3rd media recap of that meeting, stated that initially that Mayor Hinton herself was interested in that position. That media article has since been changed to now state that Neysa simply has a personal interest in the outcome of that employment decision. I believe that our Council, our city deserves to know publicly whether or not our city Mayor is in fact intending on that position herself and if so, she should be stating that clearly to the public at when she cites her conflict of interest, as opposed to stating that she knows someone who may apply. I know myself, I'm sure we all do. But that is not clarity nor transparency if it was the intent to run or apply for a city manager position for the city in which I am the Mayor at that time. So I call on Mayor Hinton if she is intending on this to state publicly if she is actually intending on running for the city manager position of our city.

Shawn commented as follows: I stand here as a citizen. I'm saddened by the disrespect given to the city citizens by the city's leadership with the process to install new water meters at the time of the city is struggling financially spend such a large sum on a device. This is the first disrespect given to the city's citizens. The most recent was the actual installation. As a citizen I received a hangar door tag informing me my meter will be installed the next seven days. I called the city to inquire more exactly when it would be installed and how to opt out. I was told I had to fill out a form and provide a wet

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signature document to the city, which seems a little overboard for this. When I asked for clarification as to the timing of the installation. I was told likely business hours during the next seven days and they would only be for 30 minutes. I asked what if I'm not home or I set my clothes washer or dishwasher to start when I was left and the water was shut off and they were damaged. Or what if I was a shower all lathered up when the water was shut off. It was suggested to me from the city there for the next seven days not to do those things during business hours. This is completely disrespectful to the citizens of Sebastopol. Even the giant corporations such as Comcast and ATT who only care about your money will give you a four hour window of time, not seven days. This message received was the same and that the City really doesn't care about its citizens. I make the statement and hope that all City Council members and city management will take some time to question the decisions they're making and if they're really in the best interest of the citizens of Sebastopol.

Richard commented as follows: I'm a retired traditional naturopath and I'm speaking regarding the cell tower above the library in Sebastopol. So for nearly 20 years during my practice, one of the things I did was something called the electromagnetic remediation in which we go to homes and offices with several meters and measure the field strength of various electrical emissions, including ground fault emissions in the wall wiring and also disturbances, some cell towers and antennas. I'd make suggestions for repairs, including, as the other speakers have said painting the ceiling, putting aluminum or mesh on the ceiling on the roof. All may make a difference. The readings of this building are exceptionally high by my standards and can potentially produce both short term health concerns like headaches, sleeplessness, tendonitis, and irritability, and also possibly more severe conditions over longer term. In Sweden they have recognized what to sensitivity only some people have this.

CONSENT CALENDAR: The consent agenda consists of items that are routine in nature and do not require additional discussion by the City Council or have been reviewed by the City Council previously. These items may be approved by one motion without discussion unless a member of the City Council requests that the item be taken off the consent calendar.

The Mayor will read the consent calendar items; ask if a Councilmember wishes to remove one or more items from the consent calendar; and then open public comment to the members of the public in attendance. At this time, a member of the public may speak for up to three minutes on the entire consent calendar and request at that time that an agenda item or items be removed for discussion.

If an item or items are removed from the consent calendar, the item shall be placed at the end of the regular agenda items unless otherwise determined by the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tern.

Councilmembers may comment on Consent Calendar items or ask for minor clarifications without the need for pulling the item for separate consideration. Items requiring deliberation should be pulled for separate consideration and shall be placed at the end of the regular agenda items unless otherwise determined by the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tern.

Mayor Hinton read the consent calendar.

Mayor Hinton asked if any Councilmember wanted to remove a consent calendar item.

Councilmember's Request(s): There were none for removal of items.

Mayor Hinton opened for public comment on consent calendar items only.

Linda commented as follows: I have a question on number three. I'm wondering what that's about, as you all know, I am electro sensitive, and therefore I'm computer free cell phone free TV free and largely electricity free and so I don't know what the rest of this number three is about. So can somebody please explain to me what the vehicle miles traveled standards? What that is and also, I'd like to just point out that, you got a little box on the agenda talking about the ADA curb ramps and the Bodega Avenue Pedestrian project that's ADA which stands for Americans with Disabilities Act. I fall squarely under that I'm only disabled from electro sensitivity, unable to go about normal functioning like downtown, or being around any kind of cell phones. So I'm just telling you that the decisions that you were in on and are making are in flagrant violation of my civil rights regarding the wireless smart meters and all the rest of it with your policies.

Mayor Hinton responded to public comments as follows:

VMT: Director Svanstrom commented vehicle miles traveled metrics is referring to the amount of traffic in terms of the amount of vehicle miles new development would cause. That is a way of measuring traffic that is replacing level of service, which is about the congestion of the road. The roadways whereas vehicle miles is about how sustainable and how whether or not your development is going to cause a lot of miles have to be driven by vehicles. Or whether it's close to amenities and things like that.

MOTION:

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Councilmember Zollman moved and Vice Mayor Rich seconded the motion to approve Consent Calendar Items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Mayor Hinton called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote.

VOTE:

- Ayes: Councilmembers Maurer, McLewis, Zollman, Vice Mayor Rich and Mayor Hinton
- Noes: None
- Absent: None
- Abstain: None

1. Approval of City Council Meeting Minutes (Special Meeting – Executive Firm Interviews) for Meeting of June 6, 2023 (Responsible Department: City Administration)

City Council Action: Approved City Council Meeting Minutes (Special Meeting – Executive Firm Interviews) for Meeting of June 6, 2023

Minute Order Number: 2023-150

2. Approval of City Council Regular Meeting Minutes for Meeting of June 6, 2023 (Responsible Department: City Administration)

City Council Action: Approved City Council Regular Meeting Minutes for Meeting of June 6, 2023

Minute Order Number: 2023-151

3. Approval of Agreement with Consultant, Fehr and Peer, Inc, and authorize Staff to execute an Agreement with the firm to develop Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) standards for the City consistent with SB 743: Total Cost: \$29,085 (Responsible Department: Planning)

City Council Action: Approved Agreement with Consultant, Fehr and Peer, Inc, and authorize Staff to execute an Agreement with the firm to develop Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) standards for the City consistent with SB 743: Total Cost: \$29,085

Minute Order Number: 2023-152

4. Approval of Master Agreement with Green Valley Consulting Engineers and approval of:
 - a. Amendment No. XX for construction management services for Bodega Avenue Bike Lanes and Pavement Rehabilitation Phase 1 project (CIP #0513-74.09).
 - b. Amendment No. XX for construction management services for SR 116 Curb Ramps ad Crosswalk Safety Improvements at Bodega/Florence and Bodega/Robinson project.
Responsible Department: City Engineer/City Administration)

City Council Action: Approved Master Agreement with Green Valley Consulting Engineers and approval of:

- a. Amendment No. XX for construction management services for Bodega Avenue Bike Lanes and Pavement Rehabilitation Phase 1 project (CIP #0513-74.09).
- b. Amendment No. XX for construction management services for SR 116 Curb Ramps ad Crosswalk Safety Improvements at Bodega/Florence and Bodega/Robinson project.

Minute Order Number: 2023-153

5. Adoption of Resolution Approving an SB 1 Proposed Project List for Fiscal Year 2023-24. Project is exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 Existing Facilities C Existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities (this includes road grading for the purpose of public safety), and other alterations such as the addition of bicycle facilities, including but not limited to bicycle parking, bicycle-share facilities and bicycle lanes, transit improvements such as bus lanes, pedestrian crossings, street trees, and other similar alterations that do not create additional automobile lanes

Project Name	Description	Approx. Locations	Est Useful Life	Year of Completion
SR 116 ADA Curb Ramps and Bodega Avenue Pedestrian Crossing Improvements	ADA curb ramps, bicycle and pedestrian intersection improvements	SR 116, Bodega Avenue at Florence Ave. and Robinson Rd.	15	2024
Bodega Ave. Guardrails Replacement	Replace guardrails from western city limit to Valley View Drive	Bodega Ave. from Valley View Drive to western city limit	25	2024

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SR 116 Enhanced Crossings	Ped-activated flashing beacons at four intersections	SR 116 at: 1) S. Main/Burnett 2) N. Main/Keating 3) Grav. Hwy/Hutchins 4) Petaluma/Walker	15	2024
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(Responsible Department: Engineering)

City Council Action: Approved Resolution for SB 1 Projects Section 15301 Existing Facilities C Existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities (this includes road grading for the purpose of public safety), and other alterations such as the addition of bicycle facilities, including but not limited to bicycle parking, bicycle-share facilities and bicycle lanes, transit improvements such as bus lanes, pedestrian crossings, street trees, and other similar alterations that do not create additional automobile lanes

Project Name	Description	Approx. Locations	Est Useful Life	Year of Completion
SR 116 ADA Curb Ramps and Bodega Avenue Pedestrian Crossing Improvements	ADA curb ramps, bicycle and pedestrian intersection improvements	SR 116, Bodega Avenue at Florence Ave. and Robinson Rd.	15	2024
Bodega Ave. Guardrails Replacement	Replace guardrails from western city limit to Valley View Drive	Bodega Ave. from Valley View Drive to western city limit	25	2024
SR 116 Enhanced Crossings	Ped-activated flashing beacons at four intersections	SR 116 at: 1) S. Main/Burnett 2) N. Main/Keating 3) Grav. Hwy/Hutchins 4) Petaluma/Walker	15	2024

Minute Order Number: 2023-154
Resolution Number: 6543-2023

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS: Informational Items or Presentations are items that are informational only and do not require action by the City Council. Presentations shall be scheduled as necessary for the promotion of an event or service or general information items to the Council.

None

Mayor Hinton recused herself from Item Number 6 and departed the meeting.

REGULAR CALENDAR AGENDA ITEMS (DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION):

6. Approval of Award of Contract to Avery and Associates for Recruitment for City Management Position in the Amount Not to Exceed \$29,040.00 (Responsible Department: HR/Assistant City Manager/City Clerk) Funding is proposed in the FY 23-24 City Budget.

City Administration presented the agenda item recommending the City Council approve Award of Contract to Avery and Associates for Recruitment for City Management Position in the Amount Not to Exceed \$29,040.00.

Vice Mayor Rich opened for questions of staff. There were none

Vice Mayor Rich opened for public comment. Award of Contract to Avery and Associates for Recruitment for City Management Position in the Amount Not to Exceed \$29,040.00

Kyle commented as follows: I'd like a little bit more details about this contract. In particular, I want to know what kind of freedom and what kind of leverage the firm that we hire will have in terms of the hiring salary of our future city manager. It would be my hope that whatever firm that we have, of course in its due diligence, try to find the correct city manager but at the same time, I'm also hoping that our city can recognize the dire financial situation that we're in and direct this firm to be as fiscally responsible with the actual hiring salary of that city manager moving forward. I know this is

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going to delve a little bit into our budget agenda item tonight. But I think it would be increasingly important to be making sure that we have things in place that allow us to give direction to that hiring firm that their contract isn't so loose that they're able to just go ahead and take the maximum amount that's been allocated in the budget and make that as the offer. So just clarity tonight, to the public as to the conditions of that contract to make sure that we will be doing this in a fiscally responsible way and then one last additional thing, because it is related, we have had multiple discussions, as Mary mentioned tonight, prior to May 16th, in which there has been direction on the on the movement of the hiring of the next city manager that all members of our City Council were members of. So it'd be my hope that any sort of potential conflict of interest at that time can be addressed in the future. So that way, we are not leading ourselves down a bad path of conflicts of interest.

Linda commented as follows: I think that they ought to be upfront and let us know what they're thinking about if they are thinking of throwing your hat in there. One of the characteristics of a good leader, as far as I can tell is the ability to listen and this just doesn't happen with our Mayor, Vice Mayor, as you just watch and see the response to all those wonderful, intelligent people that spoke on the effects of electromagnetic fields earlier. No comments and they're not going to do anything they don't listen. So that kind of eliminates them in my mind anyway, from running for City Manager, because that is one of the best attributes that Larry has that is wonderful. There is our irreplaceable city manager and he listens. He's always listened and he's helped shepherd through a lot of really good policies that this City Council, that Neysa and Diana have just sabotaged. I'm in danger of electromagnetic fields and they have just squandered our reputation. Let Larry find the city manager. He's done an excellent job all throughout his years of hiring people and it is easy and cheap. Let him find the next city manager.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I'm going to object to the continuing effort to impugn the integrity of Mayor Hinton. She has declared her conflict, it the opportunity that she has been given. She was very clear about it tonight and I'd appreciate the public understanding that our Mayor Hinton is in effect, a volunteer here. She was elected, she represents the voices of the people and she is attempting to do her job with a complete and utter commitment to honesty and integrity. So that's a request to everyone. We do have our city attorney/city manager here who listens to every meeting, and I've heard him object in no way. So I think we can feel confident the matters are being handled in an appropriate way. Going to specific questions regarding this item. I do think it's important to respond to a question about the process here. I was a participant in the interviews as we're all of us. I think the real question is whether what control the City Council will ultimately have over the amount paid to the individual who was selected as our new city manager, and what involvement the City Council will have in the process. My understanding from this individual company that we interviewed was that they were going to be very accessible, that they had great knowledge regarding California had represented many clients within California would be responsive and, and appropriate in terms of salaries, got no indication that they intended to or were motivated in any way to increase a salary that was offered to a new city manager, that they would be in constant contact with our assistant city manager and that the final decision would be in the hands of the full City Council.

