

*City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021**DRAFT*

- The water upgrade program is a service for water customers that allows them to install water efficiency improvements on their property using a monthly charge that is significantly less than the savings those improvements will generate.
- This means the customer begins saving right away, and yet they use a portion of their savings overtime, through this monthly charge, pay off the cost of their project.
- Projects are not eligible unless the savings is enough so that the on-bill charge is 80% of the entire savings that's estimated to be generated.
- This puts each customer in a cash positive position with no out of pocket in order to participate in the program.
- There were two questions from public comment.
- One had to do with the three fees that are attached that come with the financing service. The first fee is a utility fee of 2%. Of the project cost. This covers the cost of the utility to participate in the program.
- Perhaps there might be some updating of the billing system or participating in outreach to customers.
- This small revenue stream makes it easier for the utility to participate.
- The second fee is a 2% capital fee, and this makes it possible for us to obtain the financing dollars from ABAG. It's the cost of delivering the financing.
- The final fee is a fee of 1%, and this is there to just cover the cost of moving the money from ABAG into the program to pay for projects that then are paid back through the on-bill charge by participating customers.
- The details of these three fees are in exhibit "d," the total on-bill cost detail that gives all the details about the fees and what they cover.
- The other question had to do with hiring that would be related to the program contractors.
- In that case, the way the program works is that there is a program operator.
- This is a partner, part of the program that is going to talk to customers, enroll customers, enroll program contractors who have to meet certain criteria of a standard of service and price points in order to be part of the program.
- The program operator is actually hiring the program contractor.
- When we met last there was a question about how to ensure that local contractors had an opportunity to be part of the program and we did incorporate that request.
- In the master agreement in exhibit "b," which details the roles and responsibilities of ABAG as well as the partner utility, there is a section now that requests that the partner utility provide a list of local contractors who hold a Sebastopol business license that provides services that are aligned with program services. That would be plumbers and landscape contractors primarily.
- In terms of recruiting contractors, the program operator will draw from three sources to develop a list of potential contractors that they will reach out to with the program opportunity.
- Those three sources are the California state licensing board, professional associations that are aligned with program services like an association of plumbers, and then the list of local businesses that the partner utility provides.
- The program operator has a process for reaching out to potential contractors, an application process, and a vetting process to determine which contractors are a good fit for the program.
- An effort will be made to look at local contractors on that list very carefully.
- That's how we set up a process to ensure that Sebastopol contractors would be first in the list to be notified and be given full access to the application process to become a program contractor.

Mayor Glass asked for questions.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- Want to make sure that for the benefit of the public, we don't lose track of a couple of key pieces.
- Remind us about the conservation goal behind this program and also confirm that individual customers will not be obligated to sign on.
- It will be the choice of individual customers.

Chris Cone commented as follows:

- It is a voluntary program.
- The program is designed and looking ahead toward State water conservation policy that has been in development over the last few years.
- California recently switched from an emergency response to drought conditions.
- They call it making conservation a California way of life.
- This is a new policy initiative from the State, and new targets for indoor and outdoor water conservation are part of this policy package.
- Some legislation has already been passed by the State, and they are in the process of changing a lot of things about how the water sector functions.
- One of the big things is looking at those indoor and outdoor targets, specifically, and improving them since we are shifting toward an ongoing conservation posture.

Councilmember Rich commented that this program would provide individual homeowners a financing option in order to retrofit their homes in order to meet these water conservation guidelines and questioned if that captures it.

Chris Cone stated that is correct.

Vice Mayor Gurney commented as follows:

- Think about a year ago we had a meeting with City staff and we reviewed the program that had been successfully piloted in Windsor and the Easy Bay and it was suggested we consider it here.
- Staff went through all of their concerns and we were able to resolve it to make a later presentation to the Council.
- The idea at that time was we're an old town.
- We have a lot of old homes.
- We have a lot of places and things that need upgrades and remodels.
- If we can encourage our citizens to be better at water conservation through a program that's going to make that more financially available to them, we want to do it.
- The excitement at the time of that meeting was that perhaps we will be able to through our marketing efforts to reach out to our buildings that are multifamily.
- Even Park Village, where we're the landlord, and see if we can create a culture of conservation there – even more than we have.
- Our statistics are good, but at the same time we really do need to be retrofitted as Councilmember Rich said.
- This was a way that had been tested. We are the first enrollee in this.
- At our last RPCA meeting Cloverdale said, we want to be in, too so I think they're going to enroll behind us.
- I think it's got a good future.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- Our citizens and our homeowners, our tenants may be interested, our landlords if they're interested, and we have to option to make some considerable improvements in our facilities and also in our conservation records.
- That's why I brought it forward almost a year ago.

Chris Cone commented as follows:

- Would just say that the program model was vetted in three separate pilots, starting with the town of Windsor in 2012, the City of Hayward in 2014 and East Bay Mud in 2016.
- We have a long track record.
- The regional program, which is what you're considering tonight to join the regional program, has been informed by those pilots, and some of the challenges that they found we have found solutions for in the regional program.
- One of those challenges was having a source for financing that did not come out of the City budget.
- The regional program is put together to allow utilities to participate without a big commitment of staff time or funding from the budget, and yet to provide to their citizens this voluntary program that allows them to install measures without on out of pocket cost.

Mayor Glass opened for public comment. There was no public comment.

Council Deliberations: There were no further comments or Council deliberations.

MOTION:

Vice Mayor Gurney moved and Councilmember Hinton seconded the motion to authorize the City Manager/Attorney to sign the Master Agreement for Water Upgrades \$ave services and adopt accompanying Resolution establishing the Program Fee Schedule.

Mayor Glass called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote.

VOTE:

Ayes: Councilmembers Hinton, Rich, Slayter, Vice Mayor Gurney and Mayor Glass
 Noes: None
 Absent: None
 Abstain: None

City Council Action: Approved Authorizing the City Manager/Attorney to sign the Master Agreement for Water Upgrades \$ave services and adopt accompanying Resolution establishing the Program Fee Schedule.

Minute Order Number: 2021-016
Resolution Number: 6326-2021

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS: (Please Note: Although informational/presentations items are routinely informational in nature, some informational items may contain request for actions such as support, direction to staff, follow up, or receipt of item based on the presentation/information provided.)

5. Receipt of Presentation and Acceptance of the City’s Annual Audit for Year Ended June 30, 2020 (Responsible Department: Administrative Services Department)

Administrative Services Director Kwong presented the agenda item recommending the City Council Receive the Presentation and Authorize Acceptance of the City’s Annual Audit for Year Ended June 30, 2020 and provided the following comments:

- The item before you all tonight is to recommend that the City Council receive this financial report by the certified public accountants for the City annual audit for the year ending June 2020.
- Badawi and Associates is the licensed certified public accountant firm who specialize in government audits and each year the City has an audit conducted by an independent audit firm.
- The goal of the independent audit was to provide a reasonable assurance that the financial statements of the City for the fiscal year ended are free of material misstatements.
- The independent audits involve examining on a test basis, and the audit was not designed for the auditor to review thousands of individual transactions.
- It's important the City Council understand the audit was conducted on a test basis providing evidence supporting amounts and disclosure in the financial statement assessing the principle used and significant estimate made by management staff and evaluating the overall financial presentation.
- As a result they have audited and verified the City financial statement and issued the City a clean audit report once again.

Mitesh Desai, CPA, Principal, Badawi and Associates, made a presentation to the City Council.

- It's important to communicate with you directly the audit results and the scope of the audit.
- I'll go over the engagement team, the deliverables of the audit, our areas of primary emphasis, what type of audit report we issued, some required communications, the new standards that are coming your way and briefly leave some time to conclude and if there are any questions, I'll be happy to answer them.
- I was the engagement partner on the audit. I had one senior and one staff assisting me, and we always have a quality control reviewer that looks at our audit work and also looks at the financial statements as an outside viewer of our report just to make sure that we follow auditing rules and also that the report looks fine and we didn't miss anything since we also assisted the City in preparing that report.
- Discussed the deliverables and scope of the audit and issuance of an opinion and management's document.
- We assist the City with preparing the streets report and state controller's report that we're currently working on and do the GASB limit.
- We also issue a letter going over what we'll be discussing today and our areas of primary emphasis.
- Our audit is performed on a risk basis, only looking at material things or key risks.
- These are some of the key areas we focused on.
- The first being management override of internal controls, which is a risk that's inherent in any audit.
- It's nothing specific to the City that we had any concerns. It's just that whenever management are in a position to design and put in place internal controls, likewise they can override and not follow those internal controls as well.
- What we do is we look at some things that management has control over, such as journal entries, management estimates, just to see if there's anything that looked odd there or anything that we wanted to pay attention to.
- We assigned more experience to more complex areas of the audit and also adjust our professional skepticism.
- Revenues are always a key with any audit. Just because it's a more qualitatively important aspect of the financial statements. We do a lot of confirmations and validation work with revenues.

- We also do analytics where we compare current year to prior, compare revenues to nonfinancial data, to budget.
- Accounting is complex, so we do pay closer attention to that, even though it's been in effect for a number of years.
- One thing we didn't list here this year was unique with regards to the audit, where because of shelter in place orders, we had to do the audit remotely, so we had to look at a lot of electronic documents rather than hard copy original documents.
- Discussed how are approvals done; how are transactions processed; was there any difference from what was done previously. We had to take all those into consideration.
- We issued a clean report. The current terminology at the moment is unmodified opinion. What that means is that we performed the audit in accordance with the generally accepted auditing standards. Financial statements are presented fairly in all material respects. Significant accounting policies we believe are consistently applied. The estimates and the financials are reasonable. The disclosures that accompanied the financial statements we believe are accurate and complete.
- Discussed review such as how did the numbers change from year to year, was anything significant to look out for. Then with assets, you can see there was a positive increase in your cash balances, which is mainly due to another operating surplus this year. With regards to assets, they were quite consistent.
- Looking at the City's liabilities, nothing significant here. Notice that your net pension liability did go up this year, and that's not necessarily anything specific to the City with regards to any benefit changes or any poor performance or anything like that. City's liabilities is a proportionate share of the total CalPERS ushering plans, pension liability. The total liability for CalPERS cost sharing plan went up this year, mainly as a result of the investment returns not being as great as they had expected, so is there was a higher increase in the liability due to interest that's accrued on that liability compared to the plan interest earnings. That resulted in overall increase in the pension plan's liability, and as a result your share of the liability went up as well.
- Discussed the City's net position, which is taking your total assets minus your liabilities, that is your equity as of the end of the year, and that equity is broken up into three categories. There is net investment in capital assets, which is how much of that equity is a result of all the capital assets that are on the balance sheet offset by any debt that was issued to obtain those capital assets. Then you have restricted equity which is your restricted monies that you get which are gas taxes, grants, any other special revenues that you may get. Then then you have unrestricted monies which are just your general discretionary revenues, such as property taxes, sales tax, TOT. This year you'll notice there is an increase in your restricted equity, and that was mainly as a result of the large sum that was approved by the state for flood relief that was received this year. That is why you had a slight increase in your restricted equity this year. Otherwise everything looked about the same.
- Discussed the trend of the City's change in net position. What were the operating results at the end of the year. You can see there was a positive. The City had a positive surplus, just that it wasn't as good as last year. Net was mainly a result of some revenue changes that were due to the pandemic where the City had lost some revenues as a result of trends in occupancy taxes and sales taxes that went as high as expected because of shelter-in-place orders. Amongst other things. I believe higher pension expense as well created that difference.
- Discussed comparing the City's net cost of service, which is various departments, public safety, community development. As a result of having these government programs, they generate revenues, so they may charge a fee for that service. They may get grant revenues so the net cost

