



## CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: July 15, 2025

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**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers  
**From:** Mayor Stephen Zollman  
**Responsible Department:** Human Resources/Administrative Services  
**Subject:** Invitation to City Labor Unions for a Collaborative Discussion on Workforce Development and Strategic Staffing Approaches

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council invite representatives from the City's recognized labor unions to participate in a collaborative discussion with City Council and City staff during a publicly noticed Council meeting to explore strategies for supporting workforce development and organizational capacity across all staffing levels, including the strategic use of outsourcing to optimize resources and meet service needs.

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The City of Sebastopol is committed to fostering a sustainable, efficient, and high-performing workforce. As operational needs evolve, the City seeks to partner with its recognized labor unions to explore innovative, forward-thinking staffing strategies. These strategies may include improving recruitment and retention efforts, enhancing internal promotion pathways, and selectively outsourcing certain functions to ensure the best use of internal staff capacity while maintaining high-quality public services.

This agenda item proposes initiating a public and collaborative discussion during a publicly noticed City Council meeting with union leadership to align on shared goals and explore opportunities for strengthening the City's workforce at all levels.

**BACKGROUND:**

Sebastopol, like many small municipalities, faces ongoing challenges in staffing, including resource limitations, recruitment competition, and shifting service demands. Supporting a balanced, well-structured workforce is essential to operational success, employee morale, and public service delivery.

While the City values its in-house talent and aims to grow capacity internally, it also recognizes that, in some cases, outsourcing specific tasks may improve efficiency and allow staff to focus on duties best aligned with their job classifications, skills, and long-term development.

The City completed an Updated Staffing Assessment Study with the goal of evaluating the structure, capacity, and long-term sustainability of its municipal workforce. The study reviewed staffing levels across departments, assessed workload distribution, and identified any misalignments between job duties and formal classifications. Among its recommendations were strategies to optimize internal resources, ensure workload alignment with job classifications, and consider outsourcing specific lower-complexity or non-core functions to create capacity for higher-priority work.

**DISCUSSION:**

The City proposes a transparent and collaborative dialogue with its labor unions to discuss shared challenges, opportunities, and priorities. Discussion topics could include:



- Staffing needs and gaps across departments and classifications
- Recruitment and retention challenges and opportunities
- Strategies for supporting training, mentorship, and internal advancement
- Collaboration on outreach to local job seekers, students, and underrepresented groups
- Opportunities for job enrichment and workload alignment
- Use of outsourcing for specialized, temporary, or lower-complexity tasks to support core operations
- Maintaining service levels while promoting employee development and well-being

The proposed discussion would take place at a future City Council meeting or designated study session or workshop and serve as a foundation for ongoing dialogue and planning. This item is to ensure transparency with the community on efforts to create a high performance organization.

#### **STAFF ANALYSIS:**

This effort aligns with the City's goal of cultivating a resilient and modern workforce through collaborative planning and innovation. By involving union representatives early in the conversation with the City Council as to the issues the City is facing related to challenges and opportunities, the City can ensure transparency, support mutual problem-solving, and build trust while adapting to the realities of municipal staffing in today's environment.

#### **CITY COUNCIL GOALS/PRIORITIES/GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:**

This agenda item supports the following City Council goal(s):

Goal 4 – High Performance Organization

Action Plan 1: Achieve staffing and program targets that reflect best practices in efficiency, operational standards, baseline budgeting, and performance management.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this initial discussion. Any financial implications related to future staffing changes or outsourcing proposals will be evaluated individually and brought back for Council review as needed.

#### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH:**

This item has been noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was made available for public review at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting date. The City has also used social media platforms to promote and advertise the City Council meeting and agenda items.

As of the writing of this report, the City has not received any public comment. Any comments received after the publication of this report will be shared with the City Council as supplemental materials before or during the meeting.

#### **RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council invite representatives from the City's recognized labor unions to participate in a collaborative discussion with City Council and City staff during a publicly noticed Council meeting to explore strategies for supporting workforce development and organizational capacity across all staffing levels, including the strategic use of outsourcing to optimize resources and meet service needs.

#### **OPTIONS:**

That the Council not support the invitation and provide direction to staff.



**ATTACHMENTS:**

None

**APPROVALS:**

Department Head Approval: Approval Date: 7-7-2025

CEQA Determination (Planning): Approval Date: 7-7-2025

The proposed action is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Administrative Services (Financial): Approval Date: 7-7-2025

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

Account Code (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

City Attorney Approval: Approval Date: 7-7-2025

City Manager Approval: Approval Date: 7-7-2025