City staff commented as follows: The City Council will have the final control over the applicants that would be vetted through them. This is a very detailed oriented firm that will be speaking with each individual Council members, city staff stakeholders, and they are going to get as much community involvement as possible. They were very responsive to all of our questions during the interview process about how involved we are. They were clear about inclusivity and they were clear about making sure they understood what type of person we want as a city manager. So based upon the interviews of the two that we did with this firm, we felt this was the most experienced and they provided the answers as to how they would figure out what the city wants, I will say in response to Kyle, they will not set the salary as the City Council will and that will actually be coming up during the city manager budget. So there will be a conversation whether what was proposed in the budget will what will see in the budget or if that will be reduced, but how that will work out. I believe that they will also come under budget based upon our conversations with them. So it'd be my recommendation to award this contract and have the conversation about the salary during the budget not as part of this agenda item.

City Council Discussion and/or Deliberations:

There was no further discussion.

MOTION:

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Councilmember Maurer moved and Councilmember McLewis seconded the motion to approve Award of Contract to Avery and Associates for Recruitment for City Management Position in the Amount Not to Exceed \$29,040.00.

Mayor Hinton called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote.

VOTE:

Ayes: Councilmembers Maurer, McLewis, Zollman, and Vice Mayor Rich
Noes: None
Absent: Mayor Hinton
Abstain: None

City Council Action: Approved Award of Contract to Avery and Associates for Recruitment for City Management Position in the Amount Not to Exceed \$29,040.00.

Minute Order Number: 2023-155

Mayor Hinton returned to the meeting.

7. Consideration of Authorization to Mayor to Sign Response Letter to Santa Rosa Regional Library Branch Manager Erika Thibault, Library Director and Consideration of Creation of City Council Ad Hoc Committee and City Council Liaison Appointment (if committee created)(Requestor: Councilmember Zollman)

Councilmember Zollman presented the agenda item recommending the City Council Consider Authorization to Mayor to Sign Response Letter to Santa Rosa Regional Library Branch Manager Erika Thibault, Library Director and Consideration of Creation of City Council Ad Hoc Committee and City Council Liaison Appointment (if committee created).

Mayor Hinton opened for questions of staff.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I just wanted to confirm in the letter it discussed Bodega Bay that we are an important stop for residents of Bodega Bay and coastal communities. Can this be clarified. Is there a library in West County out in the Guerneville area. I certainly know there's one in Forestville but could you address what other libraries are in our district supervisor's territory.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: I did notice that as well. We do have like half a Guerneville library. So it's used basically supporting all library users from 101 West to the ocean.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I would and I'm not sure now's the time, but I would like to see the consideration of that having grown up out by the Freestone area,. I clearly remember the library truck coming out to Freestone and so I do know that in addition to mentioning Bodega Bay and coastal areas, there might be some other cities that should be included in the letter that I assume we do provide service for.

Mayor Hinton opened for public comment. Authorization to Mayor to Sign Response Letter to Santa Rosa Regional Library Branch Manager Erika Thibault, Library Director and Consideration of Creation of City Council Ad Hoc Committee and City Council Liaison Appointment (if committee created).

Erika commented as follows: I'm Erika , Sonoma County Library Director. I'm here to support the creation of an ad hoc committee to explore ways to renovate or replace the current library facility or to enhance the location to provide 21st century library service. As the previous commenter mentioned, there is a community library in Forestville. However, it is only open five days a week for about five hours a day. So it's a small location, but there is library service currently there. I look forward to working with you all and I yield my time.

Fred commented as follows: I'd like to support the motion and the ad hoc committee, I look forward to working with the community and coming up with some really creative ideas and how to look at the library building itself, develop our services and make a bit of a community outreach to involve the county in helping us with the services that we're providing out in the West County area. So thank you very much for doing this.

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Kate commented as follows: I just wanted a little clarity. I support increasing staff at the library and also renovating it. I was just unclear. Are you also thinking, is this an exploratory committee to build a new library or just to renovate the existing one? Clearly, we need more staff and so it's like, looks like you're trying to address the staff that there's a correlation between how much staff you can have in square footage and so therefore, what the thoughts are around the building infrastructure and if there's funding for that, or how would that normally come about.

Linda commented as follows: This presents itself in my mind anyway, as a perfect opportunity to make the probably most loved building in this town safe, or at least safer, because as it is, is hugely toxic. There's a growing number of us who are unable to use it because of the toxic environment created by the magnetic fields and microwave radiation there. We had years ago, there was Carl Riley who wrote the book, he was in the library and he noticed that the some of the children were acting a little strange in any way he what he does, he did for years and years he went through schools here in California and around the nation mitigating magnetic fields. He went ahead and did a magnetic survey, which I still have of the library. He presented that to try to get some people to fix it and it turns out there was just a simple little inexpensive electrical code violation that could have easily been fixed and everybody got on board, except Matthew Rose who blocked it and then and then time passed because it kept delaying and delaying. My suggestion is that we get some of these wonderful people who've spoken here tonight who have meters, and can come in there and give advice about how to how to fix the library and make it safer for the rest of us. It'll be a great idea, like the first building that gets EMF safe in this town, it would be a wonderful thing.

City Council Discussion and/or Deliberations:

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: This is in response to something that a public commenter brought up about the wiring in the library, Matthew Rose told me that that wiring problem has been corrected. So I just wanted to let everyone know that and my feedback on the letter, I think it's really well written and I support it.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I just know that we had another commenter that had questions and I didn't know if anyone or Councilmembers or someone could address those questions.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: The question had to do with whether there was an intent in this process to look at building or renovating instead of renovating the physical facility.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I'm not an expert on this. But I do know that Lantern has had fundraising efforts over the years.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: Thank you to a member of the public for raising an issue that was indicated earlier in my comments. The purpose of the ad hoc would be to explore all avenues in order to hopefully obtain more library staff. Right now we're kind of reading it in the fact that it's kind of catch 22 and the fact that some are saying we actually need a bigger building in order to be afforded more staff. The purpose of the ad hoc would be to explore all potential options with the goal, of course, to get more staff because the data is definitely that we are very heavily used library branch actually third in the county. So yes, that was the purpose, which is to address both of those concerns.

MOTION:

Mayor Hinton moved and Vice Mayor Rich seconded the motion to approve Authorization to Mayor to Sign Response Letter to Santa Rosa Regional Library Branch Manager Erika Thibault, Library Director with expanded verbiage: Expand sentence to include additional communities serving (Freestone; part time hours Forestville residents)

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: Can I ask for clarification? Do you want to expand the list of the other cities?

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I would like to see if we could expand that sentence in the letter that talks about Bodega Bay and communities to include additional communities that we might be serving, including Freestone possibly part-time hours related to forced residents to go to the library at 10:00 instead of 3:00. I would like to see that expanded for their judgment on that.

The Council discussed amended language and directed staff to revise the letter.

Mayor Hinton called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote.

VOTE:

Ayes: Councilmembers Maurer, McLewis, Zollman, Vice Mayor Rich and Mayor Hinton

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

City Council Action: Approved Authorization to Mayor to Sign Response Letter to Santa Rosa Regional Library Branch Manager Erika Thibault, Library Director with expanded verbiage:

Expand sentence to include additional communities serving (Freestone; part time hours Forestville residents) and directed staff to revise letter.

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MOTION:

Mayor Hinton moved and Councilmember Maurer seconded the motion to approve Creation of City Council Ad Hoc Committee and appoint Councilmember Zollman to the committee.

Discussion:

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: My experience with ad hoc committees is they tend to be consisting of two City Councilmembers plus staff. Is this ad hoc committee proposed as I think one City Councilmember plus a number of other stakeholders. I just want to make sure. I do not mind going outside the norm, but I want to make sure that is okay.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: We have ample precedents we have at other committees with community members on the committee and there is no requirement that it be more than one Councilmember.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I am hopeful this is not going to require assignment of a city staff member to this ad hoc committee because that would cause me concern given workload.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: How will this committee differ from some of the committees that we have already. Were there any other committees that were for the library? How are the goals for the new committee different?

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: They have indicated earlier in the year, it was decided to wind down as a nonprofit given the fact we are unclear about where the branch falls in the facilities plan, so they decided to resurrect it when we are getting closer to the top where we might be able to secure more money. As far as where we would fit the other participants who raised primarily money for additional items that are not budgeted for the branch in the library, the advisory board does go outside that scope for policy, but definitely doesn't have any jurisdiction to talk about how to operate within it as far as building size. That is the reason they need to be set up of all involved partners. As indicated, the key players need to weigh in on it and then once we have a clear plan on what we can do here financially in any other way we are bringing the library to them to get their thoughts so we can hopefully get a consensus on the issue.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I do not know if this is possible, but to pinpoint when the staff needs to be there versus not be there? I have been on these committees with different things in the city and I could sit there for an hour and there can be nothing that I need to contribute to and it goes on and on. I just wondered if that has been considered. Is there a way to do that? I do not even know if that is feasible. Is it necessary for them to be there?

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: It would be up to the staff based upon the agenda coordinated between staff and council or whoever is leading it to decide with the agenda item should be, and then they can decide if they want to come a little bit before or after. If there are things that come up in the meeting just email and say are we available to come back in. We could definitely work around it. We could base attendance on the agenda to see which needs to be in attendance.

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Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: Just given the number of people it seems like a very broad scope. This could go on much longer.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: My input would be in support of approving a maximum number of members on this committee. The more members there are the more challenges that our staff will have in terms of scheduling and coordinating. I would agree that a max of seven would be good, and to have direction from the City Council to make sure there is an effort to be alert to the need to reduce staff time and effort related to this committee and to maximize the value of the time that the staff does spend on this committee. Maybe we just have to trust them to do the right thing.

Mayor Hinton called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote.

VOTE:

Ayes: Councilmembers Maurer, McLewis, Zollman, Vice Mayor Rich and Mayor Hinton

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

City Council Action: Approved creation of the ad hoc committee and appointed Councilmember Zollman to the committee.

Minute Order Number: 2023-157

PUBLIC HEARING(s):

8. Public Hearing – To conduct a Public Hearing on Fiscal Year 2023-2024 City of Sebastopol Budget (Administrative Services Director).
 - a. Approval of Resolution Approving and Adopting Fiscal Year 2023-2024 City of Sebastopol Budget;
 - b. Approval and Adoption of Resolution establishing the appropriations limit for the City of Sebastopol for the 2023-2024 pursuant to Article XIII B of the California Constitution;
 - c. Adoption of Resolution Approving Supplemental Law Enforcement Funds (SLEF);
 - d. Approval and Adoption of Resolution Authorizing and Approving the City of Sebastopol Current Pay Rates and Ranges (Salary Schedule)

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: First of all, I wanted to very publicly thank our Vice Mayor and Councilmember Zollman for serving on this committee. Having served on it myself for the previous five years I know that it is a huge commitment, and in many ways especially with a difficult budget it feels like a thankless job. I would just say it bluntly. As far as I am concerned they did amazing work and it was pretty much in all public meetings. Near as I can figure I think we had spent up to 25 hours approximately in previous budget cycles, and I believe that they did approximately 15 meetings of an average of three hours each and if we do the simple math that's about 45 hours to go through the city budget. It is the fattest budget binder I have ever received, and I just want to say this is going to be tough for everybody, but I want to really thank the budget subcommittee for all the hard work to get us to this point, which is the opening of the public hearing with the city budget. Also, not just the Councilmember, but thanks to our entire staff that was involved including our directors and department heads and City Manager and Assistant City Manager. The three Councilmembers that did not serve that have been going through the budget painstakingly in the last few weeks and I just want to really thank everyone for the effort this year. With that, we are going to go through the process here. We will start with Director Kwong who will do an introduction with a slide presentation to recap the process and then we will hear from our budget committee if they have comments. Next we will hear questions from the Council, and these are overall questions to City Administration about the slides that were presented. Then we will ask for questions from the Council to department directors. This is the next step in getting our questions answered and then a few times here we will be providing public comment, and there will be at least two periods to give public comment. Please do not comment on the same items both times. If you come into public comment and then we will close the public hearing and return to Council for further discussion. We have two public hearings on tonight. I want to note that the second public hearing is for capital improvement projects. If we do not get to capital improvement projects tonight, which is item number nine, we will discuss an additional City Council meeting to continue the budget process.