of service is the total cost of that program adjusted by those revenues that the program generates. What we're doing here is comparing that net cost of service to tax revenues because those programs, in a sense, are subsidized by tax revenues. The City's tax revenue should be higher or about the same to your net cost of service. You can see this year there was a decrease in your tax revenues that's resulted in your net cost service being higher. Over time you've had something unique happening, a higher net cost of service. But probably something to look at over a long period of time to see whether the tax revenues are sufficient to cover the cost of service.

- Discussed the City's expenditure coverage, looking at available fund balance that's unrestricted, which means that it's available for discretionary spending, and comparing that to the City's total expenditures and seeing in number of how many months would the City be able to operate on that fund balance if it no longer receives any further discretionary revenues. It recommends no less than two months, so the City is in quite a healthy position here with regard to its fund balance. It's a bit something to be careful about because with governmental accounting, it's very short-term in nature because it looks at available fund balance, available resources for a short period. It doesn't include long-term liabilities that need to be accounted for or planned for in advance.
- Pension contributions - looking at it over a three-year period, this is nothing unusual. This is actually what everyone is seeing across the board is just the slight increase in contributions every year as the CalPERS is trying to make up for the unfunded liability. It's probably expected to keep going up in the future, especially with this year. CalPERS would want to make this up with contributions. Usually CalPERS amortizes these losses. It's always a gradual increase, but it's always good to plan for an increase in the future.
- Three-year trend analysis of the pensions, funded status - looking at the City's net pension liability over three years, and nothing significant here.
- Discussed the sensitivity disclosure. The pension figures in the financial statements are estimates. They take into account assumptions, such as mortality rates, life expectancy, payroll growth and these types of matters. The most significant assumption is the discount rate. It's such a significant estimate or assumption that GASB requires a sensitivity disclosure to provide a range as to what this number would be had the discount rate been 1% higher or 1% lower.
- OPEB. So, we have here just same as pension, just the City's annual OPEB contributions. Currently the plan is not funded, so these are just your pay as you go payments that are considered to be contributions to the OPEB plan as well. You can see that there was slightly less this year than last year, but about the same each year. You can see there was a slight decrease in the estimate this year. The City got a new valuation this year, so there were some assumption changes that resulted in a lower OPEB liability this year. There is a sensitivity disclosure for the OPEB liability. You can see the difference is not as great as with pension here just because we are looking at smaller cash flow amounts, which are the insurance premiums compared to pension benefits. Discussed sensitivity disclosure for OPEB or retiree benefits. That's a disclosure with regard to the cost trend rate. The health care cost trend rate is the actuary's assumption of how much they estimate health care costs will go up in the future. They just provide a range of a 1% lower health care cost trend rate or 1% higher, what would be the difference here. You can see it's not much difference here.
- Discussed required communications. Discussed clarifications with regard to our responsibilities as the auditors. Our responsibility is just to audit the financial statements and to express an opinion on them. With that, we value internal controls. We evaluate the tone at the top. We make sure that the financial statements are transparent. We may look at some material compliance requirements, and then we are also responsible to communicate the audit results and the scope

of the audit to the governing body, which I'm doing today. It's management's responsibility and they are responsible for the financial statements. They are responsible for establishing internal controls over the financial statements, over the transactions, over -- prevent and mitigate fraud or abuse. Responsible for informing us of all information needed for the audit and if there was any fraud. And also if we have any findings, they are responsible to correct those findings. On the following slide is also a very critical requirement of ours, which is to -- for us to maintain independence as the auditors when you're paying us to do the audit. You're paying us to do the audit because you believe we are independent, otherwise you would ask someone from management to do the audit. You know, we follow rules that are set by the American Institute of CPAs and the board of accountancy of the state to maintain our independence. You know, we don't perform any services that may impair our independence. Services that would impair our independence would be taking on management's role approving transactions, preparing journal entries, maintaining the books, preparing items on behalf of management that are not reviewed. So those we do not participate in. We do one service, which is allowable, which is assist in preparation of the financial statements. We are allowed to do that service with safeguards in place which requires an independent review of those financial statements and also management's approval of the financial statements. The audit was performed timely, so nothing to discuss here.

- Significant accounting policies, so some saving grace from GASB this year which they've never done before is they postponed implementation of some accounting standards that were due to be implemented this year. They heard a lot from the community that there was not going to be any time and priorities were with other things, of course, this year. A lot of the accounting pronouncements that are due this year were postponed to the following year.
- Attached to the financial statements are lengthy footnotes and narratives, which are the notes to the basic financial statements. The notes just provide more background to the numbers that are in the financial statements. The cash investment note gives you break down of what is the composition of the cash investments. Pension, for example, would provide information about what benefits are offered. What key assumptions went into the pension liabilities. What are the significant deferrals. What was the pension expense, and so forth. We had no difficulties in performing the audit.
- We have all the entries proposed for the audit were recorded. There were no significant matters or risks that needed to be disclosed in the financial statements.
- We do have one significant deficiency, an internal control which is still the HR and payroll process which we'd like to have either segregated or have a review process put in place. That's still needs to be worked on
- As part of the audit we obtained management representations which are a key piece of evidence as part of our audit. We are not aware of any consultations with third parties that management may have obtained. That usually occurs if management may want to get a third opinion or independent opinion on anything we've proposed.
- Discussed the management response letter, an engagement letter, and we didn't have any material communications that we've made to management in written form. We don't have any growing concern matters that the City seems to be in good financial health.
- We don't have any fraud or illegal acts that need to be disclosed.
- In 2022 we have some changes in the lease accounting that would be applicable and then in 2023 there will probably be subscription based for how the county accounts for spring brook and any other IT Arrangements.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

Mayor Glass asked for questions of staff or the consultant.

Councilmember Rich asked if for my purposes and for the benefit of the public here, could you give us a brief definition of OPEB which was an acronym that you used quite a bit in your presentation?

Mr. Desai commented that OPEB stands for Other Post-Employment Benefits. The City offers retiree health benefits, and that is considered an other post-employment benefits that requires special accounting.

Councilmember Hinton commented as follows:

- Discussed issue of HR and Payroll.
- Stated that this is handled internally but it is my understanding that our HR is handled separately.
- Is that not considered in the audit?

Director Kwong commented as follows:

- The auditor would like to see a segregation with the HR and payroll piece.
- Currently that piece is being handled by me and there is no check and balance and they would like to see that.
- It's been ongoing for the last three years.
- What that statement meant is that it needs to be done by somebody else besides me,
- I should be the authority as reviewing authority instead of rolling up my sleeve and actually doing the day to day work.
- That's what it meant by the fact that there is that deficiency in that area for payroll and HR.

City Manager McLaughlin commented as follows:

- Our department heads do a lot of hands on work.
- This department head also does a lot of hands on work and that is a problem.
- We do have an outside HR firm but many of the HR day to day functions are done internally in the Administrative Services Department such as employee leaves, balances, vacations, benefits, etc.
- There is no way to get completely away from having some so-called HR functions take place in the Admin Services Department
- Our issue is that we need to continue to look to supplementing the staff levels in our Admin Services Department and raising the level of expertise of our staff so that they can take away some of the day-to-day management currently being done by the administrative services director.

Councilmember Slayter commented as follows:

- Discussed the state controller's annual street reports as being a required item.
- What does that look like?
- Is that one of these AB 1600 annual reports or is this something difference.

Mr. Desai commented as follows:

- The State has an online platform where you can enter this report so they have some schedules that you fill in.
- Pretty much it's a report stating the City's annual expenditures and revenues that relate to streets, so you report your gas tax revenues, any other street revenue for street purposes and

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

also toward the annual expenditures for different types of street expenditures, pavement management, et cetera.

- So that's due December 1st, but it's not a physical report. It's an online submission.

Councilmember Slayter commented as follows:

- We have local streets and then we have our two state highways and all the different places that money comes from for those projects.
- This type of report could be another 200-page audit.
- Discussed page 185 of 202 - the pension plans.
- To make sure that everybody understands this, including myself, the fiduciary net position, is what CalPERS has basically on deposit for the City of Sebastopol's CalPERS liabilities?

Mr. Desai commented as follows:

- That with the cost sharing plan, it's a bit less precise, unfortunately. What the number represents is the City's share of the total plan assets, in a sense, or plan equity.
- Every year CalPERS provides or publishes a report of allocation factors pretty much for GASB 68 to record the City's net pension liability.
- What they do is in that report they have allocation factors and then they also have the total plan for all employers, what is the plan assets or fiduciary net position, and what is their total plan liability, which is the total pension liability.
- The way the City or if you're in a cost sharing plan, the way the liability is calculated is you take the fiduciary net positional indication factor and you multiply it against the total plan assets and you get your share of the plan assets.
- This is system wide.
- But it's not necessarily how much you have on deposit with CalPERS.
- If you look at your funding valuation from CalPERS, it may have a different amount.

Councilmember Slayter stated the center category on the slide is essentially the other two added together.

Mr. Desai commented as follows:

- The way it works is you take the total pension liability which is meant to represent the present value of all future pension cash outflows.
- Everything that will be paid out -- that needs to be paid out for the plan. You take that total pension liability and offset it by plan assets. So you take the total pension liability minus the fiduciary net position is the net or unfunded liability, which is your net pension liability.
- That net pension liability is what is presented on the financials.

