



CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF:

July 21, 2026

=====

To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
 From: City Attorney Alex Mog
 City Manager Mary Gourley
 Department: City Administration
 Subject: Second Reading and Adoption of Ordinance Number 1166 Amending Municipal Code Chapter 2.44 to Increase Council Member Compensation to \$950.00 per Month

=====

RECOMMENDATION(s): Staff recommends that the City Council:

Approve Waiving of Second Reading and Adoption of Ordinance 1166 to amend Municipal Code Chapter 2.44 to increase City Council member compensation to \$950.00 per month.

PROCESS OF AGENDA ITEM:

If the item remains on the Consent Calendar, no presentation is required, and the item will be approved as part of the Consent Calendar.

If the item is removed from the Consent Calendar, it will be heard as a regular agenda item and will proceed as follows:

- Presentation by staff
- Council questions and discussion
- Public hearing/comment
- Council deliberation and action

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City Council approved for First Reading and Introduction of Ordinance to increase City Council compensation from \$300.00 to \$950.00 per month. Per state law (Government Code § 36516.5) and the explicit terms of the ordinance, the new compensation rate will not become effective until January 2027, following the November 2026 election. This ensures full compliance with Government Code section 36516.5, which prohibits salary increases until at least one member of the Council begins a new term.

BACKGROUND:

In July 2023, in an effort to increase equitable representation at city government levels, the State of California passed legislation (SB 329), which increases the salary that may be paid by ordinance to City Councilmembers in general law cities. SB 329 does not apply to charter cities.

According to the League of California Cities, SB 329 was adopted because lengthy time commitments and limited pay discourage many, especially low-income residents, single parents, people of color, and young people, from running for public office. SB 329 requires any ordinance increasing city council compensation to include findings demonstrating the need for increased compensation.

Existing law authorizes a City Council to enact an ordinance to provide each City Councilmember with a salary based on the population of the city, subject to possible annual adjustment. Increasing City Council compensation makes serving on a City Council viable for individuals from across different income levels.

SB 329 allows future salary increases for City Councilmembers beyond the amount provided in Government Code §36516(a) by an ordinance or by an amendment to an ordinance, as long as the amount of the increase does not exceed the greater of either of the following:

1. An amount equal to 5% for each calendar year from the operative date of the last adjustment of the salary in effect when the ordinance or amendment is enacted. (For Sebastopol, there has been no adjustment since inception: 1984).
2. An amount equal to inflation since January 1, 2024, based upon the California Consumer Price Index (CPI), which shall not exceed 10% for each calendar year.

DISCUSSION:

Pursuant to Government Code §36516.5, any City Council salary increase may take effect only when at least one member of the City Council commences a new term of office. Accordingly, if an ordinance is adopted approving a salary increase, it will take effect for all councilmembers following the November 2026 election. The ordinance is before the Council for adoption.

STAFF ANALYSIS: No further analysis.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS/PRIORITIES/ AND OR GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:

This agenda item represents the City Council goals/priorities as follows:

Goal 4: HIGH PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION

Restore public trust, improve public communications, and strengthen collaborative partnerships with outside agencies and service providers.

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 in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT: The increase would raise annual compensation costs from approximately \$18,000.00 to \$57,000.00 (+\$39,000.00 per year). Because the new rate will not take effect until January 2027, the total cost for FY 26/27 would increase from \$18,000 to \$37,500. \$18,000 has been allocated in the FY 26 27 budget (January – June 2027).

RESTATED RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council:

Approve Waiving of Second Reading and Adoption of Ordinance 1166 to amend Municipal Code Chapter 2.44 to increase City Council member compensation to \$950.00 per month.

CITY COUNCIL OPTIONS:

1. Deny the Ordinance;
2. Amend the ordinance and provide specific direction to staff

ATTACHMENT(S):

Ordinance 1166

APPROVALS:

Department Head Approval: Approval Date: 7-13-2026

CEQA Determination (Planning): Approval Date: NA

The proposed action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378, the recommended action is not a "project" subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it does not have a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the

environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. In the alternative, the recommended action is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the recommended action may have a significant effect on the environment.

General Plan Goal (Planning):	Approval Date: 7-13-2026
Administrative Services (Financial)	Approval Date: 7-13-2026
Costs authorized in City Approved Budget:	XX Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A
Account Code (f applicable)	
City Attorney Approval:	Approval Date: 7-13-2026
City Manager Approval:	Approval Date: 7-13-2026

ORDINANCE NO. 1166

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL AMENDING SEBASTOPOL MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 2.44, CITY COUNCIL SALARIES, TO INCREASE COMPENSATION FOR CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS TO NINE HUNDRED FIFTY DOLLARS (\$950.00) PER MONTH, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2027

WHEREAS, California Government Code section 36516 authorizes the legislative body of a general law city to enact an ordinance providing compensation for members of the city council, with the amount based upon the population of the city; and

