

Audited Financial Report Offers City Statistics that are alarming!

The 2022-23 Audited Financial Report is posted and offers many insights from the statistical data reported at the end of the report.

Requests for Police Services are up 60% from last year! (PDF page 177 of 178)

12,384 requests for police services in 2023. This is up from 7,743 in 2022.

What is driving the increases? How much of this is homeless related requests?

Water/Wastewater residential accounts way up?

2,767 Residential accounts. This is an increase of 261 accounts compared to 2022.

We have 262 new accounts requesting water service? Did we have a housing boom, or did we find some missing accounts while converting to wireless water meters?

A 10% increase in the number water and sewer rate payers would go a long way to solving the water and sewer deficits.

Taxable Retail Sales declined 2 years in a row? It is down 10% from 2021 – Sebastopol is experiencing a very prolonged recession. (PDF page 165 of 178)

Taxable Retail Sales are down 10% from 2021 and down two years in a row 2021 – 2023. This has not happened at least since 2014

During the same time period retail sales in the State of California reportedly increased 13.7%. This is evidence of a city-wide downturn in economic activity with retail sales lagging the state by almost 24%.

Taxable Sales in Sebastopol are down two years in a row for every category including:

Eating and Drinking Places, Food Stores, Apparel Stores, Auto Dealers and Supplies, Service Stations, Other retail stores and all other retail outlets.

In California it increased by more than 10% in every category.

Service stations sales were up 30% in California while Sebastopol decreased by 10%.

Is school traffic from Forestville making it more difficult to stop at Rotten Robbie's?

Is there a loss of sales in eating and drinking places because we lost our downtown hotel?

Is homelessness and retail theft impacting food and apparel sales?

Fewer people are spending their money in Sebastopol. Fewer people are buying food in the grocery store or gas for their car. Sebastopol is in a recession.

The "Financial crisis" appears to be the result of a significant decline in business activity in the city. Raising sales tax rates on declining sales won't solve the problem.

When will there be a discussion of these facts and the City Council's plans to get the city out of recession?