Councilmember Slayter commented as follows:

- Then my understanding of this was correct, but much clarified.
- The net pension liability is one of my favorite nails to continue to hammer.
- In other years, I can remember this number being significantly larger, so I'm not sure why I'm only seeing it at \$12.2 for this audit period, but the reality is that the City needs to keep chipping away at our independent reserve to continue to make sure that that is funded.
- When it's an unfunded liability is when we have a problem.
- A funded liability is an obligation we've made to our hard working public employees.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

Mr. Desai commented it's a tricky thing because the total pension liability that's there is an estimate. He stated it is moving. Sometimes you think you're fully funded and all of a sudden, you're not.

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

- Discussed the pension slide.
- Wanted to verify that basically the unfunded liability that is not reflecting the set aside that the City Council has made toward this liability, but which is not cast in concrete.
- We have as a Council made a policy of keeping a certain amount of money, and we try to build it every year.
- That is a set aside for this unfunded liability but it is flexible so it's not locked away in a cabinet.
- Would imagine that in this audit you do not reflect that as an offset against that liability.
- Is that correct? This account is not locked.

Mr. Desai commented as follows:

- It's not locked.
- Even if you did, for example, find a provider that does section 115 trust and you put money into a section 115 trust, unfortunately, that cannot be offset against this liability because you can offset the trust that makes the pension payments directly.
- If you do create a secondary trust in the future, whatever reason, that wouldn't be reflected as a reduction in the liability for the current accounting, but you would reflect it as a restricted asset on your balance sheet.

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

- It was our decision as a Council not to put it in a restricted trust because we felt it was better to have the flexibility for having a large set aside that in case of rainy days,
- We have rainy days these days, that we could use it flexibly.
- Wanted to mention it because I want the public to understand we have some savings towards that smaller unfunded liability.
- Discussed the cost of service versus the revenue.
- Wanted to make sure I understood that properly that when you're talking cost of service versus the revenue, you're not talking about fee based. You're talking about basically the cost of the City providing all its services versus what our revenue is.
- That includes both tax revenue and fee-based revenue. Is that correct?

Mr. Desai commented as follows:

- The net cost of service would be correct.
- The net service is the total cost of services, the governmental services, government, public safety, public works reduced by any fees that were charged, and also any contributions and grants revenues.
- Another program revenue or another thing that offset that, for example, would be gas tax revenues that are restricted for things like public works projects - it's not reduced by general revenues.
- Those are your taxes and some miscellaneous revenues and also, I believe interest earnings in the general fund.

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- As we look at the revenues, as everybody knows, have gone down because of the COVID-19 situation in the past year.
- The time frame that you're looking at right now actually ended June 30th, so it's halfway through our last year, which was actually not even halfway into our COVID-19 situation.
- We are going to be experiencing lowered revenues as everybody practically on the planet.
- Are we in a position where we have any benefit, any capacity to borrow funds that would enable us to stretch out costs over a period of time as we move forward.

Mr. Desai commented as follows:

- That is a managerial decision in terms of something you want to evaluate, short-term borrowing options, line of credits, alternatives.
- Some of our clients get issued trans notes for cash purposes, depending on when the property tax payments come in, they issue a trans note for the time being for cash flow purposes.
- With interest rates, I guess that's another consideration to think about.
- I think something to evaluate on a quarterly basis or timely basis, just to see whether those revenues are coming in better or worse than anticipated since I think that's something that a lot of our other clients are doing, is to just have a conservative budget and then just see whether things are better or worse and anticipated to see if another alternative or if things need to be revisited in the future.
- I think at the moment, unless a fund balance looks quite healthy, BUT I only looked at it since June, so I'm not sure what it looks like at the moment.

Mayor Glass commented that it is still healthy and I was just thinking about our borrowing capacity in addition to the reserve we have. We're really in quite good financial situation despite how it looks to a lot of other municipalities.

Vice Mayor Gurney commented as follows:

- This is the money that we have set aside that's remaining flexible, but we're hoping it will go to the unfunded, the last number I wrote down was over \$12 million in 2018.
- A year and a half ago we had that obligation sitting there growing each year, and we've set aside, but the set aside isn't in that slide.
- Questioned what that fund is we have in the set aside, informally earmarked?

Director Kwong stated the set aside for the pension is \$2.7 million.

Mayor Glass opened for public comment.

Kyle Falbo commented as follows:

- Found this presentation really fascinating.
- In particular, the use of graph scale, and including related categories with radically different scales that mask significant changes that happen in a single category.
- Where instead of relying on a graphic that can mask, let's look at dynamic change.
- Discussed Slide 3, liabilities, an increase of 7%, furloughed, increase of 316%.
- Radical drop in changes of net position, we're at 31% now of where we were two years ago. We're at 21% now of where we were just last year.
- Expenditures alone, we see an 18% increase over a two-year period.
- Pension contributions have increased by 29% over two years.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- While this is correct and without errors, there is a serious financial situation that we're in and our end of the year balance that we saw speaks to that, and it is my hope that there is continued conversation quite regularly about ways to reduce the amount of expenditures that are happening for things such as \$120,000 to retrofit ten police vehicles can actually be taken off a consent calendar and discussed regularly as opposed to taking large budget items like that and slipping them into consent.

David Cary commented as follows:

- Earlier in this meeting I noted that I had had in the past some trouble keeping track.
- I had a question for I think probably the auditor on the slide that was just recently discussed about pension liabilities where it was showing total pension liabilities and net pension liabilities.
- I was noticing the dates on that slide were as of June 30th for 2016, 2017, and 2018.
- It appeared not to be dates going through or reaching up into the period for which I understand this audit was being done.
- Requested clarification.

Mr. Desai commented as follows:

- Seems actually there's supposed to be a one-year lag in that slide but it seems to be for some reason not reflecting correct information.
- Will provide a corrected copy of that slide to the City.
- It is quite confusing with pension accounting.
- There is a one-year lag in the measurement of the liability compared to the financial statements.
- Even though the financial statements are as of June 30, 2020, the liability that's presented in the financial statements are actually as of June 30, 2019.
- The reason for the lag is that our audit relies on the CalPERS audit, so we have to have CalPERS audit done to be able to give a clean opinion on the numbers.
- However, the CalPERS June 30, 2020 audit unfortunately won't be done in a timely fashion for us to be able to issue a clean opinion.
- That's why GASB allows a one-year lag.

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

- Wanted to make a comment about my understanding of why pension is such a difficult thing to understand because you have contributions to the pension for our employees, but then those contributions are being invested and so the performance of those investments is always unclear and it can vary with the market.
- It goes up and down, and that means that what looks like we're completely funding our pensions could the next year mean that all of a sudden, we're really unfunded because the investments did not perform well.
- This is beyond the City of Sebastopol's control because we're contributing to the retirement for the State of California.
- That's why these numbers seem to move all over the place and it's why it's so difficult for an auditor to freeze something in time and say, this is actually where something is, because it does move with the assets of the State of California's public employee retirement system.
- PERS doesn't seem to adjust their contribution requirements to make up the difference in a very dynamic way and so we're left with this.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- You don't need to contribute any more, but we can still see that this gap is happening, and so the only way we can fix that gap is to save money of our own accord, which is what we're trying to do.
- We have made some progress on that.

City Manager McLaughlin commented in response to the public comment, the retrofitting of police cars were required by Assembly Bill.

Mayor Glass commented that is another one of those unfunded mandates and is why we did spend that money.

Council Deliberations:

Vice Mayor Gurney commented as follows:

- Question for auditor about some inclusions in your report.
- In your report page 146, you had a summary of demographics as measured our community, and also 147, the top employers.
- I was just very curious what you meant by personal income, if that number is approximately 42,000, was mean or median?
- I couldn't tell from the way the chart was and I'm asking because it struck me as low.
- Discussed list of employers, many of the top employers were outside of our City limits.
- Curious how they got mentioned as top employers.
- They have that number of employees, but are those our citizens working there and that makes them top employers in the 95472 zip code?
- Asking this because we have a later agenda item that goes to a community vitality survey.

Mr. Desai commented that is part of the statistical section of the CAFR which is unaudited. It's prepared by information from consultants that the City hires or generated from the County. I don't have that information unfortunately, but something to check with the consultant on who provide that had information.

Mayor Glass requested that the consultant provide the correct slide to the City for the report.

MOTION:

Councilmember Rich moved and Councilmember Hinton seconded the motion to Receive the Presentation and Authorize Acceptance of the City's Annual Audit for Year Ended June 30, 2020 with the corrected slide to be provided to the City of Sebastopol as requested.

Mayor Glass called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote with correct slide.

VOTE:

Ayes: Councilmembers Hinton, Rich, Slayter, Vice Mayor Gurney and Mayor Glass

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

City Council Action: Approved Receipt of the Presentation and Authorize Acceptance of the City's Annual Audit for Year Ended June 30, 2020 with the corrected slide to be provided to the City of Sebastopol as requested.

Reference Order Number: 2021-017

PUBLIC HEARING(s): NONE
REGULAR CALENDAR AGENDA ITEMS (DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION):

Mayor Glass requested Item Number 7 be heard prior to Item Number 6. The Council was in consensus with the change in the order of the agenda.

Mayor Glass called for a break at 7:55 pm and reconvened the meeting at 8:02 pm.

7. Co-Mission Report to City Council (Feedback on Activities such as Survey Report Back, Business Council Activities (Requestor: CoMission/City Manager)

Johnny Nolen, CoMission provided a presentation to the City Council.

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

- Thanked the consultant for the report.
- Really a huge amount of information.
- Was just thinking of how I was going to be taking some of that information and talk to the Mayors about it, because we've got more data than everyone else does right now.

Mayor Glass asked for questions.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- Great report. It's really interesting the see all of this data.
- Mr. Nolen is good at summarizing it and conveying it to all of us.
- There's a lot of detail here.
- We don't have in our materials the power point presentation that you shared tonight, and it would be really great to receive that if you could do that.
- My core question though as I look at all of the data and the conclusions that you're reaching from that data, you mentioned that one of the things that you might want to do is in follow-up surveys is figure out how to expand the reach so that the survey results could better reflect the demographics.
- Do you feel like these survey results do accurately reflect the demographics of our intown and then our out of town group?
- If not, where are we missing the information?