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Administrative Services Director Kwong presented the agenda item recommending the City Council Receive the agenda item and presentation, ask questions of Budget Committee, City Staff or City Department Directors; open the public hearing; discuss and consider approval and adoption of the FY 23 24 City Budget.

Mayor Hinton opened for questions City Administration; Admin Service Director or Budget Committee on General Process or Overall questions.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: You mention when you were talking about the sewer and water an increase. Can you clarify was there going to be increase in it.

Director Kwong commented as follows: What I mentioned was that there will be there's a rate study underway to address the deficit that you've seen in water and sewer.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: That that rate study is in our budget, correct?

Director Kwong stated yes and it is split between the water and sewer funds.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I have a follow up question regarding water and sewer since we're on that topic. Is the water rate study intended to look at revenue, both to take care of our address our current deficit in at least one of those accounts and also planning for the future.

Director Kwong commented as follows: Yes, our water rate study will have a few components. We're going to address the route study that was not included in that component because as much as we have conservation, that's also an impact on revenue. So when citizen are very diligent about conserving water, that's what the revenue went down from the last rate study, and we did not take that into consideration that there will be a requirement from the State for conservation. Also, there were capital projects that were not part of that rate study or certain capital projects that were happening faster than what was planned. So there's a lot of things that happened in this last rate study that was not included. One was the route study and capital projects was not adequately included in the rate study. So it's costing the city showing the deficit for water and sewer at this time.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: When we're doing this we're actually trying to assess and basically right size this or right price it but at the same time when we say due to conservation we're not bringing in as much revenue. We also don't want to be punitive and punishing our citizens for that's what we're trying to pay. There's a fine line there between please conserve and now we going to do more so you pay the same amount,

Director Kwong commented as follows: So the rate study; process and what will be recommended will go back to the Council after the back end of work has been done. We'll figure it out what the Council or the public can or cannot absorb as to fee increases. There might be a phase in maybe 20% is too much, or is not enough. It all depends. Right now we are only at the first stage of the study where we just sent all the data that we have to the consultant so that they can put in their model and see what that looks like.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I just like confirmation from you, as our Finance Director, that there is a plan to address what we are seeing as bright red numbers in the water and sewer accounts.

Staff stated yes.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: Is that a part of that plan in the study that's coming up, and will it take into consideration not just what money is needed for the future, but what money might be needed in order to resolve our current deficit.

Staff stated that is correct.

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Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: Do you know just in general, where we rank with our water rates versus others?

Staff stated I don't know the I don't know the answer to that.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I did want to weigh in on that question a little bit. You do recall that we have our own water system. We're one of the only cities that does not buy water from the county. Can we get that report when we actually are discussing rate holder possibilities and compare that as that would be great information.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: It's just important to have context for everybody what we are just like when we compare our sales tax and everything else to what others are doing and that the consultant will have a comparison how we rank with other city when they come back out to Council. When is the report expected?

Director Kwong commented as follows: We have our kickoff meeting in a week. They received that data about two plus weeks ago. So we're going to have our kickoff meeting with staff and consultants to talk about what is expected and what's in their model, or if it's not in their model yet, what else is missing.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: What's the earliest that water rates increases might affect our residents?

Director Kwong commented as follows: I'm planning on January 1 2024.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: On page 31, discussed the shuttle fare subsidy. Was there any follow up with Sonoma County Transit on if Sebastopol reduced that stipend to the fare shuttle how that will affect us or will we still have a shuttle or does that reduce the services?

Director Kwong commented as follows: I haven't heard from Sonoma County Transit, which I did email the manager. My guess is if the city is only going to subsidize half of what is costs, the other half will be passed on to writers.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: The other point I'd make is probably a point that I'd like to make in terms of the budget in general, having served on the Budget Committee, which is we do have a mid-year budget process. So in terms of the allocation for the shuttle service, for instance, this specific item or other items, the City Council does have an opportunity at mid-year if for instance, it turns out that the shuttle, the \$7500 allocated proposed to be allocated here is used up by riders, and that the City Council then wants to consider allocating additional amounts to the shuttle fare, the opportunity would be the mid-year budget process. Is that accurate.

City staff commented as follows: That's accurate. I also want to explain to you for the budget and to the public that these are recommendations only these are not set in stone in this budget. So these are all considerations as directed by the Budget Committee to come forward to the entire City Council. So there is opportunity for these figures to change. But yes, you're correct Vice Mayor in if we see that if this is approved at this level, and it comes back six months from now, during major budget that the county comes to us and says we just can't do it, we could look at our budget at that point and look at either increasing it further or reducing it at that point. But this is based on the ridership that we received. As Director Kwong pointed out, we did reach out to Sonoma County Transit with no response that.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I have a question related to this, which that would have brought up. So my understanding of the shuttle is that this budget item by funding it provided free rides for everybody on the shuttle. However, the other option would be to charge a small amount to ride the shuttle and stretch this money for the entire year. I suppose we have two options. We could direct our staff to reach out to the shuttle service and ask that the amount be charged and not be a free shuttle.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: I was part of the committee that looked at this originally for the city. So the initial idea of a free subsidy for the shuttle at all, was to encourage ridership because ridership was very low at that time to show people that the bus was a good idea and that they could use it effectively. So that program was very, very successful and ridership went up. What I have heard from Sonoma County Transit over the years, and even

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recently is that if we start charging a fair, then the ridership will go down and they will have to assess whether they can keep the route as is, or whether they have to make adjustments so that they can cover the costs with the fare that they will charge. So it's possible that the transit agency does not know right now what the ultimate effect will be. But that's the history and the discussion that we've had with them in the past.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: Regarding the discrepancy in the policy versus the application? When is a good time to discuss that? Will that be something we'll deal with later on?

Mayor Hinton stated that would be during discussion.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I'd like to state that the transmittal letter contains for each of these departments a detailed list of the changes, the reductions that the budget committee dealt with. So for instance, under City Council, there's a list of items one through eight, it occurs to me that one way of dealing with this discussion would be to simply use that as a guide. We could look at, for instance, City Council, ask our fellow City Councilmembers, if they have any need for additional information on those eight items. If the answer is no, then we go on to the next department, but it might serve as a good guide for us. Just a suggestion.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I believe I'm doing that I'm just using the full transmittal letter, we have these breakdowns in front of each itemize department list.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: I have a question about Council objectives. Could you define what that category is.

City staff commented that this is the City Council initiatives and it's reduced by 89%. It's a budget line item that shows up and then must be detailed later explaining it references initiatives, community grants program, and other community support.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: Does this include Relaunch.

City staff stated the budget committee did not recommend continuation of funding of Relaunch.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: Can you just detail other community support.

City staff commented as follows: What was in the reduction was the reduced contract funding for the outreach homeless coordinator contract that Council awarded as well as Relaunch.

The Council discussed the budget department by department.

Mayor Hinton recused herself for this discussion of the City Manager/City Attorney budget.

City Manager/Attorney Budget:

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: I have a question about the decision making around a new city manager making a base salary of \$285K. Does anyone want to comment about why you would estimate a new city manager would be making \$100,000 more than what our current one is making?

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: The reason this figure was chosen is the advice that we got from our consultant, HR consultant was that this salary range was necessary to attract top talent to the position. Now there's two purposes of clarification. If you reduce that it would simply go into the brochure as a lesser amount and it might potentially induce some other good candidates to not apply because the salary was insufficient. In their mind the way it works, however, so that everybody understands that is once the Council makes a decision as to which candidate it favors for the position of city manager, then you negotiate with that candidate and attempt to arrive at a mutually agreeable figure. So these figures should be seen as general guidance, so to speak, because whichever candidate you

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ultimately choose that candidate will have unique situations and unique needs and we'll have unique attributes. So it's a matter of negotiation at that time. So you're basically setting the figure that would go into the city budget and into the recruiting brochure.

City staff commented as follows: The City conducted a survey as to what the local cities have didn't have are paying for city managers within the last six months and it does range from \$188,000 to \$300,000 plus.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: Can there be a reduction in the \$300k that was set aside for the city attorney firm, and then do a mid year review? So could we is it possible to cut that in half to \$150K pending a mid year review?

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: The \$300,000 is a projection what and based on solid evidence what an attorney firm would charge to provide routine city attorney services. Half of the year would equate to \$150,000 but would only cover half a year. The contract you just approved on a previous meeting would put me back as the City Attorney at a greatly reduced figure until I'm replaced. Also if I could, we should stop calling it litigation. I think that's a little bit misleading. The introductory kind of this section says litigation was increased to \$625K should be legal services and only approximately half of that is actually, quote, litigation, unquote. That is not solely the ACLU suit. We have a number of HR issues with much lesser amounts attached to them.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: To clarify about the idea of cutting that budget in half the \$300K and half to \$150K. Bring it back at mid-year? Is that even something that can be done?

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: That is something we can discuss at the discussion in action part of this agenda item. The clarification is in my opinion, question would be what is the \$300,000 for and what is \$325K for. I think that's what the city manager does is \$325K for the legal litigation cases that we have going on. \$300,000 was included as city staff provided as they were asked to get requests for qualifications, which we did as to how much an attorney firm would cost for a year. That is that cost. So yes, it can be addressed during the discussion.

Councilmember Maurer clarified that if we didn't budget the \$300K and we only budget \$150K could we come back at mid year and then reassess it and then budget the rest of it?

City staff commented that would be a Council discussion.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: What is the MMO ? It is not clear.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: During the time of the pandemic, we paid our small share based on our population of a lobbyist that represented many of the cities in the in the county who was situated in Washington, DC that helped lobby for the pandemic relief that the federal government applied, as well as advising on grant opportunities. Since we have now hired a grant writing firm, we felt that that should be eliminated, because we now have grant writing firm doing the work that this organization was doing before. So this is taking, stopping the city's contribution towards that.

Mayor Hinton returned to the dais.

Assistant City Manager/City Clerk Budget:

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: With all of these subscriptions being reduced, since we are going to be hiring a new city manager, do we need to worry about any of these? It talks about mentor ship with the newly appointed city managers.

City staff commented as follows: The subscriptions relate to the Assistant City Manager/City Clerk department. A lot of times what those are providing are mentorships to assistant city managers who want to become city managers, that is part of what that is as well. So we have eliminated it and will work with other city managers.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: What are the election costs for.

City staff commented as follows: That is just the cost to Sonoma County Registrar of Voters for the conduction of the election only. It is not preparation of the ballot measure for consulting fees or anything else, this is just what it cost us to do an election that is not within our cycle. So November 2024, the election is a lot less because it is dependent on how many cities, school districts, put measures in. We don't know how many in March are going it, so that costs could go up or down, depending on how many measures are put on.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: Does this cost include multiple measures?

City staff stated it would be for two measures on an election.

Administrative Services Department Budget:

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I do have a question which might be the same question you have, which is why are we, in this section talking about three ballot measures, but in the last city clerk section, we looked at the election cost of two measures?

City staff commented as follows: This was discussed at the budget committee to include the ballot measures but the administrative department would contain the consultants costs to prepare the measures. The original Clerk budget did not contain any election costs as if there is a November 2024 election, those costs would be in the next budget. However, if we bring about measure in November 2024, all the writing of it has to be done within this current fiscal year to be able to put it on the November election. Election costs will be for the '25 budget, not within this current budget, because that will be a cost that comes after the election, so it is the timing. For any election on the November 2024, the measure has to be written in this fiscal year. If we propose two for March, you have part of the \$60,000 to write the ballot measures. Then you have the writing of a third measure, but the writing has to be done within this current fiscal year. It would be too late to wait until the fiscal year '24-'25.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: Just for clarification, for the public and everyone. If we are talking about ballot measures, did we clarify what measures we are talking about?

City staff commented as follows: No. Those will be coming back on a separate agenda item.

Planning Department Budget:

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: Could we briefly explain one sentence, two sentences reduction in outreach support. The \$4000 savings.

