

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [City Council](#)  
**Subject:** Delivery Of Fire Services  
**Date:** Monday, September 25, 2023 9:05:41 AM

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Dear Mayor Hinton and members of the Council,

Thank you for holding a "Town Hall" meeting to discuss the future of fire delivery services within the City. Of all the responsibilities of the City Council, delivery of fire services ( and related medical assistance ) ranks amongst the highest of priorities.

I am in favor of maintaining control of the governance of our Fire Department. As it now stands, our elected Council is accountable for the delivery of services and I would hope to see that continue. Sebastopol, as an incorporated city, has a distinct community of interest and we are fortunate to be able to rely on locally elected representatives to administer our affairs. At the end of the day, consolidation with another entity means ceding control. Our ability to govern ourselves is, at best, diluted. At worse, we completely lose control and influence.

The Matrix Report makes it clear that challenges exist and an influx of revenue is needed to appropriately staff and maintain the Fire Department. Principally, the Matrix Report suggests hat a parcel tax of \$265 per year will be necessary, with or without consolidation. I have no quarrel with that. However, if we need to impose a tax, I'd rather pay ourselves than send money to an outside entity.

A parcel tax, continued funding by he City Council and new monies accruing from the pending county-wide ballot measure may be enough to fashion a staffing scenario that fits the needs of Sebastopol.

There a many nuances and details to all of this but my reading of the Matrix Report is that even with consolidation there remains significant issues relating to fire house renovations, apparatus replacement and a determination of the appropriate staffing arrangements. At this point then, consolidation doesn't seem to solve any substantive issues other than imposing a parcel tax without the need for an affirmative vote. I believe the folks of Sebastopol will favor taxing themselves to assure delivery of fire ( and medical ) services.

The final resolution of all of this will be a heavy lift and I commend the Council for forthrightly addressing this. I am hopeful that there is a way to continuing governing ourselves when it comes to our Fire Department. Thank you for your consideration.

Richard M. Johnson

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