

Dear Council Members,

I am writing in regards to the discussion of the Ad Hoc Fire Committee.

From the last meeting, it was clear that the public and also Council Members wanted to hear from Chief Piccinini.

It seems that he should give a public presentation prior to the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee.

As it is clear from the Matrix report, the City receives no service benefit until the Station House is remodeled. With this information, it seems obvious that we should not even consider consolidation until there is a path forward to a station upgrade/ remodel, including a timeline.

If we need to pass a bond to fund the station remodel, get design approval, get bids from contractors, it seems that it would be at least 3 years until work would begin on a station remodel. Thus, there is no urgency to consolidate until this crucial aspect is determined and funded.

With the fact of the station remodel as key to any path forward, it appears that we will need an interim plan until the station is remodeled.

If an Ad Hoc Committee is formed prior to Chief Piccinini's public presentation, I ask that the Ad Hoc Committee address the following issues:

- 1) Create a town hall for Chief Piccinini to present his initial thoughts and response to the Matrix report, what problems he sees that need to be addressed in the short and long term, and to have a Q&A with the general public;
- 2) To form a Work Group with Chief Piccinini, fire fighters, business owners, citizens who participate in emergency response groups, the Police Department, contractors, architects and other residents who have skills related to the questions at hand to address the following;
  - A) Design, cost and timeline for fire station remodel/upgrade;
  - B) Costs involved with Sebastopol's contribution to Gold Ridge's PERS and other benefit if a merger with Gold Ridge would take place; would Sebastopol's revenue be contributing to the entire Gold Ridge Operation and how does that compare to our current PERS/ benefits obligation?;
  - C) Do outreach to commercial landlords and business owners regarding the commercial tax that is part of Gold Ridge's Parcel Tax. The Gold Ridge Proposal is \$300 + .15 per square foot. 14,000 sq feet would be \$2400 per year, 1200 sq feet would be \$480. How much would this tax be on Hotel Sebastopol? Is now the right time to impose additional taxes on our businesses? Do we want to create more financial barriers on our local business community to receive a basic service like fire if there are other options? Engage the business community in this discussion to get their feedback. We need to support our businesses, support hotels coming in and support other commercial projects to increase our revenue.
  - D) What are the immediate needs of the Fire Department and what are the short and long term solutions and timelines?
- 3) After the Work Group discusses these questions and whatever else might be relevant, the Work Group will give another public presentation to discuss their findings and take questions from the public.

4) The next step, once the financial data has been collected, is for the Work Group to create at least 5 scenarios which include all financial considerations from the station remodel to the PERS contributions. They should include:

- A) How much will we need to remodel the fire station;
- B) What are the different financial schemas for PERS and other Benefits;
- C) What are scenarios if Council commits 18%, 19%, 20% of the budget to Fire Service as is standard practice in most other California cities?
- D) What are scenarios for a Bond to pay for the station upgrade?;
- E) If a Bond is considered, would Council also consider increasing the amount of the bond to fix other pressing, underfunded infrastructure like Sebastopol's Roads, which have the poorest rating in the Bay Area?;
- F) If a Bond is considered, would an on-going parcel tax also be necessary? If so, how much and how would the City consider commercial properties?

The discussion of our fire service and how it is paid for is a fundamental and critical community issue. I ask that Council move with transparency and public input in this process.

There is no urgency around this issue and if we do decide to consolidate, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to reverse the situation.

Thank you,  
Kate Haug