City staff commented that was for our Outreach Coordinator; however the planning tech will be coming on board soon and will be doing some of the outreach that the Outreach Coordinator has been doing.

Building Department Budget: No comments.

Engineering Department Budget: No comments.

Fire Department Budget:

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I am just wondering if the fire chief could actually explain the difference between stipends and the incentive.

Interim Chief Piccinini commented as follows: The category of the incentive or retention pays line item actually serves more as an incentive pay. It is combined with the \$15 pay and the \$15 drill pay. Those stipends are a nominal fee that are

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compensating the firefighter for reimbursables, so that category is designed to reimburse. We have a volunteer firefighter responding to a call that receive \$15. Again, nominal fee for responding at any time, day or night and then it provides a reimbursable amount, a nominal fee, for reimbursables. Things like gas in the car, torn or damaged clothing, training they may attempt on their own. Those kinds of things. Again, that is the \$15 fire call and the \$15 drill. They receive \$15 for attending the drill once a week every week of the year except for thanksgiving. So the incentive, or the retention pay, was designed to bump that \$15 fire call pay up just a little bit to serve as an incentive for the volunteers to drop what they were doing and come down to the fire station. So it is hard to put an exact number on that. For some calls, it could be \$10 extra bump and for other calls it could be \$25 extra bump on top of the \$15 call response. So there is that category, so that retention or incentive pay is kind of stacked or connects to the \$15 fire call pay. That is how it is connected. I will also point out a couple of things on that. The narrative is a little inaccurate. That was first driven by a Federal grants that we received and it was a five-year grant with which \$100,000 was provided to offer this benefit or this compensation to the firefighters. In 2011, the grant expired and it has been funded as a line item in the city's budget for the last 13 years. So again, it was with reference to intending to be one year. I'm not really sure the context in which that was presented. I did not do that narrative. So I just want to make that clarification. Now, with regard to the stipend pay. Brought forward to the city again, as far back as maybe 13 years ago. There is no paid staff, except for the one now 40 hour engineer. So there is no staff to manage projects, to manage programs, to put together training packets. To be available in the fire station in the event of a call. So what was proposed years ago was that we offer the opportunity for the volunteers to serve or work a stipend shift. Again, they receive a nominal fee. They come in. They work, essentially, an eight hour day. I am just giving you a general review. There are some specific nuances. Generally, they come in and work an eight hour day. They are paid a reasonable salary, just slightly above minimum wage. But they are paid for doing that work. They are in the fire station. They are performing project work and they are available to respond to calls. They are working on behalf of the city, and so they received that stipend pay, which is just fair and you can't do it any cheaper. I hope that clarifies the difference between the incentive pay where retention pay is tied in and connected to the \$15 fire call pay and the stipend is when the fire department comes in and actually performs work on behalf of the city and is paid a daily rate from performing that work.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: Earlier in the year, we had a discussion about \$80,000 incentive pay. It seemed like, based upon as I recollect, with the Mayor asking the question of how is that divided and the questions were about the number of stipends volunteers. It seemed like there were eight, so when you say it is hard to break it down, I actually would like to see it broken down because from my recollection, that conversation, if it is \$80,000, you each get \$10,000. I would like to have an average. I know you said it is hard to break it down, but in my mind, I need to see it broken down or is it possible? it is possible to break it down.

Interim Chief Piccinini commented as follows: In part, it is broken down by way of the report, which is provided on page 61. There is a table of how that is broken down. On average, again, I am shooting from the hip a little bit. But that is not the way it works. The \$80,000 is divided into four, so every quarter of the year, there is \$20,000 available. What happens is we take a look at the number of calls that we respond to within the quarter. So I will try to do some math off the top of my head. If, in a quarter, we respond to 500 calls, if we take a look at that 500 call, \$20,000, that is \$40 per call. Then what happens is we take a look at how many responded to a particular call within that order and let's say 10 people responded. That means they received an additional four dollars. If one person, or let's say two persons respond to that call, then let's say they received an additional \$20. So we take the additional \$20,000, we take the \$80,000, divided by the four quarters. That gives us \$20,000 a quarter. Divided by the number of calls that a volunteer response to and then they share that on a per call basis. So if two people show up, they share that amount. If 10 people show up, they share that amount and again, this isn't incentive pay. I appreciate that it is referred to as retention. That is the way it was presented by the Federal government for us to come up with strategies to hold onto these volunteers. If there is any little thing that we can do to help retain them, then that is the goal. So this is an incentive. I really appreciate the volunteers that you spoke about earlier. You are all volunteers. I totally understand and appreciate that. Our volunteers do not get to make appointments with their stakeholders. They get called in at a moments notice. They have to leave their son's soccer game and get up during the night when other people are sleeping. Anything we can do to kind of create an incentive for them to push away from the dinner table and go down to the dinner table, it improves our response times and our ability to get there. I provided a staff report from a previous Council meeting, wherein the data is clear. We have demonstrated that this is effective and is worthy. Again, this is not an area that I can recommend or support. Again, I won't answer questions right now, but I can take the floor and say that I cannot support or recommend this cut.

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Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: Can staff look at the most recent you have in terms of retention pay distribution, can you give us a sense of what the maximum to minimum amount distributed to individual firefighters might have been in that quarter? Is it like, you know, \$10 to \$10,000? What is the range? I think it might be helpful for us to understand, and then we just have to be careful not to get into discussion too much.

Director Kwong commented as follows: It is as little as \$18 and a maximum of about \$2900-\$3000 in the first quarter – January through March.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: Is there one person who has received \$2900 in the first quarter

Staff stated yes.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: Do you have an average of how many people respond when the fire call goes out? When the fire call goes out, everyone gets paid that responds to the fire, whether they actually get on the fire truck or go to the actual fire. Or they just sign in with a log, I guess. So I am curious of how that works and about what the average responders for fire, thinking that might be different day and night. Could you outline that for us?

Interim Chief Piccinini commented as follows: Unfortunately, I don't have a specific statistic on the average number of calls that a volunteer response to. In answer to your question, they received the \$15 for responding to the fire station if they come to the fire station and the fire truck is already out the door and they did not respond themselves to the emergency, they still receive the \$15 plus the retention pay boost and whatever amount that is. That is fundamentally how that works and you are correct that at different times of the day, we can, and quite frankly, depending on the nature of the call. We can see as many as 12 to 15 people responding to the fire station, or as few as two. Again, depending on the time of day. So an individual that makes \$2900 in a quarter was one that was motivated to come down to the fire station by way of this incentive to make a lot of calls. So we have one member in the audience who responded to 751 calls of the 1325 calls last year. 751 calls and this is a full-time working employee, who has a profession and a career. They got up at night while others were sleeping and then came down. They had \$15 times 751.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I did hear the word misspoken salary. We are talking about stipends only, and retention pay. I just want to clarify. My understanding is that a captain's weekend on standby is a stipend pay of \$500, and a shift pay is \$200. Can you tell me what the hours are, like how many hours is a shift pay and how many hours is a shift on the weekend for standby?

Interim Chief Piccinini commented as follows: The hours for a shift pay is eight hours. For a captain, duty on weekend means starting at about 6:00 p.m. Friday night through Monday morning at about 7:00 a.m., depending on what time they need to get back to the job. They come to the station to get their gear and they serve as the command in charge of the fire department from that Friday night through Monday morning when they are on call. They cannot go to parties. They cannot drink. They are committed to being able to respond and command incidents and for that, they received \$500 from that Friday night through Monday morning period of time.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: How many captains of the fire department have to fill that spot?

Interim Chief Piccinini commented as follows: Currently, there is five.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: Just to clarify, I am doing the math. That is about 60 hours they will do on call. Correct?

Interim Chief Piccinini commented as follows: That is correct

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: Can you clarify how many volunteers did we have total? I know there has been some nuance in your position.

Interim Chief Piccinini commented as follows: Yes. The nuance with the eight volunteers has brought us up to 26 volunteers.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: What is best practice for how many you need on a truck to actually roll out?

Interim Chief Piccinini commented as follows: Best practice across the fire service is a minimum of three. We, in some neighboring departments, the staff has two and then we allow our volunteers to also respond with two for non-fire events because, again, there is no assurance of how many volunteers will come to the fire station and how quickly they will get to the fire station. So in order to achieve good response times, if to show up, we want them out the door. For fires, we try to really strive to hit the minimum three. Three on a truck company. We are generally successful at that.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: Do we generally have volunteers that respond to every call across the board. Do we have a time where we struggle? I am just thinking in the middle of the night, how many different times is a hard to get?

Interim Chief Piccinini commented as follows: I did in fact provide the budget committee and the fire ad hoc committee, which will report, discussing how challenged our staffing model is. I have also included in the monthly report, in January and in February, you will note in the monthly report that we have three occasions in January and three occasions in February in which we were not able to get our firetruck out the door. I do not mean in any way to criticize these volunteers. Sometimes they are just not available or they have not received the level of training in which they are able to drive a fire engine, and so we, again, have occasions where we will not get the firetruck out the door. We have occasions where our response times are between 10 and 17 minutes. Last month we had a response time of 21 minutes. That is, by any industry-standard, it is just simply not acceptable. We are not asking for an increase in stipend pay. We are asking for an increase in the number of stipend shifts that can be offered. We are not asking to increase the amount of the stipend. We are asking to increase the number of stipend that can be available so that we can expand that program deeper into the 24 hour day to close this staffing issue.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: During this period of time, you had a position fully funded that was vacant. Your fire engineer is soon to be brought on board

Interim Chief Piccinini commented that is correct.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I want to make sure I understand in the mix that during this period of time, you have not had a fire engineer at the firehouse. Correct? For the last approximately how many months has this position been vacant.

Interim Chief Piccinini stated since April.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: The other pieces, the related question has to do with the work of the ad hoc fire committee, which is looking deep into the fire department. Can you give us a sense of when the City Council might get the results and that full information that we are looking forward to from the fire ad hoc committee?

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: Based on our most recent conversation and our schedule for community meeting, we are looking for that to come to the City Council in September. Note that we have two meetings off, one on fourth of July, canceled, and one meeting in late August has been cancelled. We are working through this budget, which we think will take a bit of time. That is when the full Council should be expected to hear from the fire subcommittee, on further discussions regarding the fire department.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: For clarification, because we are in discussions of the budget, it's my understanding and hopefully I'm correct that the ad hoc fire committee report will include recommendations regarding future funding of the fire department. Is that correct?

Mayor Hinton stated that is correct.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: I had asked for a policy about what factors come into play with hiring people, do you have your own special elements that you consider when you are considering who to extend an offer to, by way of, a stipend person?

Interim Chief Piccinini commented as follows: First of all, they are not a stipend person at that point and we don't hire them. These are people that walk into the fire station and genuinely, under the sole umbrella of volunteerism, want to come in and serve the community as a volunteer firefighter. We do not have a policy specific that sets any demographic requirements for that. We start by just somebody that has walked in and has expressed an interest, and once we get a small pool of interested candidates, then we put them through an orientation, a physical agility, we invite them to come to the fire station to get a better sense for what it is they're getting involved in, we hold interviews with them to make sure that it's clear that they understand that the expectation is to get up, again, at wee hours in the morning while the rest of the community is sleeping, that we make sure that their partners at homes are at on board with the idea, so in the last case of the eight, I can't speak to the specific demographics, essentially seven males and one female and all are doing great.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I appreciate that question but it does sound like, again, it's a volunteer position and anybody that meets the volunteer criteria, it sounds like they're under consideration.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: Do you keep track of the data of who you accept or reject by way of these volunteers? I will be straightforward, a lot of what you just described tonight and in the budget meeting was not explained to me when I applied it to be a volunteer. I want to be clear about what criteria do you actually use, and if you keep track of data, who applies and who gets rejected, and if you keep track of why they were rejected.

Interim Chief Piccinini commented as follows: I know of no history of data collection. I am not keeping any form of data collection on the demographics of a person who walks in and wants to be a volunteer. What's important to us is that they demonstrate a sense of their commitment, we describe what that's going to look like, and if they meet physical fitness standards is a requirement, and that is driven by law, if you will, that's not driven by just us wanting young, strong people. They have to pass a physical agility test, they have to go through a complete physical, so, we do not keep track of data, and again, I'm not, I'm not sure exactly what you were told, historically,.