Mr. Nolen commented as follows:

- Feel like it is close enough to be informational and help guide decisions.
- Feel like the biggest failure is in not reaching the Latino population in this area and look about how we approached using the data base and how there has been historical emotional, intellectual and structural voter deterrents of communities of color.
- That was an oversight on our part. It was a new effort for us going into a pandemic and doing a major public outreach without actually being able to canvass and talk to people, so it was a first stab.
- Do thing though that the opinions and we can see some of the trends both in more structural things like income and also more emotional and intellectual things reported.

Vice Mayor Gurney commented as follows:

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- Had the same type of question.
- Going through voter information and learning what we did about the respondents -- there are people who vote, people who have an email address on file with the Registrar as well, that means they have a computer, and there was a high percentage of homeowners.
- Think we missed a whole rest of the population and through the process targeted accidentally, perhaps, the more privileged people and missed a lot of the rest of us.
- That's my concern.

Mr. Nolen commented as follows:

- Have the same concerns.
- Do think that it could partially be because the biggest outreach to the data base work used the newsletter as well as our own and many other local news organizations sent it out.
- There is always going to be the effect that people who respond to surveys tend to be whiter and wealthier.
- If we really wanted to get into parsing through that, we would run it and then do a full analysis adjustment against the demographic shift.
- I'm just not sure what we're looking for in the survey is going to change enough to make it worth that work.
- Can do that if that was an interest.

Vice Mayor Gurney commented as follows:

- Don't know what additional work we're interested in, but I think for instance Burbank Heights and Orchard is where we have a significant group of our population, most organized and effective advocates so activists.
- They don't have computers, don't have phones. They're more of what people would say old school.
- There's an activist community that may not have engaged in this because our methods of getting information didn't tap them.

Mr. Nolen stated CoMission looks forward to expanding our outreach methods in the next.

Councilmember Hinton commented as follows:

- It was great information.
- Did want to report that I did get a couple of emails and I did participate in the survey personal
- Know your organization is doing a lot with the City.
- One of your action plans tonight is where we go and what survey maybe we do next.
- How many hours approximately or different people worked on this survey?
- What does it take to put a survey out of CoMission's work and separately from the other things you're helping us with.

Mr. Nolen commented as follows:

- I can give you a ballpark idea of that.
- Three of us worked on the survey over the course of the last month, and it will have taken a total of about 30 to 35 hours up to this point, and that doesn't include further analysis that we do as a result of this conversation.
- That will be a mixture of principle hours and our entry level administrative hours.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- It's an interesting question in terms of whether it's worth looking deeper into the survey data.
- Whether or not it's worth investing further in looking more in this data or expanding the survey is driven by what the City Council or City staff intends to do with the data.
- Given a broad brush of needs here.
- Right on target,
- As a City Council, as a City, look at your data and just keep in mind that we aren't capturing a particular section of the population.
- In fact, what that might indicate is that the amount of concern that's reflected in your data is in fact under reflected.
- That's one way of looking at it.
- For instance, the Latino population, we could look at what are the demographics of that population and what is the need that generally is represented by that population and then adjust for that, taking into consideration our conclusions.
- There are some conclusions you felt were reliable, regardless of the tweaking details.

Mr. Nolen commented as follows:

- That's correct.
- Thought is because we were not trying to accurately assess like very specific knew numerical values.
- Think what it does is it provides an overall view of the state of movement of things right now.
- Just using our knowledge of the world and populations can track that.
- Maybe it's more, maybe it's less. It confirms there is a trend.
- Then things that we feel were not extremely precise on
- There are many, many people -- several hundred for each category -- that said they would participate in follow-up survey, would like to participate in town halls discussing these things.
- We could dive deeper with the people, not just discussing the data.
- We could do follow-up surveys.
- We open it for one week. It's just a couple of questions, grab a snapshot and pull it back in.
- That is determined by what decisions the Council and staff are going to be making upcoming and what kind of curiosities will help you inform what kinds of decisions you feel you should be thinking about making.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- If we consider categories that might be underrepresented in your survey, which I think is important for the City Council to consider was the very low number that you showed for people who pursued rental or mortgage assistance.
- That struck me as really super low to think that only 7% in our population had requested any rental relief or mortgage relief.
- Do you feel that that underrepresents the numbers, given what you know about other demographics?

Mr. Nolen commented as follows:

- My experience from the previous surveys and in my direct work with the local business community was that there was a lot more activity seeking rent relief by businesses.
- This was not a survey of businesses but of residents instead, so I don't have a professional knowledge about what kind of rate we should experience there.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- I did find that the 7% of food insecurity and 7% of rent insecurity.
- Not sure I have not any statistics that have been very reliable on those kinds of counts.

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

- Do you have the data to be able to look at the geographic distribution of the respondents?
- Was this totally anonymous, or could you tell something about the location of the respondents?

Mr. Nolen commented as follows:

- All of the respondents' individual questions can be correlated.
- We can say -- take out everyone that didn't respond that they're in the City limits and rerun all of the other analysis based only on City respondents and vice versa.
- Even when people are anonymous, it still is maintained as a single response line.
- If we wanted to look at that, that's very feasible.

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

- One of the issues about rent and mortgage assistance, we actually do have a tremendous amount of proportionately compared to other small cities, we have quite a bit of subsidized housing (such as Burbank Heights or Petaluma Avenue Homes)
- We have a lot of housing for people that are relatively low income, but they are not going to be probably seeking rent relief as much because how much they pay has to do with their income.
- Could you do a scatter plot on a map - Are we getting a huge amount of dots in Swain Woods and no dots at Petaluma Avenue Homes
- Looking at the distribution in the City.

Mr. Nolen commented as follows:

- Didn't ask any more specificity on location other than City limits in the incorporated area and a couple of other categories that are not represented.
- Could really on parse it between the City limits in the 95472 out of City limits
- We couldn't populate it to neighborhood or section of the City.

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

- Concern is that some of the sample had so few of certain demographic categories that it's so small it's not statistically significant.
- When looking at the number of young people, for example we're massively undercounting or undermeasuring the Latino community, but we're also massively undermeasuring the younger community.
- Got a lot of data on are the same old folks.
- Do think this contains a lot of useful information.
- But even if we were to correct for weight for the survey, still think the ends are so small the weighting's not going work right.

Mr. Nolen commented as follows:

- If we were going to go through a correction process, several of the small lesser represented demographic groups would be eliminated from response analysis - Like the 18 to 24.
- Wouldn't be worth scaling up.

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- There's a lot of good information here, but we need to pass on some of this information to our partners in the community.
- For example, the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Association for them to be able to act on some of it.
- We as a City do not have so much ability to act on.
- For example, as a small City, we don't provide social services, so the only thing we can do is work with partners that do or with the County.
- What are the things that we can affect most significantly that we could do?
- What would be your top five?
- Big list of potential actions, but of top five things that we as a City can actually do that would be effective, that would be really helpful to the scale of the problems at hand, what are the top five?

Mr. Nolen commented as follows:

- I couldn't give a great answer on that, but what I would say is I completely understand on the City's limited ability to directly implement things.
- What I imagined is if the City Council and staff identify priorities or do some gut checking on what would be the most impactful for the community, the business Council, the community benefit Council, commissioned as part of the community vitality project would be groups that you could then say, hey this a priority.
- How can we make this happen?
- There are people in the community ready to make happen whether they're stakeholders or good Samaritans.
- I think what the City really needs to do is identify what is felt to be the most valuable.
- I do have a lot of information we're preparing to share with these various Councils, which includes email lists for people that submitted and the full open ended question sets.
- Then facilitate the relevant parts of these actions with those in our next upcoming meetings.

Vice Mayor Gurney commented as follows:

- When you were asking there about the scatter shot, how that was distributed, my understanding is that you don't have data to know this.
- Wondering if people responded out of a motivation of their frustration on our transportation corridors.
- The City wants to hear from you. People have a lot to say. They're motivated by this problem with traffic.
- My understanding is we can't get that through your data.
- Wondering are we wanting to talk tonight about what we think are the top five things we can do, or is that another meeting? Or does CoMission need to take this out to the business people and then come back?
- How are we going to work with this material? Just procedurally and our time commitments?

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

- Found this was such a huge amount of data.
- I have been trying to think about how we can respond to this information.
- I think our discussion needs to focus around the approach on how we're going to deal with this.
- This is so much stuff, we couldn't possibly even begin to attack all of this in one or two hours.
- Need to talk about our approach, I think we're going to come back to this with more meetings.
- Need to determine what the approach is going to be in those future meetings.

Vice Mayor Gurney commented as follows:

- Think it would be really helpful for the Council to hear what staff saw in their top priorities for the work that's recommended that would help them in their functioning and service delivery.
- CoMission is working with community organizations, the CBO Council, the businesses Council, et cetera.
- All of us are talking about it as a leadership group and then the staff is talking about it.

City Manager McLaughlin commented as follows:

- Staff plans on continuing to meet with CoMission to develop ideas from this information that we could either bring back to the Council and/or utilize at the staff level.
- The amount of time we have had with the survey results so far, there's some obvious things to me that staff would be doing just based on what we have heard.
- That is to say, putting information on the web page, taking some of those comments and making sure our web page information is truly helpful to provide information to people, practical information on how they can join a City Council meeting, how easy it is to do that, and to try to encourage it.
- Then this is the whole educational piece about people's fears and hesitancy to use our local businesses in a shopping situation.
- We want to educate through the Chamber and the Downtown Association, et cetera, educate our businesses that there is this fear in the community.
- Right now there's a hesitancy to just be completely out there conducting shopping where there is that opportunity.
- We figured that many months ago.
- We developed even before we started going into simply working out of our respective homes.
- We had some business meetings where we were going to develop campaigns, so to speak, amongst our local businesses along the lines of, we paid special attention in our business to your safety.
- Here's what we've done to make sure your experience is a safe one.
- There's things we could do with this survey right now at a staff level, but secondarily we plan on meeting with CoMission to develop more ideas and to return with them to the Council.

Mayor Glass opened for public comment.

Kyle Falbo commented as follows:

- Much of the data is mentioned by CoMission to be non-representative of our city.
- Notable biases are age, ethnicity, identified gender, and owner occupancy.
- With this as a consideration, it's quite likely the actual impacts of the financials are more dire than reported and much of the categorical responses are different than our actual demographics.
- In particular the question of have you sought mortgage or rent relief suffers from response bias because it fails to recognize those residents who don't currently have a mortgage or rent to consider which the already bias demographic data will also mask.
- In the previous agenda item the Mayor and City Manager were quick to claim that state mandate with regard to the ten vehicle retrofit.
- I'm in full support of an upgrade to our police vehicles to meet a state mandate.
- What I'm not in favor of, and what I am quite sure is not mandated by the state is the cost.

