



City of Sebastopol

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: April 21, 2026**

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**To:** Honorable City Councilmembers  
**Requestor(s):** Councilmember Hinton  
 Mayor McLewis  
**Department:** Interim City Manager  
 Public Works  
**Subject:** Waiver of Budget Committee Review for Special Event Permit Fee Waivers of  
 \$2,000 or Less

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution establishing a policy to waive Budget Committee review for requests to waive special event permit fees when the requested waiver amount is \$2,000 or less (applicant would still be required to submit a deposit of \$1000/\$500/\$150 for damages; (refundable deposit amount would depend on the size of the event per our user fee schedule).

**PROCESS OF AGENDA ITEM:**

- a. Introduction of agenda item by Requestor(s) and City staff
- b. Questions and discussion from Councilmembers
- c. Open for Public Comment
- d. Council Deliberation and Action

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** The City Council is asked to consider adopting a resolution that streamlines the review process for small special event permit fee waivers. Currently, all fee waiver requests must be reviewed and recommended by the Budget Committee before full City Council consideration.

Special event permit fees include a refundable deposit in case of damages based on the number of anticipated attendees. The deposit is \$1000 for events with more than 200 people in attendance, \$500 for 51-200 people, and \$150 for an event with 50 people or below. In most cases, these deposits are returned to the applicant if there is little to no damage found upon inspection by Public Works. Per the history below, most event fees are \$500 or less but have still been required to pay the refundable deposit.

This proposed procedural change would allow waivers of \$2,000 or less (retaining the requirement to submit to the City the \$1000/\$500/\$150 refundable deposit) to be considered and acted upon directly by the City Council (proposed for placement on consent calendar), while preserving Budget Committee review for larger requests with recommendation to the full City Council. The policy aims to reduce administrative delays for community organizations, enhance efficiency, and enable the Budget Committee to focus on higher-impact fiscal matters.

**BACKGROUND:** The City of Sebastopol processes special event permit applications through the Public Works Department, with associated fees and deposits established in the City's adopted fee schedule. Following the suspension of City sponsorships, all fee waiver requests have required Budget Committee review and recommendation prior to Council action.

While this practice ensures fiscal oversight, it has created unnecessary delays for smaller, community-oriented events, such as neighborhood gatherings, nonprofit fundraisers, cultural celebrations, and local festivals, where the requested waiver is typically \$2,000 or less. These modest waivers have minimal impact on City revenues but provide meaningful support for vital community engagement. Also as noted above, most deposits have been refunded in full upon inspection for damages by Public Works.

**DISCUSSION:** Adoption of the attached resolution would create a standing policy allowing special event permit fee waiver requests of \$2,000 or less to be placed directly on the City Council agenda (recommended for placement on consent calendar). Waiver requests exceeding \$2,000 would continue to require Budget Committee review and recommendation to the full City Council. A Councilmember may still pull any consent calendar item for separate discussion per existing Council policy.

A summary of the Special Event Fees Waived in FY24/25 and this Fiscal Year to date are as follows:

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Number of Events with Fee Waivers</b>	<b>Total Fees Waived</b>
FY 2023–2024	Sebastopol Little League	\$200
	Peacetown	\$300
	Gravenstein Apple Fair	\$7500
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,000</b>
FY 2024–2025	Chamber Tree Lighting	\$450
	Apple Blossom Parade/Fair	\$14,620
	Rotary Centennial Celebration	\$500
	Kiwanis Easter Egg Hunt	\$400
	Summer Concerts	\$1,550
	Many Moons	\$1,200
	July 3 <sup>rd</sup> Fireworks	\$6,930
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25,650</b>
FY 2025–2026 (to date)	Living Peace Wall Induction Ceremony	\$450
	Porch Fest	\$500
	Kiwanis Easter Egg Hunt	\$400
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,350</b>

**STAFF ANALYSIS:** This change maintains full Council oversight for all waivers while improving administrative efficiency for both staff and volunteer event organizers. It balances fiscal responsibility with the City's interest in facilitating community events.

**CITY COUNCIL GOALS / PRIORITIES / GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:** This procedural adjustment supports City Council priorities related to community engagement, efficient government operations, and support for local events and nonprofits. It is consistent with the General Plan's emphasis on fostering a vibrant community.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** As of the preparation of this staff report, no public comments have been received on this item. Any comments received after distribution of the report will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials. Public comment will also be accepted during the meeting.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH:** This item has been noticed and made available for public review in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act, at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None. This is a procedural change only and does not alter the City's authority to approve or deny any waiver request. The cumulative value of approved small waivers is expected to remain negligible relative to the overall City budget.

**RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:** Approve the attached Resolution No. XXXX-2026 waiving Budget Committee review for special event permit fee waivers of \$2,000 or less, with the continued requirement of submission of the refundable \$1000/\$500/\$150 deposit for damages.

**OPTIONS:**

1. Modify the threshold amount (such as permit fees only of \$500 or less; \$750 or less; or \$2000 or less) and continue to require the \$1000/\$500/\$150 refundable deposit for any damages to venue); and adopt the resolution; or
2. Direct staff to return with additional information or alternatives; or
3. Decline to adopt the resolution and maintain the current process requiring Budget Committee review for all waivers.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Draft Resolution No. XXXX-2026

APPROVALS:

Department Head Approval:

Approval Date: 4/14/26

CEQA Determination (Planning):

Approval Date: N/A

The proposed action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Administrative Services (Financial)

Approval Date:

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget:  Yes  No  N/A Account Code (if applicable)

City Attorney Approval:

Approval Date: N/A

City Manager Approval:

Approval Date: 4/14/26

**RESOLUTION NUMBER: XXXX-2026  
CITY OF SEBASTOPOL**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL WAIVING BUDGET COMMITTEE  
REVIEW FOR CERTAIN SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT FEE WAIVERS**

WHEREAS, the City of Sebastopol issues special event permits through the Public Works Department to support community events; and

WHEREAS, associated permit fees, including a refundable deposit for potential damages, are established in the City’s adopted Schedule of User and Regulatory Fees; and

WHEREAS, requests to waive such fees have historically required review and recommendation by the Budget Committee prior to City Council consideration; and

WHEREAS, many community events request fee waivers in amounts of \$2,000 or less, but retaining the requirement for submission of the \$1000/\$500/\$150 refundable deposit (per the approved user fee schedule), and such waivers typically have minimal fiscal impact to the City; and

WHEREAS, in most cases the refundable deposit is returned following inspection, further reducing the net fiscal impact of these waivers; and

WHEREAS, requiring Budget Committee review for smaller waiver requests creates unnecessary administrative burden and delays for community organizations and staff; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to improve administrative efficiency while maintaining appropriate fiscal oversight for larger waiver requests.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Sebastopol does hereby waive the Budget Committee review of special event permit waiver request fees in an amount of \$2,000 or less. Such requests may be placed directly on a City Council consent calendar agenda, for consideration and final action.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that requests for special event permit fee waivers exceeding \$2,000 shall continue to require review and recommendation by the Budget Committee prior to City Council consideration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this policy shall take effect immediately upon adoption and shall apply to all pending and future special event permit fee waiver requests.

The above and foregoing Resolution was duly passed, approved, and adopted at a meeting by the City Council on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of April 2026 by the following vote:

**VOTE:**

- Ayes:
- Noes:
- Absent:
- Abstain:

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

Mayor Jill McLewis

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

Mary Gourley, Interim City Manager/City Clerk, MMC

APPROVED AS TO FORM: \_\_\_\_\_

Alex Mog, City Attorney