Police Department Budget:

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I have one question. My question of the police chief is, with these two positions frozen, are you still confident that we can provide a safe and secure environment for Sebastopol? Are you concerned about an understaffing issue, service delivery problem, here?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: We can provide a baseline of service to our community. But, that's not to say that the elimination of these two positions won't have impacts. Some of the impacts may be increased response times at times, it can be a decrease in our ability to be out in the community on foot patrols. Doing operations involving traffic enforcement, essentially being out there, proactively, rather than just in response mode.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I know you had some positions that have been funded but didn't have people in them, so currently, how many actual officers do you have in the mix to schedule in for shifts?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: Currently, right now, I have 10 officers specifically assigned to patrol, and that includes three sergeants. That can be scheduled into the mix.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: Is that allow you sufficient staffing to always have two officers on at a time?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: It allows us to have two officers on until somebody goes on vacation or is sent to training, then we have to backfill with overtime.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: With those 10 officers who aren't on vacation, who are available, are now working overtime shifts.

Chief Nelson commented that is correct.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: Does that mean, then, that that situation would have been alleviated with the addition of the position that is frozen in the proposed budget?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: Correct. Every position you add or every position that you decrease as either a positive or negative attack effect on overtime. With the reduction of positions, that tends to have an inverse ability to manage the overtime, because we are required to backfill.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: The 10 officers that you currently have available to schedule in, including the three sergeants, are there still currently some positions that are funded but you don't have people on site?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: That's correct. We currently have two vacant positions which are identified by the positions we are looking at freezing, one sergeant position and one police officer position.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: Do you have any funded positions that are funded individuals that are off work for whatever reason?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: I have an additional position where an individual is off work currently due to a legally mandated leave.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: To the extent that you can share it, any indication of whether that person might be available in this next fiscal year?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: It's difficult to say. I wouldn't anticipate it.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: With the numbers the Vice Mayor just went through, do you still have at least one captain on duty all the time, correct?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: The captain is on duty four days a week, as am I.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: So he or she could actually fill in to save overtime if needed, correct?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: In a crisis situation, yes, if there was absolutely nobody to fill. It is not the best use of the resource but he would be able to supplement.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: Other jurisdictions do the same. San Francisco does. Or are you saying no?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: I'm not familiar with San Francisco PD, they're a lot bigger and they have a lot more depth than we do.

Councilmember McLewis commented a follows: With freezing of the two positions, where does that leave us staffing wise as far as historically?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: Since 1986 this department has always had a minimum of 14 officers, there's been times where we've had as many as 17, although it was a brief. We were allotted an extra position; however, we've been playing catch-up to fulfill our staffing. We are getting close, now, with the two vacant positions, that's the closest and the

most fully staffed this department has been in several years. But this department has run with a minimum of 14 officers since 1986, for the last 37 years.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: With this frozen, where will we be at again?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: We'll be at 13.

Councilmember McLewis commented: We will be at less than we had years ago.

Chief Nelson commented that is correct.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: Just thinking about that, how have the demands changed since then?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: Workloads have increased for officers. It's gotten to be a much more complex job, there is a dearth of data entry systems for every task that they do, every stuff they make they have to make the racial entity profiling act required by law, they have to enter every single stop, every single contact, we are also required to enter data of federal and state mandated system, evidence used to be done by hand, you'd fill out a form, now you have to go in and enter it into a computer system. Our report writing, computers were supposed to make things a lot simpler, in some respects, they have, but in many respects, they haven't. Report writing is a much longer, time-consuming process, now, because of the data entry into all the fields. It's become, the amount of free time, so to speak, that officers used to have to proactively patrol as compared to 37 years ago, I started over 30 years ago, it's increased exponentially, the amount of time it takes to handle one report call.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: If we are talking about freezing positions, having less than we've had in years, and I know that we are worried about revenue and our budget and everything else, but could this potentially increase our overtime?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: It could still, we could still end up needing overtime because if you have some of that vote goes on vacation you indicated there will always be overtime. With more staff you're able to manage it better. With the two positions that we have, depending on the scheduling model that we are in, it gives us the ability to provide overlap, versus having two officers on 12 hours at a time, two officers on the second 12 hours of the day. It provides ability to provide additional coverage on a swing shift, and it allows us come up for our memorandum of understanding to have what's known as a relief shift. We have the ability legally and contractually to move one of the swing shift officers into one of the other positions should somebody be on vacation or away from training. We are paying them straight time instead of filling it with overtime.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: My final request is I went to the meeting with the businesses because of the increase in shoplifting at all the different issues that we are having, we had that meeting a couple weeks ago and we talked about community policing. With this impact the ability of the officers to walk beyond foot that we discussed, so that that would be good for our downtown given what the business owners?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: This does allow us to have overlap which frees up officers to spend time downtown, to walkabout, to go into the schools. Make contact with students and staff and be on scene, the loss of the two officers inhibits our abilities. We are struggling with now due to the workloads, with the numbers of officers we have. So, the two would make a big difference.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: If we were to add one of the two frozen positions, either one, the officer position, or two, the sergeant position, in your determination what would be the one position you would recommend?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: I would recommend the sergeant position, simply because there's a concept known as span of control, and currently with just three sergeants on several days out of the week, we do not have a sergeant on duty. Which, sergeants go through specialized training, specialized school, to learn how to mitigate liability, they have more expertise on duty, they're a resource currently as it stands without that force sergeant, we run shifts with whoever

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is the senior officer on duty, who is the officer in charge. They can reach out to the captain or myself for advice, and are encouraged to do so, however, with the change in the department, we've become a very young department and we have a lot of officers who are tenured with less than two and three years, and conceivably at times they are the officer in charge, they don't have the experience that a supervisor would have.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: To clarify, the supervisor you stated earlier that a sergeant is filling the rotation of patrol, correct? So, that position would rotate in for patrol as well.

Chief Nelson commented as follows: Sergeants are a hybrid, so to speak, in a lot of larger agencies sergeants aren't granary to respond to radio calls and handle 911 calls, they are reactive and are out in the field as they hear calls coming in to go to particular scenes, which might dictate higher liability or crisis negotiation type things and added sergeant on duty, our sergeants, they work a shift, they respond to all calls, they write reports, they make arrests. They do still do a role.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: Earlier I was asking staff about the salary range and I was asking, just for the first officer, not the sergeant. They told me the salary range for an entry-level officer was between \$160K and \$230K, something like that. My question is, what's budgeted here, or not budgeted, is \$264K for a sergeant position. Is there a salary range for a sergeant position?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: It varies. Once they're promoted, they would start at step a which is considered lower, that figure is built into the budget, in the event that we would have to go outside, to get a tenured person under the classic formula, et cetera, we budgeted in at the high-end.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: What I'm looking at is on page 97, and what it says is that this position is frozen and the value of that position was \$264K, so I'm assuming that's the salary for the pros and sergeant position.

Chief Nelson commented as follows: That's correct. That's what was budgeted.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: Is there a range, or is entry-level for a sergeant cost \$264K?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: There is a range but I'm not sure what the bottom step for a sergeant is. If we were to promote internally, and I currently have a candidate that has gone through the process and would be able to promote internally, he would start at a lower range.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: So it's possible that you could, we could unfreeze one of the positions, and then you promote someone internally.

Chief Nelson commented as follows: To the sergeant position, correct.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I was just wondering, maybe I misheard, but before these positions were frozen or around that time, did you have contingency off out already?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: I had a conditional job offer out for the officer position to a lateral police officer.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I was just wondering how hard it is to staff these, find someone.

Chief Nelson commented as follows: It's been quite the grind over the last two years to get up to staffing, but we've been able to recruit and successfully hire people who want to be here in the city of Sebastopol who I believe meet with our community and our organizational expectations.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: What is, assuming an internal promotion, what would be the cost of a sergeant that was internally promoted? There was an indication from our police chief that that sergeant, if they were internally promoted, would start at level, the first level, is that correct, chief?

Chief Nelson stated that is correct.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: What is that amount?

Director Kwong commented as follows: Whoever is going in this position if they are incumbent in another position, their salary has to be 5% or more to the new step. In the new position. It can't be, he or she cannot make less than what they're making now. They have to make at least 5% more in the new position than they did in the old position.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: If we were to move a current employee into the sergeant position, then that would free up, technically, their salary for a new hire in the officer position, correct?

Chief Nelson commented as follows: That's correct. If you were to not freeze the sergeant position, we promoted them internally, that would create an additional police officer vacancy.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: Would that require that a recruitment fee be added into your budget?

Chief Nelson stated no

Public Works Department Budget:

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: In the absence of becoming independent picking up trash downtown, they come in five days a week and pick it up, what's the alternative? Who will pick up that trash?

Public Works Superintendent Del Prete commented as follows: I did receive your email and I didn't get a chance to respond to that this evening, but, a lot of the trash that they pick up is in and around the park areas, so park staff does pick up general debris in and around the park. The things that's going to be missing, and becoming independent is a great organization, I can't say anything bad about them, they're an excellent organization, they provided great service. They do pick a lot of things out of the tree wells downtown, as you know, we do have extra street sweeping in town that does pick up garbage from the street area, but in and around the sidewalks of downtown and in the tree wells are the areas that they do pay special attention to. Those are going to be some of the areas that don't get maintained as often, because when public works staff does clean those out, we lift up the tree grates, we remove weeds and debris at that time. It will have more visible trash in the tree wells as well. We could schedule more public works time when available to try and remove some of that, but it is a service that is going to be lacking.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: Could their service be reduced? They do this five days a week, could their service be reduced to three days a week? Is that some kind of a contract that could be negotiated?

Superintendent Del Prete commented as follows: Every contract can be negotiated, my intention, when these severe budget cuts came down the line is I took a hard look at all of the contracts, and the landscaping and the litter abatements were contracts outside contracts that weren't related to health and safety, they were more beautification types of things. That's where those hard cuts were made.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I had a question related to Ives pool, I noticed when I was looking at percentages up and down that Ives pool had some specific ups, not reductions and it looked like it was in equipment repairs, can you outline the things that we have going on for me, that are increased budget items?

Superintendent Del Prete commented as follows: Originally some of the budget cuts originally designed for Ives pool or recommended for Ives pool included major plumbing repairs. But, we have critical sand filters, and other chlorine monitoring systems that are in need of repair that have to be done, and it just didn't make sense to do those repairs when we are going to be maintaining the mechanical part of the pool, and not do the plumbing repair at the same time. So the plumbing repairs were put back in. There's some flow monitor, chlorine monitor replacement, the issue that's going right now is internally, in the sand filters, there's a failure in some of the structure which, when we back flush, the sand filters,

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sand gets dumped into the pool and makes the pool cloudy. Currently we are working with pool staff to do that off-hours, and as minimal as possible to maintain health regulations.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I'm just wondering, I was looking to see where we are at. I noticed that park village, we do maintenance, what do we do over there? Is it also cleaning out trash and maintaining the park?

Superintendent Del Prete commented as follows: The cost associated with that item, there's some tree work, we do road and regrading, pothole repairs, plumbing repairs, on the city mains within that area. We do general maintenance. We actually do make repairs to the natural gas system as well, because it's a private system.

Mayor Hinton called for a break at 10:06 pm and reconvened the meeting at 10:10 pm.

Mayor Hinton opened the public hearing for public comment. FY 23 24 City Budget.

Kyle commented as follows: At the beginning of the budget it states the city was not willing to reduce service levels in order to balance the budget but as we've heard from Public Works, that's far from the truth. Despite monumental reductions, across most departments, except for three of the non-council departments that just so happen to also be on the budget subcommittee, the failure to reduce budget for the following departments, the argument was made about unwilling to eliminate positions. Increasing cost in the city manager salary outside of our means, and suggested as a way to entice candidates is a terrible argument, and I'd suggest trying to get some of that consultant money back from providing such poor advice. Locally city manager salaries, Santa Rosa, \$176,000, Cloverdale \$176,000, Petaluma, \$230,000. Also, it's really unfortunate to see such radical increases in city attorney budget with no real conversation on the matter other than a couple bulleted summaries. I like to suggest that the city make conscious efforts to get sued less as a means to reduce the departments budget. Also with the budget subcommittee we saw a staffing report that indicated clearly the need for a separate city clerk position, when you additionally consider the current plan to break of the city manager and attorney position with no discussion how this might change the need for a current assistant city manager/city clerk position as currently staffed it feels like a disservice to our community. The classification of employees is never easy, but in a budget crisis to not explore this recommendation as a physical option is unfortunate. Financial service continues to be vague with so much entrenchment with enterprise expenditures, and a heavy reliance on contract services is difficult to see, but it is a matter because that department didn't have a reduction either. Fire seems rushed, ill-informed, fire ad hoc committee hasn't actually presented to our council, they canceled their agenda item after the last meeting at May 15th and finally, it's unfortunate that our council made the decision to do this for public comment on our budget, two years in a row like this. You would think that there would be much more dedication to public comment then waiting like this and having us do the entire budget in one fell swoop

Kate commented as follows: I would like to say that as a person who pays property taxes and spends money locally to generate sales tax, I did not agree with the cuts to the fire and the police departments. You just heard the police chief say that we have been having staffing levels equivalent to the 1986, and currently that is unacceptable, and that will put our students, our residents, our visitors into peril if we ever have an emergency in our city. So it's ridiculous to think that you can staff a city in northern California during a drug crisis at 1986 levels. The other issue I want to speak about is the incentive pay for the firefighters. I was ashamed to hear Councilmembers grilling our fire chief over such a small amount of money, when you're willing to raise the city managers salary by almost 50%. As I have to be brief, because we are only allowed two minutes for some reason. I do have some suggestions. One, we do not need a staffing reserve fund of \$300,000. I would say, at this point, we should fully staff and try to increase revenues for our city. Two, do not settle with the ACLU, go directly to the plaintiffs, have them fire the ACLU and settle with them directly. They are plaintiffs, the ACLU is not a plaintiff in the case. Three, west county community services should pay rent on the city property that they occupy to cover the mortgage and insurance in park village. We should not have any tax money going toward that, because it's no longer a public space. Three, do not bring three new tax initiatives to ballot. Is \$100,000 they can go directly to the fire department.