- As I spoke at a previous meeting the cost approved by the Council as a consent item with no further discussion was \$120,000 to retrofit 10 vehicles which is \$12,000 per vehicle.
- A cost that, as I mentioned at that time was double what other municipalities in the state paid per vehicle for the state mandated retrograde.
- I'm expecting the Council to scrutinize the cost of the expenditures.
- Case in point is this CoMission contract.
- I'd like this Council to detail not only the producables, but the cost of this contract with CoMission.
- What guidelines were in place by the City to measure the goals of the CoMission contract over the last seven months in which the outside consultant was under contract?
- What was the upper limit on the billing amount provided by the Council?
- How often did the Council check on the costs of this contract over the months of the contract?
- What specialized expertise did CoMission provide that was outside the scope of current City staff.
- If this continued reliance of outsourcing labor across multiple City departments is going to continue, at what point does the City investigate increase in staffing to accommodate the workload that continues to be outsourced as consulting fees?

Evert Fernandez commented as follows:

- Thank you for you and your group. I participate in some committees. I know there's a lot of behind the scenes work that is needed to come to this conclusion.
- I appreciate everyone's comment regarding the validity as far as the demographics of the community.
- I'm particularly concerned about the Latino community but also, as Vice Mayor Gurney mentioned, older individuals.
- Sometimes, I think effort is confused with effectiveness.
- You can be doing a great effort of reaching out to individuals.
- We put it on our web page. We're going to improve our web page.
- We're going to send out notices by cell phone. You're not going to get some of the older individuals.
- I think what's important for future communications is how do you communicate with those groups.
- If the City needs to send something out, in what forms should they send them out to make sure that you access all those individuals?
- For example, there was a high incidence response that people new the routes to leave the City.
- If you're not including the older individuals who know the routes but may have difficulty getting the transportation to get out, that could be an issue for that.
- I appreciate the comments that were made, and I think that there's just certain ways that you need to communicate with certain individuals.
- Same thing with our youth, they're probably not going to read the City newsletter.
- One way to engage those individuals, and other demographics that you need to get a hold of is to get together with representatives for those groups.
- Get together with some youth and ask them, how do you guys communicate, what would be an effective way to communicate with your group, involve them as part of the process so they can then encourage others to participate and get those remarks.
- I agree, it is underserved and we may get misleading information on it, but I don't think it's by lack of effort from CoMission.
- I think CoMission did what they could from this standpoint.

- I think we need to look at how we communicate and make sure that's incorporated into the City.

David Cary commented as follows:

- Think the survey provides a lot of useful information particularly as a first iteration of this kind of survey on these topics.
- One of the things that I would suggest dealing with if you do another similar survey is making it clear to survey responders what kinds and levels of confidentiality in the survey results or the individual survey answers are being provided to respondents.
- For example, the survey had some mix of very personal sensitive information as well as personal identifying information, for example getting email addresses, and that could raise some red flags for some people in terms of who all would be getting some of this information, including for purposes outside of this engagement with the consultant.
- I'd assume that there are some good agreements with the consultant about some of the issues.
- Making it clear to responders how that is being handled would be useful in a survey.
- One of the questions I would have for the consultant, staff, or the City Council is, out of the information that we saw tonight, that we're getting from the survey, what was the most surprising and unexpected set of information that you got, what was it that changed your perspective about something?
- To what extent was a lot of it predictable?
- Finally, one of the things to go forward, one of my recommendations would be to think about this as a dynamic situation, that our next six months with this pandemic are going to be different than the last six months, or the last ten months were and what kind of actions and information have to do with that changing situation?
- We've got some vaccinations that are starting to be made available.
- There are things that would have been helpful the last three months but may not be what you need to be targeting going forward.

Suzanne Lande commented as follows:

- I think it's a good report.
- I realize there's more that we may need.
- The garage door was a good reminder to me.
- I remember when in the past someone showed me how to do it, and I will get that help again.
- I'm obviously a senior woman, and Caucasian.
- Other things that I think we need, both for the report, and really information for the City, I think that we need a report for people on food scarcity.
- Whether their shelterless, or their income is really low, on the City information, we need to put out a current listing of what's available for people.
- For example, St. Stevens the food bank is available not just for Sebastopol but for others in West County.
- I know it's really good for people who I know who are food insecure.
- Also, for the report and for the City, the younger people who may have financial needs.
- We had some incredible City Council meetings, many months ago, that drew a lot of interest from our youth, I think it might have been related to racism and police oversight.
- There was a ton of young people who came.
- I do know quite a few people in this town, I've been here a really long time, and I just happened to cross paths with younger people, and I volunteer with Homeless Action.
- Some of them definitely have some big needs.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- Things like safe parking for someone who has a vehicle, we really need that.
- Also just to find out if somebody needs some immediate help with rent, I realize the City can't do it, but maybe you can help guide people to where to go to get the help.

Council Deliberations:

Councilmember Slayer commented as follows:

- I do have concerns about some of the holes in the data.
- We know that around 50% of all Sebastopol housing stock is occupied by renters and yet we have a survey that says the respondent, 71.44% of them own their own homes.
- That clearly doesn't align.
- It's been identified about the lack of ethnic diversity in the respondents and Mr. Fernandez noted it precisely about using different methods to obtain the information we're looking for, which is different from the information we have at hand.
- You can't expect a middle aged white professional male with no kids to necessarily know how to tap into other demographics. It goes both ways.
- I think that using that as a guide post, and we've seen it in national politics where people relate to similar people, and that's just human nature, that's what we have done forever.
- I think there's a lot to do with that. I think that we should explore some of those ideas.
- Is there a way to take data from the survey and possibly to dovetail that in with any degree of accuracy?
- If we retargeted certain demographic groups, or if we obtain information from the census or, there's any number of places where you can get that kind of information, is there a good, accurate way to put that all together that doesn't turn into nonsense?

Mr. Nolen commented as follows:

- I would say that the most important thing is to ask the questions exactly the same way to the different groups.
- Question psychology is significant.
- We could even run a narrower survey if we found that specific things were of interest through the questions we wanted to further explore.
- We can combine the data. We can do whatever we want with want data.

Councilmember Slayer commented as follows:

- I think when it comes down to some of the emergency response and safety issues, the numbers that are shown there appear higher than what I would have guessed.
- If half of the population understands how to operate their garage door, that's far in excess of what I would have estimated.
- We have groups in town that we can tap into to address some of those things. CERT is a great program. Map Your Neighborhood. Those folks are well established and well known in our community.
- It's a matter of figuring out how to push them deeper into the community.
- When it comes to something as simple as a garage door, I know an organization that could not facilitate the management of people calling and saying I need this, but I know an organization that could muster volunteers to go and show people in a COVID-19 compliant way how to operate their garage doors.
- We have volunteers and community groups to begin working on some of the easier items that we might identify.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- I would like to make sure that we focus on what our outcomes are.
- Had those same concerns about the nature of the data. There's expense associated with looking more into this data.
- I have to ask myself, and I invite my colleagues to ask themselves, what are we going to do with that data, if we get more data?
- When I look at the proposals that have been outlined here in the report, if we had more data about the Latino community, if we had more data about renter insecurity, and food insecurity, would that change the recommendations?
- Looking at poverty shift, gathering and promoting hardship resources, support safe rehiring and growth, job training, create food waste diverse programs, community support groups.
- Those are all things that I can support.
- Before we send these guys out to do more data collection and to spend more money on the data collection, let's make sure that we're actually going to do something different with that information.

Vice Mayor Gurney commented as follows:

- One of the main points we're learning is that we missed people because we're not communicating, as Mr. Fernandez said, in an effective way.
- The piece of information we need is how do we actually get information to land on people so they do what they need to do or we give them the help they say they need so the garage door works when the power's off.
- It's the effective piece that we really need to figure out.
- We can send all the newsletters in the world by email, and we got half the people out there, or more who just aren't interested in reading them.
- We can send a lot out and they can be jazzy and interesting, and we can even spend money on them, but if it doesn't land on the person we need to be talking to, what's the point?
- To me, that's the bigger challenge than getting more data.
- I think this information makes sense.
- We're all seeing the same holes in the data.
- I don't think there were a lot of surprises, although, I wish more people were interested in the Council meetings.

Mr. Nolen commented as follows:

- The missed demographics is a result of itself.
- Through the life of the Community Vitality Project, since the pandemic began, figuring out how to reach community members and gather people in dialogue across the digital divide has been a big challenge.
- It's one of the most important things to be addressing.

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

- I think we've got a lot of useful and important information here.
- I also find it somewhat embarrassing that as a community, where we think we're really committed to equity as a community value, and yet, we can't seem to get off square one on dealing with it.
- I just have a couple suggestions about how we might be able to engage.

- As we move through the process and as we engage with the community that we think about ways to engage with the parts of the community that aren't engaging with us.
- First of all, part of the reason that people don't come to Council meetings and part of reason they don't read our newsletter, et cetera, other than language barrier issues, is they don't have time.
- There's a lot of people struggling out there with their kids that are home schooling.
- Some families don't have internet access, they don't have computer access.
- They're just struggling to get the food on the table, trying to pay the rent.
- They're trying to figure out how to maneuver the system and prevent their kids from flunking out of school.
- That's why we're not engaging with those people.
- We're the least of their priorities. Who cares about the City Council?
- They are trying to make sure they have enough money to not get evicted, trying to have enough money to get food.
- I think that is part of our problem here.
- The other part is, I think we also have a big segment of our community that are living in a fairly large quantity of affordable housing developments such as Burbank Heights, which is full of a lot of activists, but mostly aren't digital.
- We have other families that are living in other affordable or lower income subsidized housing, and I don't think we're engaging them in our community. How do we do that?
- Another thought is, we can specifically do outreach to those sets of addresses to see if we can get people engaged.
- The other place to get people engaged is through the school system.
- Park Side is more than 50% Latino.
- Being able to run surveys or do focus groups, if we can partner with the school district to find out if we can be doing surveys to parents that are in that district.
- Parents that are part of the community and that are just getting left out of the loop being involved in City activities.
- What can we be doing for those communities that are not at the Council meetings, that are not here, what can we be doing to make to have them feel that something we do is worthwhile to them?
- What activities, what issues do we need to be pursuing that would be worthwhile, or do they care about?
- I'm not quite sure how we find out about that. Part of it has to do with having a survey that includes them.
- My other thoughts have to do with the faith based organizations in town which have a lot of demographics that are not included in this survey.
- They have participants in faith-based organizations that are not fitting the average demographic of this survey.
- I am very concerned that we did not manage to engage people, the whole community in this, and I am not trying to point fingers at anybody, but we need to step up our game and figure out how to do this better.
- Can't see just spending a lot more money on expanding the data set when we already know that we have a 7% food insecurity rate.
- That's probably an understatement, what are we going to do about it?
- How are we going to engage with the varying services that provide food? How are we going to engage with the nonprofits that provide emergency rent funding and utility funding and most

importantly, how do we help those organizations deliver the services and engage with people that need them and make those connections?