WHEREAS, on June 29, 2023, the Governor signed Senate Bill 329 (SB 329), which amended Government Code section 36516 to increase the maximum monthly compensation that may be paid to City Council members in cities with populations of 35,000 or less to Nine Hundred Fifty Dollars and Zero Cents (\$950.00) per month, subject to annual adjustment; and

WHEREAS, the City of Sebastopol has not adjusted compensation for members of the City Council since at least 1984 — a period of more than forty (40) years — during which time the responsibilities, time commitment, and complexity of local governance have increased substantially while compensation has remained static; and

WHEREAS, currently City Council members receive compensation of Three Hundred Dollars (\$300.00) per month, which, when adjusted for inflation, represents a significant reduction in real purchasing power over four decades; and

WHEREAS, in addition to attending regular City Council meeting, there is substantial additional time required of Council Members for special meetings, closed sessions, workshops, study sessions, review of lengthy agenda packets and supporting materials, preparation for meetings, responding to constituent communications, attending community events, serving on City committees and regional agencies, participating in intergovernmental meetings, and fulfilling other duties of public office; and

WHEREAS, the significant time commitment required of City Council members, combined with relatively low compensation, can create financial barriers that deter qualified individuals, particularly those from lower-income backgrounds, younger candidates, single parents, and people of color, from seeking or continuing in public office, thereby limiting the diversity of perspectives on the City Council; and

WHEREAS, SB 329 was enacted in part to address these barriers and to make service on city councils more accessible to a broader cross-section of the community; and

WHEREAS, the proposed compensation of Nine Hundred Fifty Dollars and Zero Cents (\$950.00) per month is consistent with compensation levels adopted by comparable cities in Sonoma County; and

WHEREAS, increasing City Council compensation supports the City Council's goals and priorities, including maintaining a High Performance Organization, restoring and maintaining public trust through transparent and effective governance, and improving community engagement; and

WHEREAS, the Budget Committee of the City Council reviewed this matter at its meeting of May 11, 2026, and recommended support for increasing compensation to \$950.00 per month; and

WHEREAS, on May 19, 2026, the City Council considered a staff report on this matter, received public comment, and directed staff to prepare an ordinance to implement the compensation increase; and

WHEREAS, Government Code section 36516.5 provides that any ordinance increasing the compensation of City Council members may take effect only when at least one member of the City Council commences a new term of office following a municipal election; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to adopt this ordinance in full compliance with all applicable provisions of state law.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Findings. The City Council hereby adopts and incorporates by reference all of the recitals set forth above as its findings demonstrating the need for the increased compensation established by this ordinance, as required by Government Code section 36516.

Section 2. Amendment of Municipal Code. Chapter 2.44, City Council Salaries, of the Sebastopol Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows (with deletions in ~~strike through~~ and additions underlined):

Chapter 2.44 City Council Salaries

2.44.010 Establish salary.

Section 36516 of the Government Code of the State of California authorizes the City Council to establish a salary for said City Council members, in cities up to and including 35,000 in population, up to and including \$950.00 ~~\$300.00~~ per month, subject to annual adjustment as set forth in Section 36516. Population of the City of Sebastopol is less than 35,000.

2.44.020 Salary amount.

Effective January 1, 2027, there is herewith established a salary for each City Council member in the sum of \$950.00 ~~\$300.00~~ per month.

~~2.44.030 Effective date:~~

~~Payment of the increased salary as provided in the previous section shall be effective January 1 in accordance with Section 36516.5 of the Government Code of the State of California.~~

~~2.44.040 Continuance of salary:~~

~~The existing salary as provided by Ordinance No. 771 shall continue for each Council member until said sum is increased as authorized by law.~~

Section 3. Implementation. In accordance with Government Code section 36516.5, the compensation established by this ordinance shall not be paid until January 1, 2027, following the November 2026 municipal election. Until January 1, 2027, Councilmembers shall continue to review a salary of \$300 per month.

Section 4. Supersession. This ordinance supersedes and replaces any prior ordinance, resolution, or provision of the Sebastopol Municipal Code that established a different amount of compensation for members of the City Council.

Section 5. Severability. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The City Council declares that it would have adopted this ordinance and each section, subsection, sentence, clause, and phrase thereof regardless of the fact that any

one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses, or phrases may be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

Section 6. Publication. The City Clerk is directed to cause this ordinance to be published in the manner and within the time required by law.

Section 7. Effective Date of Ordinance. This ordinance shall take effect and be in full force and effect thirty (30) days after its final adoption, subject to the implementation date established in Section 3.

APPROVED FOR FIRST READING AND INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Sebastopol held on the 7th day of July, 2026.

APPROVED FOR SECOND READING AND ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Sebastopol scheduled to be held on the 21st day of July, 2026.

VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

APPROVED: _____
Mayor, Jill McLewis

ATTEST: _____
Mary Gourley, City Manager

APPROVED AS TO FORM: _____
Alex Mog, City Attorney