Patricia commented as follows: I've been a volunteer editor and lead writer of the city newsletter for 23 years. STEP was established by the Sebastopol City Council and cocreated with community members including myself in the year 2000. Since then, six issues of this friendly, helpful print newsletter have gone out every year, educating people on everyday

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topics and the viable alternatives. I call it your handy guide to less toxic living. However, the aim of this pioneering project has been greater, to reduce our shared, cumulative community exposure to the everyday invisible toxics that threaten our health, water supply, and ecosystems, to create a healthier city are for everyone. I've been delighted to help manifest the council vision with this collaborative project and I've been delighted by the public's positive response to it. In our annual survey, STEP consistently gets an 85 to 90% plus approval rating. People repeatedly report using STEP information to take specific, tangible actions to reduce their toxic use and exposure. All of this has been done at a low cost to the city, because committee members have worked on this project as volunteers, including my work creating professional quality print ready newsletters and because STEP was put in water bills to piggyback on existing postage well reaching all-city bill payers. Fortunately, the budget committee is proposing drastic cuts to STEPs small budget that would get its core outreach structure. They proposed totally holding the print newsletter, but the whole point of STEP is to outreach to everyone in town especially those who don't know they're using toxics and would look for options. I sent a letter yesterday offering a counter proposal which would still trim hard costs by 40% with almost no staff time, but keep the essence of the project. This would be done by shifting STEP from six issues a year to four and limited in the print card, I would also take on doing online feedback. You can still do STEP for a bargain price of only \$2000 a year and almost no staff time. I hope you'll hear the voice of myself and the community members, this is a valuable, unique, innovative, pioneering project that is making a difference in making the town healthier, I also suggest that the council, I'm but answer questions and I suggest that the Council ask for financial analysis of the city staff plan to shift water bill mailings from six times a year, to 12 is doubling the printing and postage cost a priority when other valuable programs are being cut.

Oliver commented as follows: I've already sent in a written public comment but I wanted to reinforce what I said, which is the NHA advisers and their fiscal sustainability report, which preceded this budget animated very crystal-clear what a typical city budget, safety is a first priority that's our police, fire, and public works. Everything else is a different segment, we got a 280 page budget, we are having a public hearing which could end in 10 minutes would be a total of 20 minutes of public hearing, after an awful lot of very confused shuffling through all these departments cuts, it's incredibly unimaginative budget which is all about basically doling out money, there's no discussion at hand of how to increase sales tax, any sort of plan any strategic plan, so, this is a mess and I think it needs a good two or three more meetings to actually go through the thing and get this into some sort of coherent form. That's actually fair and equitable for the people who are paying their local taxes. It's just, it's all over the map. It's really hard to know how to tighten this up, and make this a much fairer, more equitable and reasonable process, going forward

Shawn commented as follows: I'm here tonight to request of the \$80,000 from the fire pay be reinstated. This money was originally \$100,000 and was provided to the fire department on a safer grant for several years, the expectation it would be continued by the city at the end of the grant.. The city has already reduced this by \$20,000 a few years back, while other departments continue to receive raises. I've heard from and from the City Council that we make too much money, and we are just volunteers. Many of our earnings are stated incorrectly, but we are actually paid calls which means we do receive some reimbursement for time and sacrifice, but beyond what is seen on paper, each of us spends countless hours working on projects for our personal satisfaction and benefit to the City of Sebastopol. We, the firefighters, have failed to make it known how many collective hours we donate to the city and as citizens beyond what is shown on paper, the city is getting the cheapest fire service possible. As a citizen and member of Sebastopol fire, with our current budget issues, I understand, but not reduced the pay as by this elimination of funds you reduce our pay reimbursement for our time, energy, countless hours and missed family time such as birthdays and holidays, missed sleep, missed meals, missed stress, danger to our lives and risk of injury, because we love what we do, and our city. This will reduce his back to the 2007 standard of reimbursement. Discussed department employees are getting pay raises on July 1st. As firefighters we do not get access to benefits. As I understand, Councilmembers get access to benefits and after two terms this is for life. What exactly are all the benefits that council numbers are receiving? How are they changing in this fiscal year? How many are getting raises but we are getting reduced again? Please reinstate \$80,000 and not reduce our reimbursement for our time to the 2007 standard. One solution would be to make the \$300,000 for the engine to the budget line item for vehicle replacement, then reduce the fire budget by \$300,000 allowing \$80,000 back into the budget, still saving the city \$220,000 out of the fire budget line item.

Linda commented as follows: Discussed the two minute allocation of the public has been given, that the current city manager and city leadership, the Mayor, the Vice Mayor, they don't listen to it, and they don't want to hear from us. This is a good way to make it happen. Limiting our input. So there's that. Also, we need to look at where the money, millions

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and millions of dollars, I'm looking at this, there's \$2.2 million in wireless water meters which just ends up in a criminal assault to us all, it's like having smoke, but, any kind of toxin coming up from beneath your feet, 3002 of them that it's like being shipped to Auschwitz, and then having to pay to take a shower. That's exactly what it is, because it is an assault, and we are paying millions of dollars for it and it's going to be an ongoing cost, because those little jewels which are lithium powered batteries, battery-powered plastic, nonrecyclable meters have to be replaced every five years or so, they are not durable like the previous, last up to 40 years. All of these wireless water meters constitute an assault, and in fact, the \$2.2 million that the city gave, is a crime and it should be Dante, who brought this to us, said that it was no cost, and he'd done his due diligence, how come we have, the cost of the model water meter of water, with only \$.4 million coming in.

Mike commented as follows: Volunteer firefighter. I'm just here to represent the fire department and ask that you consider reinstating the \$80,000 incentive pay. I also would like to request that, on the budget line item that the fore engine be moved to vehicle replacement instead of showing up in the fire department's budget. It's disingenuous that it looks like our budget is increasing when it's actually not. If that were removed, you would see the true budget the city is paying for the city fire department and I like to say to Councilmember Zollman. I remember one of the meetings you asked about having people, knowing there was going to be a call and then we paid for that, our fire department is paid by call, we have pagers, when they go off people show up to the firehouse and that's how we provide our service, it's paid by call, there's no cheaper way to provide that service. I feel like the ad hoc committee, we bumped around a little bit but it feels like somehow you think you're going to do this cheaper than what's being done. I'm here to tell the public that's not going to happen. There's no way that you're going to do the fire department any cheaper than what's currently being done right now. We are paid by call, the model that you have is the cheapest thing that you have to make this service available to the public. If you go to consolidation, the taxpayers are going to be paying a parcel tax that's coming from the gold ridge district, and that's how it's going to be paid for, the taxpayers aren't aware of what's going on, and what I'm telling you guys is, I'm not sure what's pushing this whole thing, but there's no way you're going to do it cheaper than what's going on right now. Sebastopol Fire served the community for over 120 years, I think the city has benefited by the service of the fire department has provided a cheap service, I urge you to consider this.

10:30 pm. The Council was in unanimous agreement to continue the meeting beyond the 10:30 pm end meeting time.

Mary commented as follows: It's disgusting to me that any money at all is being taken away from the fire department. I think it's disrespectful to our firefighters, and I want to personally say to our volunteer firefighters I'm embarrassed and I'm so sorry and then, when Chief Nelson mentioned the decrease, or, not bringing on other police officers, and there may be increased response time, I have to say, that triggered me. Because it was a few months ago when I was home alone, and at 11:45 at night someone was trying to get into my house. They were trying to get into the front door. I don't ever remember being that afraid in my whole life and I worked with gangs in LA and I taught inner city LA. I called 911, they rolled immediately, it felt like it took them a long time to get here but they were probably here in a minute and a half and two officers showed up, and unless this is happened to you, you have no idea how important the police are, and the firefighters are. Anyway, I don't think any money should be taken away from them at all. Find somewhere else to take the money away from.

Richard commented as follows: I've been with the Sebastopol fire department for 18 years, 19 years, approaching my 20th. I'm asking the City Council not to take \$80,000 away from us. Has any of you ever done CPR on somebody and looked into their eyes wondering if they're going to die, have you ever done that? I did that tonight before this happened to me and I didn't sleep. After the Fires, I didn't sleep. After my first CPR incident, I didn't sleep. I've been having trouble sleeping, and they're saying that the stroke that I had on March 15th was from not sleeping. You know what happens when you don't sleep? Your brain waves don't recycle properly. Sleep is the most important thing that all of us can have. A little incentive is pretty nice, because when I was hoping for that incentive money when I got to the hospital. It wasn't there. I didn't get it till last week. But it was a nice chunk of change, you know? It was about \$800, and it took care of some bills, because I don't make any money anymore and I worked shifts at the firehouse, sometimes four or five shifts a week and I've been called a paid volunteer and if you will, that's what we are. We are paid volunteers. We don't come to the firehouse and work a shift for nothing. We don't go to the firehouse at 4:00 in the morning or 2:00 in the morning for \$15. Pager goes off, I wake up, oh, I'm going to make 15 bucks. Let me get the out of here. Why am I even up when I wake up? Because it takes 15 to 20 minutes to fully wake up. You could be in an engine driving still half asleep. If you go on call all the time. Was it left or right to that lady's house? We just got up, even the staff guys that sleep and go down the pole.

Tom commented as follows: I think I'm fourth or fifth generation Sebastopol, my mom and dad were born on Palm Drive, grandparents went to Analy. Been around for a while. I'm a career fireman, been a member of the Sebastopol fire department since 2010. I became, I don't know, an honorary member when I was five and my dad started there. I've never felt so unappreciated, till recently. That incentive money, or the retention money, is a pretty big deal for the guys down there. Not so much for me, I'm not as active as I once was, but I want to support them. \$15 doesn't get me much gas, tires are expensive, I know you guys know that because we have 24 tires that need to be replaced on the fire engines. You're not going to buy his new ones, we got to have new tires on these ones, I appreciate were getting some of them taken care of. It's honestly too much liability to put my career job on the line to volunteer here, because we don't have any money to fix this stuff, and I know there's issues with the rigs, so I can't accept the liability of getting in an accident in one of those rigs and losing my job. That's a big deal for me. I hope you don't cut our budget, I hope you don't cut our retention money, I think there's other places that we can cut some money. There are a couple benefits that the city employees get that we don't, because we are not employees. I like a one time payment of \$2500, we use our personal electronics for a lot of stuff, I'd like to have a stipend for that, \$1800 sounds good, we go to conferences and trainings, \$1600 would be awesome annually, meetings and travel, we go to meetings every week. Monthly meetings, we have foundation meetings.. That's about 10 grand we could probably cut this year

Steve commented as follows: I've been on the department for 39 years. I've been in Sebastopol for 60. I got a few things to say, and I'm just going to, some of these are redundant, we already talked about them but I'm just going to go through my list. There with me, I'm a little tired. The city has a huge problem. We know the budget issues, we saw all the red writing on it, we dig in and see that our salaries and compensation seem to be one of the worst problems associated with the budget, we've seen gigantic increases in employee compensation over the last 10 to 15 years, we have huge amounts of overtime pay and other pay crippling our budget, even through covid, compensation packages continue to increase, so now this and other factors of lost revenues have put the city in a financial bind. Fire department personnel have always been the least compensated group in this city. Our fire call pay has not changed in the past 17 years. It actually went down by a combined \$20,000 in 2020 during covid. The firefighters didn't complain when the reduction happened, because part of the \$20,000 was used to fund a much-needed full-time engineer position. Fast forward to today. Now our budget committee is ready to approve, yet again, a reduction for the firefighters call pay. To the tune of \$80,000. This would turn the clock back over 20 years for fire call compensation. This \$80,000 cut should never have been an option, and should never be on the table. Compensation cuts should have started from the top down, not the bottom up. The firefighters continue to carry their pagers 24 seven, 365, as you've witnessed tonight while we had a call while we were in this meeting. We respond to family emergencies, and the fire department continues to operate on a tiny budget of about 11% of the total city budget. In doing the research, similar cities in California are in about the 25% range, we are at 11. We're not even close to where we should be. This means that the fire department has saved taxpayers millions of dollars over the years, by operating at a budget deficit. We asked the City Council and the budget committee to reinstate this \$80,000 to help our firefighters.