- I think those are the things we need to do more than just crunch a few more numbers.
- Don't think throwing a lot of money at more data is necessarily the thing to do.
- I think we need to take a look at what we found out and what kinds of things we as a Council can actually do to resolve some of the problems, help mitigate the problems, or help get the problems at least partially solved. What are our next steps?
- We just got all this information. I think a next step might be to take this information to department heads and then the people working in all the departments to come back to us with suggestions of what they think are priority items out of the suggestions that CoMission came up with already.
- I think that is what City Manager McLaughlin has said.
- Then all of us can go through this information and look at what we think our top five priorities are, and then the agenda setting committee, I would think, might consider setting up a study session to go over our ideas in those two areas.
- What are our priorities as individual Councilmembers?
- What does staff think the top priorities and actions we need to take are?
- Then, at that time, we can think about if there's unanswered questions, do we need to ask for more information?
- First, we need to know what the questions are before we ask for more information and spend more money.

Councilmember Hinton commented as follows:

- I am definitely not for doing any more data collecting for the survey.
- I believe this is the third survey CoMission has done for us.
- I'm just going off memory there, and of the \$100,000 that we allocated, we have \$43,000 left and I don't want to allocate any more of that to surveys.
- I want to take this info and move forward on actual actions.
- I just recently, in another meeting talked about a recruitment, and we talked about tapping different resources.
- It's too bad we didn't tap, whether it was Park Side, or Burbank, or some other resources but that ship has sailed at this point.
- I am definitely in favor of staff making some recommendations and us sorting through it ourselves and then holding on the spending until we can decide how we want to move forward with action.
- I feel like it's time for action now.
- We're going to have tough budget decisions to make, so I want to make sure we preserve what's still left to actually be able to have CoMission work for us, to move some of our projects forward,

Councilmember Slayter commented as follows:

- I understand the need for fiscal restraint but I'm also concerned we have partial information.
- Designing a program to assist a certain demographic.
- It may not be the demographic that needs help which is troubling to me and we may be paddling in the wrong direction.
- I get the dichotomy between the two, but I agree that letting staff take a look at this, in a deeper way, coming back to the Council with recommendations or a more guided conversation would suit us well.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- In support of the process that you proposed
- Think what we're all learning on a learning curve.
- We're going to be collecting more data as a Council on one issue or another into the future and we're recognizing that we need to take a different tact to engage community members.
- I would put out there that one thing we need to not forget in the mix is plain old snail mail.
- Having gone through a campaign recently, it's amazing. People open things.
- In terms of the process, I think it sounds great to me. Rely on staff, bring it back. Try to react as quickly as possible in as financially responsible a way as we can.

Vice Mayor Gurney commented as follows:

- The process that the Mayor mentioned included each of us going through the recommendations and prioritizing those and maybe adding our own so that we're not just looking at what staff finds of value to their service delivery but also our evaluation of what we think would help the community.
- Those we missed in the survey as well.
- Potentially have a workshop on this if the agenda review committee can figure out the timing, so if we are still here in this impactful time, we come back, put our heads together and figure out what the actions are, and if we need more information, what the information might be.

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

- The agenda review committee will talk with staff.
- Staff has their marching orders.
- They will be reviewing this information and coming up with how they think it needs to get framed within our actions.
- All of us will be reviewing this and coming up with our priorities and lastly, the agenda review committee will come up with a date for a study session so that we can have our priorities discussed along with staff's priorities and see where to take it from there.

City Manager Mclaughlin commented as follows:

- The reason I wanted to comment briefly if I could is to clarify the question of finances.
- CoMission is doing other things besides survey work.
- We have not expended all the budget yet.
- CoMission is doing work in the community benefit field.
- Staff is meeting regularly with CoMission, and based on what we just said, there will continue to be expenditures already budgeted for.
- I want to make sure that that is clear, or if that is not the case, that we talk about this evening because I heard preserve the funds.
- Preserve means don't spend more of that knowing that it is already budgeted.
- CoMission is doing a number of things, including with staff and I wanted clarification on that.

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

- What I was hearing, rather than ask for more data analysis on this particular set of data, that we move forward, rather than ask for additional data to be collected or additional analysis that we start off with our session of looking at what we already have.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- In light of what staff is thinking, and in light of what we as a Council think, and then at the end of that session, we can determine if we need to spend anything more specifically on this initiative.

Vice Mayor Gurney commented as follows:

- I know from my firsthand involvement with the CBO Council, the work we have done has helped happen over the last six months is partly coming in fruition now.
- It's starting to gel and starting to happen. This is not the time to stop working together. It's time to amp it up.

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

- I'm seeing collaboration between multiple CBO organizations that are actually talking to each other and taking action to do things in alliance.
- Hoping we're going to see the same kind of thing happen from our business community.
- Have to say, the thing that really just knocked me on the side of the head more than anything else out of the data, was just that thing of yes, we have a large senior population. Yes, people are uncomfortable and not happy really with going out there into the community because they're worried about their safety, and then what's the third piece of information there? People want delivery and curb side service. What can our business community do to make sure that is happening? We don't actually have a local delivery service. Other than Instacart that works with Safeway.
- Where is the Chamber going to take it? Where is the Downtown Association going to take it? Where are other nonprofit organizations going to take it?
- There are lots of opportunities to address those issues.
- That's what we will be doing, and that's what we will discuss when we have a study session.

City Council Action: Staff to review and agenda review committee to discuss study session.

Reference Order Number: 2021-019

8. Discussion and Consideration of Letter of Support for Sonoma County West County Transient Occupancy Tax Measure (March Election) (Requestor: Mayor)

Mayor Glass presented the agenda item recommending the City Council discuss and Consider Authorizing the Mayor to Prepare and Send a Letter of Support to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors for the West County Transient Occupancy Tax Measure (March 2021 Election)

Fifth District Supervisor Linda Hopkins and Dennis Rosatti were in attendance and provided information on the tax measure.

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

- I put this agenda item on here.
- I had spoken with Supervisor Hopkins about this measure.
- A measure that will be on the ballot in March. It has to do with raising T.O.T. Taxes.
- The T.O.T. will apply to Airbnb's and hotels not in Sebastopol.
- We still get to vote on it.
- This is setting the T.O.T., raising the T.O.T. rate. The transient occupancy tax, the tax that people pay when staying in a hotel or an Airbnb.
- This is a measure that will be on the ballot that will raise the T.O.T. for hotels and temporary transient housing outside of the city limits of Sebastopol.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- It's actually not going to apply to the Airbnb's or the Fairfield Marriott that we have in town and it will be raising funds that are for emergency related services and for educational related support.
- I'm going to ask Supervisor Hopkins and Mr. Rosatti to make their presentations so that we can hear all about the purpose of this.

Supervisor Hopkins commented as follows:

- Think that you hit on all of the interesting, unusual governmental nuances.
- Oddly enough, Sebastopol's residents will be voting on this.
- Measure "B" is to generate roughly \$2.7 million a revenue per year and after that, 50% will go to support education and 50% will go to support emergency medical visits, paramedics, and rescue services, really focusing on ambulance response, especially in our unincorporated areas.
- The education side of the measure is actually broken up in two phases.
- The first phase is while there are considerations for unification for different school districts considering coming together and consolidating together, and it is intended, while the process is ongoing, maintaining facilities and programs to try to avoid cuts.
- It opens up the discussion of education.
- It can provide childhood education opportunities, affordable child care, jobs training, technical education, post-secondary.
- The idea would be to actually have multiyear grants available to any educational entity or early childhood entity within West County.
- Also of note, the funds on the education side will be overseen by an education advisory committee.
- They will be able to support a representative and they would join members of the coastal and lower Russian river advisory council as well as administrative, teacher and parent representatives, and the business community to come together to decide how the funds be allocated and to oversee the grant applications and requests for proposals coming out.
- That is the big picture.

Mr. Rosatti commented as follows:

- I think what you just heard from Supervisor Hopkins is a bit of a downside to the solution to a problem that is persistent in the community for a while.
- Two problems actually have been persistent.
- One is the emergency services and fire and rescue in the community, and the community where the intention is to direct the funds.
- Primarily, they are responding to 80% of the calls in letters from the community.
- Visitors, tourists, folks not paying taxes.
- They currently have the largest parcel tax in possibly the state, definitely our region. \$524 a parcel a year.
- The homeowners are paying a giant burden.
- Tourists, many of us in the region are experiencing the benefit of their investment and dollars spent.
- This measure helps close that gap. It helps put another paramedic firefighter on the engine.
- They currently have four people in staff and when the ambulance goes to two people, what they're going to do is go ahead and put a paramedic on the engine so they have two vehicles that can go out and respond with paramedics on them.
- The other side on education, I think some of you know that I spent six years on the Harmony Union School Board in West County.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- One of the things that we struggled with there is looking at unification, we have 11 school districts in West County. Ten elementary that feed in one high school.
- We talked about unification and it would cost \$2 million for a small school to merge with another district to create efficiencies.
- We couldn't stomach how to figure how to you do that with the budget and fighting for dollars to keep the librarian on staff.
- It creates a fund with districts can go to have a resource to help them.
- I'm a campaign consultant on the measure. We have done voter survey's; we have found a strong appetite for the measure.
- The folks who initially opened up the poll and said here's the measure language, how do you feel?
- We found 70% of residents were for us. 30% not there. We did have a number of undecideds.
- As we give them the information in the poll and give them the arguments for the measure, we landed a 76% hard yes for the measure with a plus-minus 7.0 ratio.
- We are still way above the margin with a low end of the margin.