Mayor Hinton closed the public hearing.

Mayor Hinton responded to public comment: I'm going to address a few questions, but not wanting to get into discussion that all Councilmembers will participate in. Let me just address a couple questions that I noted. One member of the public noted that there is a limited time tonight for public comment, in the public hearing. I want to point out as I did at the beginning of the meeting that we had 15 budget meetings, at all 15 budget meetings we opened public comment on the sections of this budget that are recapped tonight. This is a process that the city goes through with a budget subcommittee doing the deep work, and going through the details, and the opportunity to speak was at each and every one of those publicized budget hearings. Budget subcommittee meetings. So, I wanted to address that question and then, there was another question that came to mind, one member of the public brought up west county community services paying the city of Sebastopol for park village. I want to point out that the city of Sebastopol owns park village, it costs the city \$80,000 a year to maintain that, and we created, from the former trailer park, to park village in 2017 what it is today. We, at that time, retained our vendor to help us operate it, instead of a private company that was managing our tenants in there. I did want to address that comment. I also did want to point out, although somebody did acknowledge it, that as City Councilmembers, we are also volunteers that are paid a small stipend. My understanding is no one gets lifetime medical, no matter how long they are on the Council, and in fact, not all Councilmembers take the medical insurance

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offered, and personally, I have not taken it for six years. I just wanted to address that as well. With that, I want to go back to our deliberations, and our process to try to continue to move the budget forward, and what I'm thinking is that we would take it section by section again. This is how we've done it in the past, and we would deliberate, section by section, and try to come up with either agreement, or differences, so that we can get through this budget. With that, we will go ahead and start back again on the City Council, department section, which started at page 30 and I'd like to take comments from the City Councilmembers on this section, and see if we can get agreement of how to move forward on this, at least section, and then we will continue to go section by section, does that sound acceptable to everybody?

City Council Discussion and/or Deliberations:

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: Looking at the City Council department, I'm looking at the proposed reductions for the STEP newsletter, I want to support having that STEP newsletter four times a year mailer, and that would add back \$2000. I know that at this point we have a \$15,960 decrease in the budget. We didn't use that. It was in the budget, there were \$45,000 funds for the city manager search, and we've used less than that, so that gave us a surplus of \$15,960. I would support the \$2000 for STEP, four times a year mailer. I would support more money going to conferences for Councilmembers, because I think those are unique opportunities for us to learn, and work possibly more harmoniously together. We have a lot of work to do, here, over the next two years together. So the idea that only two Councilmembers can go to a Cal Cities conference, I feel like we are missing an opportunity, and I feel that way also about the Mayors and Councilmembers meetings. I would like to have some discussion on, how can we bring a little bit of that back so that the Council can work more effectively together, so we can create goals and work together to improve the city. Those are the three things, and I have one more comment, on the community benefit grants and this was actually proposed, he's not here anymore, by one of our residents. The suggestion is, is the community groups apply for special grants, my first suggestion is the Council creates policy goals, if we want to improve community vitality, we would put out a grant notice and have the nonprofit groups, whatever groups, apply to help us with whatever that project was and that they will be in and accountable for whatever project we did, so it would be a partnership rather than the way it is right now, community grants are more of, here's some money, for each Council gives away so much money. The community grants are almost like a collective Council initiative, here's the money. I propose we do it a little differently, define our goals, and have a different process, and those are all my comments. I'm recommending further conversation on how we can make better use of those conferences and not limit it to two people.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: Just to make sure I understand what you're proposing, Councilmember Maurer. In regards to the STEP newsletter, and the proposed budget, we have a \$500 amount, we heard a proposal from Patricia, I think it was, to fund it at \$2000, four times a year, that would be adding in an additional \$1500 to the currently proposed \$500 amount. Is that correct?

Staff stated that is correct.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: Yes, that would be an addition of \$1500 to publish it four times a year and then adding in conferences. I do think we need to increase the budget. I want to take it from somewhere else, but, I want to increase that line item. If all five of us went twice, what would that cost, versus if all five of us went once a year.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I will say that I am in favor of, it wasn't brought up, but removal of city issued cell phone costs. I know I've always used my personal cell phone for Council and published it, and I believe that that policy is fine. The subscriptions is fine. I am actually in favor of the recommended reduction to the STEP newsletter, from the paper product. We should be going more electronic, and we left \$500 in there, and I'm in favor of the budget subcommittee's recommendation. I am also in favor, for this year, in the reduction of conferences. I'm generally a fan and encourage everyone to go, especially the new Councilmembers to the last conference in Sacramento as new Councilmembers, it's an every year on, off thing and it goes with election cycles. I think two in this year, when we are facing such a crisis, makes sense, doesn't mean that we can't bring it back. I'm in favor of suspending the Council initiatives, and reduction in the sponsorship support, in favor of that. I am, as mentioned earlier, interested in adding a low cost to our shuttle. I think we have established writers, now, and I'm interested in what statistics very low cost ride to the market would be, versus fund it as we have been doing at no cost at all and then analyzing it midyear review and I am in favor of reductions of community grants, except for the Chamber of Commerce that hosts our apple blossom

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festival. I'm interested in their line item, how much of that was cash and how much of that was police services or other services. I had that question, is that all cash that we had given in community benefit?

Staff stated that is cash given to the Chamber.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I would be interested, even though I recognize that they are not a 501(c)(3), that is a traditional event, and our city doesn't have the manpower to host it, and compared to other things that we've done, like our Relaunch event last year, I think that the chamber does a spectacular job and I'm interested in including them in some money in this community grant section.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: With number one, I agree with the removal of cell phones, the elimination of subscriptions I'm good with, I'm willing to discuss the STEP a little bit, to see if there's some sort of compromise, the reduction in conferences, I agree, I prioritize police and fire, so I can't ask to go to a conference if we can't get money for them. Let's see, suspend the annual Council initiatives, I'm okay with that. As far as the community grants, I, too think that we should not be taking the chamber out of there. I read the policy, the policy states that it's for nonprofits, and technically, in California, 501(c) six are nonprofit, I understand the application says 501(c)(3), we have a discrepancy in our policy so I'm hoping staff can figure that out, we can figure that out at another time. I would like to see the chamber receiving some money for that. The reduction in sponsorship grant support, I'm okay with that and also the \$7500 for the shuttle subsidy, I'm okay with that reduction as well. I would be curious to understand better what this reduction does, and where that leaves us. Perhaps that might be another discussion that we have, but from what I understand, the fares are not exorbitant to ride that, so I think at some point would make it other items, if we have to go back to these, that's something we can reopen again. Hopefully that was efficient enough.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: I'm okay with number one, okay with number two, I'm interested in but dissipating in a dialogue about what to do with STEP, I have to say that I would prefer to have it be digital, because even people who have digital can download it if that particular issue was important to them, but I'm willing to have discussions around it. Number four, I'm fine with it, five, fine, all the rest of them, six, seven, eight, maintain the recommendations

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows:

1. Agree
2. Subscriptions
3. Discuss STEP more compromise
4. Conferences – agree prioritize police/fire
5. Initiatives ok
6. CBG- should not taking chamber out of there/Read policy – states non profits/application says 503 3 c
7. \$7500 shuttle fare ok with reduction – understand better what this does and where it leaves us/fares not exorbitant

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows:

1. Agree
2. Agree
3. Dialogue with STEP Prefer digital
4. Fine with reduction
5. Fine with reduction
6. CBG find
7. \$7500 recommendations

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

1. Fine
2. Fine
3. STEP commitment to zero waste
4. Agree conferences
5. Initiative ok

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6. CBG- come around open to considering the potential waiver our policy in recognition of history of Chamber Allocating same amount \$500
7. Fine with shuttle but would be open to a discussion about low cost rides.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

STEP: We have three people wanting that. I'm not going to move off the \$500 allocated for electronic. I can appreciate that this has been in our community for a very long time, but that doesn't mean we should continue, especially in a paper format which cost additional mailing costs and paper, and it's, it's been around a long time and I find it, myself, it hits the recycle bin. I'm not moving off the 500. Maybe we can just ask where everybody else is, and we need three people in favor of it to add it back into the budget.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: Vice Mayor for bringing up the environmental impact. I've now changed my mind. I want to keep it at the 500

Three thumbs up for keeping STEP at \$500

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: My comment is that the city publishes a paper newsletter six times a year. So, I don't think it's too much in terms of recyclability, it's easy to recycle a piece of paper and the information contained in STEP is an important part of the city of Sebastopol, in my opinion, in terms of reducing toxics and it's a long-term project, a labor of love, and it means a lot to a lot of people. So, the idea of relegating that to just online, because you don't want to create more paper waste, I don't agree. Will put it that way. I don't agree.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: Speaking for myself, I can appreciate other people's opinions, but I don't hold it in the same regard as I do the city newsletter, which brings out topical up-to-date information about what's happening in the city. I find many of the things that are covered in the STEP newsletter information I could have gotten from another source. I just don't want to discount it but is there anybody else that has comment?

McLewiss commented as follows: Agree on \$500 for digital version. Is that 500 enough to cover the digital? Are we approving a number that is not really what it takes to cover that? I'm just asking.

City staff commented as follows: It is my understanding that it does. It covers the putting it on, uploading it, that would be if Patricia was still willing to write it based on that. That would be the question to Patricia if she would still want to do the newsletter if it's all digital.

Patricia commented she would not be willing to do the digital version only.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: My comment is that Patricia is here, she's the writer of the STEP newsletter, and if she is saying she doesn't want to do a digital version, that will affect our budget and I think that that's an important, if she's saying no, I don't want the 500, we should know that. I want to just make that clear, because that will affect our budget. I don't want to have this go later on, she didn't need it, she doesn't want it..

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I understand. I think the option that is being presented is either \$2000 for a print, four times a year STEP newsletter, or no STEP newsletter.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I want to make sure with Patricia that based on this conversation that we are not, that you do not want to write a digital newsletter, is that correct? Okay. That's there. She's indicated that she's not prepared to make a final decision. I would suggest that we leave the \$500 amount in their, as a digital newsletter, and allow staff to coordinate with Patricia about her final decision.

City staff commented if she decides not to then we can adjust this in mid-year budget review.

Chamber of Commerce Community Benefit Grant:

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Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I did want to bring up one point, which was, should we leave the Chamber of Commerce in this item six under community grant, or should we consider it a sponsorship in the sponsorship grant line item? Does the budget subcommittee have a recommendation? Because it kind of is a sponsorship, that the city is provided with the Chamber. Because we have gotten logos and different things as part of that.

City staff commented as follows: A city sponsorship would do that, but also the community benefit grants do as well. We are suspending the sponsorship, so if you're going to put it, I would say for this year only retain it in the community benefit grant. But then, address, bring the item back on the policy to make sure that it is clear and transparent in the policy moving forward.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I'll go ahead from the perspective of participating in the budget committee comment on this item. What we as a budget committee decided to do this year with our budgetary woes was to allocate \$500 to each of the grant applicants. The Chamber was one of those applicants, we elected to not recommend that they be funded because of the whole issue regarding 501(c)(3), which was raised by the application language, apparently not by the policy language. My proposal would be that we waive, for purposes of this budget, the 501(c)(3) requirement that might be implied by the application and treat the chamber, as we did within the budget committee, in the same way that we treated other applicants, which would be to allocate \$500 to them. That would be my proposal, assuming that in fact city attorney supports that.

Councilmember McLewis concurred.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I would like to consider an additional consideration for the Chamber of Commerce. When I look at the \$500 that have been recommended, to the nonprofits, and I look at the people served, if there's economic benefit to the city, we have the peacetime concerts, which are multi-weekend, but also, solicit quite a few sponsorships themselves. Rebuilding together is a one day or maybe one weekend event, sea serpents rent relief, I'm not sure how many people served, then we go down to world friends, save the Gravensteins, and the historical society, I feel like the Chamber could deserve a little bit more, based on people served, and that it encompasses the entire city. I was interested in proposing possibly either \$1000 or \$1500 to them in this line item, I'm wondering what my colleagues think about that. I'm looking to add and give them \$1500.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: I had a fully different proposal with what to do with the community grants. That was where I was going with it. So this is different. I would stick with my \$500 thumbs up. From the perspective of equity and fairness, and especially given the discussion regarding Gravenstein apple fair earlier, I would stick with the \$500 for the Chamber of Commerce. I think it's challenging. We are looking at funding community grants to all these different nonprofit groups, and the Chamber, and it's such an important conversation and we're trying to do it in 10 minutes. It just feels wrong and I also agree with an equity thing, it's like, but, I think the city has really big needs, and we could be partnering with different community groups, and have it be a different model rather than here's the money, here's \$500. Think what the Chamber is offering is something the city would want to partner with, and I would support giving more money, to the Chamber. But, we are trying to get through this budget in a timely manner, and that makes it a difficult conversation.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: We have to get through the budget process. If there is some disagreement about the allocation of the dollar amount for community benefit grants, one option would be to take the \$3000 that has been allocated in the proposed budget, and fund a sponsorship program, and allocate it that way. We'd really be delaying the distribution of these funds. I'm a little uncomfortable with that.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I would be for putting in this item, putting in maybe a number of \$5000 and bringing this back as an agenda item for the Council, without allocating it specifically to community grant organizations tonight. Many of these events, I know Save the Gravensteins, comes up soon, but the others don't seem to be, peace town goes all summer, then we could maybe bring this full discussion back with our policy, and deal with both things at once and allocate the money.

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Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I was talking about the situation that we are in, the conundrum where we need economic development, we need people supporting the businesses because we do need money coming in. From that perspective, I think when we are looking at something like the Chamber. To your point, it does serve a lot and it serves a purpose. Right now we need more sales tax coming in, but, I also agree with what you're saying about bringing the \$5K back and making it, I guess re-evaluating how we've been doing this. I don't know how long this has been in place, I don't recall in all the reading. But, maybe we need to re-evaluate this process and figure out a different way.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: I think procedurally, with due process, I definitely am in favor of having a rethink and a strategy after we get done with the budget, but we put this out here to all these people, they spent hours preparing, they did the budget committees with us, and somehow to just withhold it for a while and do a rethink, it doesn't make sense to me right now. I would rather go ahead with, maybe we have three for \$500 and do that and move on.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I hear you, on the amount of time they put in. There's many different sides to this.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: If we approve the \$3000 tonight and added an extra let's say \$2000 to the budget and brought back our policy, the apple blossom is really what we're talking about, here, and it doesn't happen until next spring. We could bring back the allocation to the Chamber in a separate agenda item when we clean up our policy. Does that work for everybody? So we approve the \$3000 as indicated tonight, and an additional \$2000 to be allocated somewhere down the road.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I am uncomfortable adding \$2000 into this budget for the City Council to later on allocate in a discretionary manner. Having gone through the budget process, it makes me uncomfortable and I do feel that it doesn't respect the process that we invited the various nonprofits in town to participate in. I happen to agree with Councilmember Zollman on that point. My perspective would continue to be that we add into the \$3000 the additional \$500 for the Chamber of Commerce, and then, as a separate item, bring back a reassessment of this policy, and may be at midyear we have an opportunity to allocate more money to our local nonprofits. That's my personal opinion.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I want to respect the process you guys went through, but this budget process is a time when the full City Council weighs in. So I do see there's support for the Chamber, here, and I'm not sure if it's more support than \$500 worth or not exactly. But this will be the time to allocate it, if there was. At least get it into the budget, even if it's not a final.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: It's very difficult, because this was committee grants program that was developed when the Council had more money, discretionary spending money, so, what it looks like is what the committee did, so I don't know all the work you put into it and all the discussions you had with these various groups, but it looks like it was just kind of, let's try to save face and give everybody a little bit. But \$500 is not going to go very far for the chamber, is not going to go very far for any of these programs. So, that's where I'm thinking in terms of community and partnerships to work together with different nonprofit groups in order to create programs that are benefiting the city. Rather than just here is \$500. I'm not saying these groups do not benefit the city, they do, but I'm thinking about something more like a partnership program, and I appreciate a couple of people agreed that that might be a good idea, and discuss it later, but I don't think \$3000 goes far enough in terms of a partnership program or a grants program. I think \$3000 is an absolute minimum, so I would actually agree to bump it up to at least five.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: Thinking about the process that the applicants have participated in. Let's set aside the dollar amount. Whatever the dollar amount is, we allocate that dollar amount and we, as a City Council, revisit the distribution of that dollar amount amongst the grant applicants that submitted their applications as part of our original process. So you respect their participation, you respect the contents of their application, but the City Council then has an opportunity at a later date, to reallocate, whatever that dollar amount is in a way that's different from what the budget committee initially proposed. My thought would be stick with the \$3500.

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Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: I have heard and I agree, we need to be mindful of how much time we spend, City Council having these discussions, it's been brought up, about the fact that we keep staff here, we have our AV, and for those that didn't participate, there was the video. So you can go back and actually watch all of what we did. I'm not a bit in favor of redoing it, I'm sticking with the \$500.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I'm going to stick with Stephen Zollman on this, I think adding \$500 additional dollars for the Chamber of Commerce would be my preference, and understanding that at a later date we need to bring back our policy, and hopefully we will have an opportunity to allocate additional funds, if additional revenue comes in. I'll be willing to if we have a \$500 for the Chamber of Commerce, tonight, that would change that budget item to \$3500. Then we can have further discussion when we bring our policy back. We are adding the chamber in at \$500 as well tonight.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: What if we started charging the small amount for the shuttle and not waiting till midyear to see if we can fund what it's been typically a free shuttle for our community.

Councilmember Maurer commented so you're just keeping it as it is? With the \$7500 reductions? We didn't hear back from the transportation people. How do we even know if that's a valid reduction?

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I feel like we should start charging, and then we might even be able to save the additional \$7500. We'll know at mid-year review whether we need to change it back to a free shuttle, in which we would use the \$7500 is my understanding. But I'm in favor of starting to charge now and then looking at this mid-year to see if we need to change it back to a free shuttle.

City staff commented as follows: What the Mayor is saying is that she would like to correct me if I'm wrong, is to keep the \$7500 intact, you would like for the Sonoma County Transit to start charging all the riders, whatever fee it is, and we'll see at midyear what kind of ridership we have, because as City Manager McLaughlin mentioned earlier, if we start charging riders, this is why the whole free subsidies, free rider program, free shuttle came into play is because we were providing a free service. That's why we have ridership. If we start charging it might drop off, and if it gets dropped off we not might not have route 24 anymore. So it was recommended to subsidize it to get ridership, at this point saying we can no longer afford to subsidize it, so let's try to charge now that we have regular riders, and see what our end result is before we continue with free shuttle service. Are you proposing that we have riders pay full fare or that we subsidize it?

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I'm saying full fare and keep the amount in the budget, and if we see a drop off in ridership then we will have to use the budgeted \$7500 for the second half of the year.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: I'm concerned about the effect on the public. The ridership, from my understanding, includes both seniors and a number of students now who are attending the charter school

City staff commented as follows: What I would recommend is staff tried to reach out again to SCT, bring back more information, at the next meeting. If they do respond to us within the next two weeks. Then bring this back for further discussion at this time regarding the shuttle. I do also want to note that the next budget meeting, this budget hearing is being continued to the June 27th, which is a week from tonight, at 6:00. This room will be zoom and hybrid. We will continue the public hearing to that date and time.

Mayor Hinton re-opened the public hearing.

Kyle commented as follows: Despite the Mayor's claim that the budget subcommittee provided ample opportunity for the public to make note, tonight's budget hearing only allowed for public comment late into the evening at 10:30 p.m. for the rest of the members of the public, it should be in the public interest that we open public comment for continued debate upon the public, debate on the budget, because what you are doing is making line item decisions, and to not provide public comment for those line item decisions you are making is a travesty. Provide public comment in the future.

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Oliver commented as follows: Just seconding what Kyle said. This is line item by item with no discussion and the earlier comment about how people could show up at the budget meetings as the meal was being cooked is valid, but I was at some of those meetings but it was incredibly hard to understand what the was going on. I agree with Kyle, we should be discussing this item by item, and as I've said twice this evening, we should say the public safety is number one, why are we discussing coins in the back of the couch and newsletters and completely inconsequential things when this is so important

Linda commented as follows: I would like to third what Kyle said and then you very much, Oliver, you're absolutely right, we are victims, in fact, of the Mayor's continued not hearing us and not wanting to hear us, not listening to us and god help us, if she ever thinks that she wants to be city manager. We need more public participation, and thank you very much to the fire department, and the police department, which I've said before our family jewels in this town and they are to be celebrated and supported instead of undermined by the leadership that we have in the City Council now.

Kate commented as follows: I just want to say, it would be impossible to comment during the budget meetings themselves, because you actually have to analyze the budget as a whole before you can start making comments on it, so, I think it's great that there's all these budget meetings, but the real activity of analyzing a financial document is seeing it in total, so you can't really comment on it in bits and pieces, because you're not giving it a proper analysis. I also want to say I hope that as you continue this meeting on the 27th, that you remember all the public comment and the fact that firefighters were speaking before you tonight, because I doubt that they'll be able to show up again for another 5 1/2 hour meeting or whatever this was, so I really hope that you take all the public comment that you heard tonight into your consideration as you move forward, to actually discuss the police and the fire department budget at the next meeting

Mayor Hinton closed the re-opened public hearing.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I wanted to address the public. We will be reopening the public hearing on our next meeting, and that will allow for public comment to continue on this budget. Just letting the public know.

Councilmember Mauer moved and Councilmember Zollman seconded the motion to continue this item and continue Item Number 9 - Public Hearing on Capital Improvement Program Budget for FY 2023-2024 to the June 27th 2023 Special City Council meeting to be held at 6:00 pm by Zoom and In Person.

Mayor Hinton called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote.

VOTE:

Ayes: Councilmembers Maurer, McLewis, Zollman, Vice Mayor Rich and Mayor Hinton
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

City Council Action: Item continued to June 27th 2023.

Minute Order Number: 2023-158

- 9. Public Hearing – To conduct a Public Hearing on Capital Improvement Program Budget for FY 2023-2024 (Responsible Department: Engineering Director). Item Continued.

City Council Action: Item continued to June 27th, 2023.

Minute Order Number: 2023-159

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA: Three minutes per speaker for up to twenty (20) minutes total for public comments but can be reduced at Mayor’s discretion depending upon the number of speakers or Mayor has discretion to allow for additional time beyond the 20 minutes allocated for public comment dependent upon the subject matter or number of speakers.

There were no additional public comment for items not on the agenda.

CITY COUNCIL/CITY STAFF REPORTS/COMMUNICATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/FUTURE MEETINGS:

- 10. City Manager-Attorney/City Clerk Reports: (This will be either verbal or written and provided prior to the meeting).

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11. City Council Reports/Committee/Sub-Committee Meeting Reports: (Reports by Mayor/City Councilmembers Regarding Various Agency Meetings/Committee Meetings/Sub-Committee Meeting /Conferences Attended and Possible Direction to its Representatives (If Needed) on Pending issues before such Boards. (This will be either verbal or written reports provided at the meeting)
12. Council Communications Received (Information/Meetings/Correspondence Received from the General Public to Councilmembers)
13. Future City Meeting Dates/Events (Informational Only): (See City Web Site for Up-to-Date Meeting Dates/Times)

CLOSED SESSION: NONE

ADJOURNMENT OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING

June 20, 2023 Meeting will be adjourned to the Special Meeting of June 27, 2023 at 6:00 pm (In Person and Remote/Zoom Virtual Meeting Format).

Please note: The City Council Meeting of Tuesday, July 4th , 2023 has been cancelled.

Mayor Hinton adjourned the City Council Meeting of June 20, 2023 at 11:40 pm to the Special Meeting of June 27, 2023 at 6:00 pm (In Person and Remote/Zoom Virtual Meeting Format).

Please note: The City Council Meeting of Tuesday, July 4th , 2023 has been cancelled.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary C. Gourley
Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, MMC