Mayor Glass commented as follows:

- I would just like to say one very important thing just to re-emphasize in case it's not clear to anybody. This is not going to be paid by taxpayers here.
- This is a tax that is paid by tourists to the region, and tourists are putting a burden on the region, and the idea is they pay a fair share for how much.
- Even though we don't have a lot now, we expect we will have tourists back in the near future, hopefully.
- Next year, we will be getting our tourists back, and we want to make sure that we have adequate emergency services when we go to the beach.
- When we go to the beach, we want to make sure there are ambulances there to take care of us and they aren't burdened by tourists calling.

Mayor Glass asked for questions of the Mr. Rosatti or Supervisor Hopkins.

Vice Mayor Gurney commented on the nexus that plays on the emergency services.

Supervisor Hopkins commented as follows:

- This measure is actually modeled after a measure that West Marin chose to split the revenue with fire and emergency services and affordable housing and the nexus there, is that we see a combination of vacation models and affording housing throughout West County.
- Because we have very robust urban growth boundaries and much of West County is in high fire zone, the coastal zone, a flood zone, we thought that addressing the needs of social service that is suffering because of the lack of affordable housing.
- We are seeing it challenging for a number of families to live in the County and declines in school enrollment.
- That is how the loss of affordable housing has impacted the enrollment in our school system.
- This is a way to offset that.
- I also would argue the impacts of the tourist economy mean that we have a lot of seasonable, low paying jobs.
- We actually have the highest rate of homelessness per capita, the highest rate of unemployment and the highest rate of opioid fatalities and I believe that by investing in the education system, we can overcome some of the social challenges we have in the lower Russian River.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- My concern that I would like to hear you address, either one of you, is what impact is this going to have on tourism in the County?
- I know of a similar measure that was up for a vote and didn't make it through.
- Can we address those concerns in some way?
- Is there some way to reassure the community that the perceived impact on tourism and on the individuals who own homes and are trying to make them available and earn a living out of that process, that this won't reduce the tourism activity in the community?

Supervisor Hopkins commented as follows:

- That question refers to Measure G.
- That passed last year in March and was put on as a half-cent sales tax measure.
- It was a fundamentally different taxation structure and we actually have successfully passed a number of transient occupancy tax increases.
- The most recent was in 2016 in all unincorporated areas and after that passed, which was a 3% increase, we have actually seen year after year increases in terms of visitorship to West County.
- It is clear there is not a cost sensitivity. I have done a bit of research with demand and the fact that is that West County is a luxury market. A lot of vacation rentals on the coast go for more than \$1,000 a night. What I heard from folks in the industry, they don't think those customers are going to think about another 4% on their bill. It's assessed at the end so it's not something that needs to be advertised.
- Just another fee, just the way you have airline fees, sometimes if you go through Airbnb, a cleaning fee and a T.O.T. at the end.
- There has been concern at the end of the business community, but the members at the business community self-assess themselves to support advertising so they actually have supported increases to the T.O.T. tax in the past.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- How does this effort, this T.O.T., work strategically with the fire tax that we know is likely to come up in November?
- Even though one is a T.O.T. and one is a different source, are you concerned about the T.O.T. effort undermining the possibility of succeeding with the fire tax?

Supervisor Hopkins commented as follows:

- We really believe that the nexus that Measure "B" is on the unique tourism aspect in West County.
- It's a different conversation where we are trying to discuss the impact of visitorship on first responders and the emergency medical system.
- I actually look forward to having a conversation with you, that you will see measure 2.0, what we're calling it, to bring back to the voters in November, focus on fire risk reduction, and vegetation management and home hardening and emergency alert warning and broadly up staffing throughout the County.
- It's more of a readiness conversation as opposed to a tourism impact conversation.
- I think that voters will support both of them and see there is some overlap but there is a distinct set of problems we are solving for with the two measures.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- In terms of the educational piece, I want to make sure we understand that what first step is regarding unification.
- Is the goal that the funding on the allocated piece would be focused on supporting unification of elementary and middle schools in the first stage?

Mr. Rosatti commented as follows:

- The unified school district is undergoing the process where they are asking Sonoma County Office of Education to look at the broader problem of unification.
- Look at multiple options. Is making sense to have a river area one, or a Sebastopol area one.
- What would the different areas look like?
- While the study is under way, this could hopefully help keep the campuses open, help support programs while the conversation to look at cost savings takes place, and after that study is done, it would provide financial incentives to complete it or augment programming.
- It will be up to the advisory committee whether it's career technical information, arts. It's really going to be up to the community committee to determine the priorities.

Councilmember Rich questioned if this is then potential funding to keep the various campuses of West Sonoma unified high school district open while they work through that process?

Mr. Rosatti commented as follows:

- That is identified as a priority in the measure for the short term and the long term is supporting the broader unification measures.
- Think the first two to four, you will see share of the funding go to the West County high school district.
- They were in a situation where due to severe budget crisis coming up here without some different type of income coming in, they were looking at closing a campus. 400 plus square mile district.
- It's a very large geographically, and the study has been out, and we are not going to get the results for that, and the Sonoma County Office of Education for about 18 months.
- What we're looking to do is close a gap in funding
- General feeling I heard in the community, no one wants to close either of the campuses.
- It is such a big district.
- This would really help at least buy some time.

Councilmember Hinton commented as follows:

- Do you know what the average night rate is?
- In all of the impacted community, you talked about %1,000 dollars on the high side.
- I'm thinking average might be closer to \$100, which means this tax will be \$4 per stay per night.

Supervisor Hopkins commented as follows:

- I do not have that data at my fingertips.
- I think you can reach out to my tax collector and divide the revenue right by the number of rooms.

Councilmember Hinton commented as follows:

- What it costs people, I think makes a big difference

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- I'm a host. I have a rental through Airbnb, and I rent it out so \$4 is not a big impact.
- In the agenda packet we got, Mayor Glass said of course we would like a seat at the table but sounds like it's proposed for the education side.
- How much will you have? The tax money is coming from our district.
- In the staff report it says has to have approval by the Board of Supervisors.
- How does that mechanism work?
- Will you have full control or is it just in our district and the other supervisors agree to do what our district wants?

Supervisor Hopkins commented as follows:

- The good thing is in the measure, it actually requires the money go back to what is generated.
- It would be I think very unusual for them to decide I don't like the allocation that the community supports so I'm going to monkey around with pulling \$50,000 there, and it wouldn't make sense.
- They could not pull it into their districts.
- It does have to remain in West County.
- There is no law that says they couldn't overthrow the decision, but I have a hard time thinking that would ever happen. It wouldn't make sense.

Councilmember Hinton commented if this is different than the other T.O.T. as Sebastopol got shorted before.

Supervisor Hopkins commented as follows:

- This is a set aside with earmarked different from the other T.O.T.
- That is how the proposal comes out.
- It specifically requires there is literally a district boundary.
- It's the West Sonoma County High School District, and Sebastopol and out to the coast and up, it doesn't include Sea Ranch because they go north but the lower Russian River.
- It has to stay in that area, and Sebastopol will not be assessed but they are part of the area.
- You will be eligible to apply for the funds.

Vice Mayor Gurney questioned with a 4% increase, what will the ultimate rate be?

Supervisor Hopkins commented it is 4% on top of the 12% which would go up to a total of 16%.

Councilmember Slayter commented as follows:

- 50% goes to education.
- 50% goes to local fire agencies.
- How does it get apportioned beyond that?
- There's an awful lot of entities under those two umbrellas?

Supervisor Hopkins commented as follows:

- I think that for the education piece, that's why we really tried to create more of a community structure.
- When you have a tax that is in basically in perpetuity until repealed or altered, you want to build in enough specificity that it goes to what is intended.
- We erred on the side of creating institutional infrastructure so the community would have it on the education side, to direct the funds.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- On the fire side, it does call out the emergency medical services, and it will be prioritizing ambulance service.
- There's an opportunity I think for Sebastopol to benefit in terms of mutual aid if we look at coastal ambulance provision.
- At the end of the day, we are all part of the same network, and having an amped up staffing on the coast provides a backup as the balance is out of the area.
- That will be folded into the fire services, the silver plan, and we have established goals for the unincorporated areas that are tourist impacted.

Councilmember Slayter questioned what is the total number of school districts and fire districts in what would be a new district, a special assessment district?

Supervisor Hopkins commented as follows:

- Fire districts are changing on an annual basis as we strive to consolidation, and the intent is to support the consolidation.
- Russian River was annexed and we anticipate that Forestville will be annexed in June.
- The goal is they will be annexed by Sonoma County.
- There are more school districts and fire district per capita in West County than any other else in the County.

Mr. Rosatti commented there are 12 school districts, and ten fire districts In the territory we are talking about.

Councilmember Slayter commented as follows:

- If it's \$2.7 million annually, so you take half of that, \$1.35, and if this gets apportioned but just using rough numbers, equally among 12 school districts, that is \$100k per school district per year,
- Going back about the proposal and the gap between the missing funds to explore consolidation, it \$1 million.

Supervisor Hopkins commented as follows:

- That is 2008 or 2009 ad it ws estimated \$1.5 to \$2 million.
- That is 10 to 11 years ago.

Councilmember Slayter commented if it costs \$1 million to so a consolidation, if you have two school districts, each one of them would be putting funds in a bucket.

Mr. Rosatti commented as follows:

- It depends on how many districts are working at consolidating together.
- One of the things is an election that happens that is man dated for the voters.
- They are forced to be asked this question if they are comfortable with changing.
- There's also quite a bit of process on the up front.
- We have a leg up on that \$1 1/2 million number.
- The study that is done right now is taking off some of the cost that we will be up front in terms of unification because they are actually performing the study and paying for it.
- They are not going to ask the districts to reimburse them for the study.
- There would need to be additional studies done and do things like alignment of contracts, and look at the real estate issues, and then work will have to be done at the parcel taxes.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- Many have existing parcel tax revenue that comes in.
- They are going to look at that in the study that is done now.

Councilmember Slayter commented as follows:

- Sense is this is more at least in the beginning large sums dedicated to help big idea consolidations or unifications.
- The Sebastopol Senior Center has an adult education program that is really awesome that is new and exciting (Legacy)
- Say all of a sudden has a hiccup, they can go to the fund and say they need \$50,000 to help us close this gap.
- Is it actually going to make a difference?
- The issues in consolidation as you just noted, it's a myriad of difficulty, in so many ways, and honestly, as a nonparent, I will share that I am a receptor for these types of things.
- We hear from friends and neighbors and constituents and I have an awful lot of people who say to me, what in the world is all these school districts in West County?
- What is going on? That is crazy, and as nonparents, people who have never been in the system, outside looking in, it's crazy making.
- I applaud the effort at doing something.
- I'm worried that this is nothing in the grand scheme because it's such an enormous problem that it needs ten times this amount of money to actually be effective.

Supervisor Hopkins commented as follows:

- Just want to say that from the inside looking in, as a parent, I agree wholeheartedly, and part of my secret scheme is to also shame the State into something.
- If we are able to pass the measure, we are saying we are prioritizing unification, we want to fund it.
- In the '60s the State had funds for unification in the school districts and if we have that again, we might get teachers supporting this, parents supporting this and school superintendents and it's going to get everything across the finish line.
- We need to partner with the State.

Councilmember Slayter commented as follows:

- Discussed fire EMS and balance.
- Assume it's the same thing where whatever West County committee is the decider of the funds.
- It's impossible to know what the city's portion would be.
- At this point it's unknowable.

Supervisor Hopkins commented as follows:

- Discussed having not established a fire funding mechanism and a lot of research is in staffing models.
- Actually identified in the measure the Sonoma County fire district or another entity would be the administration arm of that, and the conversations would happen with the board of supervisors so that would happen because there is an institution already in place.
- If funding is available for item X, then cities and districts have funding year after year after year, so I think some assurance is it is not a one-time drop in the bucket, to be able to go buy a fire truck.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- On the fire and emergency side, it was stated that the benefit would be to unincorporated Sonoma County.
- Would the fire be available for the funds?

Supervisor Hopkins commented as follows:

- Sebastopol would be eligible but to be honest, the language in the measure reflects the tourism impact that is unique in the coastal and lower Russian river and incorporated communities.
- Do recognize you have a tourist impact in terms of traffic.
- Do see the argument that was made in the measure really favors directly addressing the tourism impact, where the revenue is primarily being generated.
- The education side is speaking broadly, and the Sebastopol schools are no disadvantage.
- You're eligible but in terms of priority, I don't think you would be as high as the communities that are actually responding to tourism-based calls.
- It sounds like the measure is already in it's on the ballot, and pamphlets are going on Thursday.
- The ballots drop on the second of February.
- The language that is set as it is.

Councilmember Rich questioned if the language is before the Council tonight.

Supervisor Hopkins stated it could be forwarded.

Vice Mayor Gurney commented:

- The tourism has an impact on the roads and the traffic situation.
- We do need help there financially.
- It's another conversation we need to have with you.
- What the fifth district and the board of supervisors can do that will impact not even the local people but the other people who drive here.
- We just don't have the money to do all the road work we want.

Supervisor Hopkins commented as follows:

- Would love to have that conversation and one thing just to mention, currently the tourism impact fund, all of it this year is earmarked for this election for measure "B," and if the measure passes, we will get that money back.
- The money will be taken from the measure and those funds would be eligible.
- If those funds did not open up again, we will have another round of tourism for the next found for the fiscal year, and I would love to come back and have a conversation about your needs and how to support you.

Mayor Glass opened for public comment.

Kyle Falbo commented as follows:

- Prior to this agenda item, you can count on one hand the times I have heard City Council mention the school districts, strange considering there is property tax, and they should make a priority low-density, high-income housing to have property value and rental rates that support families with children to actually live here.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- One of the most appalling realizations is hearing a loss of pine crest, failing to hear any discussion by council, and regularly discussed plans to consolidate and leave the city for a high school.
- The previous agenda eye time brought up a big point.
- The City is missing an opportunity to engage with the local school districts.
- I applaud the involvement with the issue and the long-term effects for all areas of the community.
- The silence in the governing bodies is deafening.
- Hope they find the solutions that benefit the benefits.

Council Deliberations:

There were no further comments.

MOTION:

Councilmember Hinton moved and Councilmember Rich seconded the motion to Authorize the Mayor to Prepare and Send a Letter of Support to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors for the West County Transient Occupancy Tax Measure (March 2021 Election)

Mayor Glass called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote.

VOTE:

Ayes: Councilmembers Hinton, Rich, Slayter, Vice Mayor Gurney and Mayor Glass

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

City Council Action: Approved and Authorized the Mayor to Prepare and Send a Letter of Support to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors for the West County Transient Occupancy Tax Measure (March 2021 Election)

Reference Order Number: 2021-020

Councilmember Slayter commented as follows:

- The public comment about having additional conversations with our school districts and those are separate governmental entities.
- I'm not saying we haven't had good communication with those folks.
- What I'm saying is the boundaries are not the same.
- School districts can have wildly different boundaries, and fire districts can have wildly different boundaries than city limits.
- We need to make sure we are not overstepping our governmental bounds.

Councilmember Hinton commented as follows:

- Many of us attended the school board meetings.
- There is an elected board responsible.
- I want to assure the speaker in the public we have kept up on those and attended those meetings.

6. Housing Sub-Committee Report Out (Requestor: Housing Sub-Committee)

The Housing Sub-Committee (Mayor Glass and Councilmember Slayter) provided a Housing Sub-Committee Report Out.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- On the housing subcommittee, we have been up to many things.
- The first thing that I want to report is about the Bodega Avenue project. Director Svanstrom is here and she could give us maybe a two minute synopsis of what is moving forward with that.
- Councilmember Slayter and I got a report from Director Svanstrom, this is the parcel on Bodega Avenue.
- It's an affordable housing project and it's going to be reviewed by the DRB, and because it is 100% affordable project, it fits within the zoning. There are also certain state regulatory constraints in terms of our input on this.

Director Svanstrom commented:

- The DRB first reviewed this in late 2019. The DRB at this point had a lot of feedback for the applicant, and they came back for the second preliminary preview with revisions.
- We had a two-part meeting this past fall for that second preliminary review meeting.
- Received a lot of public comment.
- They did submit a formal application in the beginning of December.
- We have reviewed that for completeness. That is a requirement by State law that we go through and look at the actual application and what it means.
- They have a lot of items to address still on their formal application. A hearing isn't eminent.
- I know that Council has a number of public comments from property owners in the community about that, and we have seen those and many of the things we are already asking the applicant to address.
- The DRB will be the review board for it.
- It is zoned for the use, we will be looking at the impacts once we have application completed and look at how they revise the project to respond to staff comments on that.
- It's an 84 unit 100% affordable very low income.
- They are proposing to do it in two phases and the first phase, I believe is 48 units and the second phase is 46 units.
- They are subject to design review, and tree removal, and we will look at any impacts to adjoining property.

Councilmember Slayter continued:

- A second item that we wanted to bring your attention to is just to let you know that we are being required, and actually the budget subcommittee knows about this, but we need to update our housing element, so the budget subcommittee is actually looking at the issue of a request related to that.
- The General Plan Housing Element has to be updated by 2023.
- We were able to meet certain standards and deadlines I believe that allowed us to go seven years instead of three or four.
- We are already on a longer period of time for a fresh and valid housing element and yet, we are already cranking up the machine to do that work on a mid-cycle housing element update.
- All of this is also needing to take into effect or account the regional housing needs assessment, or RENA, and those additional numbers which I think are still in a small state of flux.
- There's a whole host of planning commission, public meetings and things that need to happen, and consultant will be required to help us with that.
- It's a fairly good sized undertaking for the Planning Department.
- Our Planning Department is working on pulling together an RFP for the assistance we need do that update.

- The third item is COVID, we know from the survey that we just had, we know there is housing and rent insecurity that we have people because of COVID are having a hard time making their rent.
- We have people who have a hard time making their mortgage, et cetera, and so there has been a mishmash of Federal Regulations and State regulations that have been putting moratoriums on evictions and this and that.
- That is in something of a state of flux.
- We're expecting that something may change.
- We're monitoring that.
- We don't want to respond inappropriately by doing things that are re-inventing the wheel.
- We're watching that to make sure that we are addressing the problems that are occurring in our community and also keeping an eye on what the state and the feds are doing.
- The West County Community Services had an emergency fund that was for helping people that could not pay their rent or utility bills and that came out of the first C.A.R.E.S. Act and they got a significant amount of money.
- What I hear is there is more money coming from the feds and through the state and the County and some will likely get allocated to the West County Community Services because they had an original contract to do that.
- That is another component in the kinds of support services that are needed particularly in this COVID situation.
- We're looking an in the mix of things as we continue to go through COVID.
- The economy is tanking and there are a lot of people out there that are in dire circumstances.
- We have had a lot of meetings about what was known as the Sebastopol Inn, that is rechristened Elderberry Commons.
- We met with the owner of DEMA and CDC staff and West County Community Services , so we had a big powwow to address and to continue talking about the issues that were raised in some of the City Council meetings we had over the last two months that had to do with the Sebastopol Inn.
- There were questions about parking issues, questions about fencing, questions about accessibility from the trail.
- We had the one meeting with the County then one where all the businesses and property owners were invited.
- Many did not attend but the invitation went out.
- We did hear from property owners. A specific example was the developer of the housing behind the commercial building that is right on the corner of Morris and Sebastopol.
- About access to the retail and service goods in Gravenstein Station, and not wanting to cut some access off but still wants to have protection for their private property.
- Property owners, neighbors are talking with each other and County staff.
- There is a person at the County CDC who is a special projects manager, a senior level person who is a decider, able to direct staff.
- Fencing and different changes to the physical environment are being discussed and there will be changes made as a result of the collaborative conversations.
- The other important report from the first meeting which was the government-only meeting was from our police chief and there have been zero calls attributed to Elderberry Commons as of last Thursday, midday, and everything seems to going well with the vendors and with DEMA as the operator and the private security that is on site.
- No significant issues to date - those are going as we had hoped.
- They reported they have moved in somewhere in the neighborhood of 14 to 15 people.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- We and all the stake holders saw samples of what the fencing, what they are planning on in terms of fencing, what it looks like.
- They also said they are willing to run that through the Design Review Board.
- They are working to collaborate with us as a city.
- They are a County property, however they are working on and plan to collaborate with our city processes on the design issues, accessible issues, et cetera.
- CDC and DEMA have been working to have a vender relationship with some of the local businesses.
- Apparently, they are buying coffee from Coffee Katz now on a daily basis.
- There has been discussion with DEMA and the chiropractic offices there, providing services.
- A heartwarmingly collaborative situation that we were hearing about.
- The person who is building the townhomes was anxious to preserve access so that his new residents would have access to Coffee Katz and be able to get on the trail because they consider that to be an amenity for that location.
- Did bring up the issue of exactly what all of those funds, the \$375,000 we have been promised, would come to us.
- We asked about that and that is going back and forth between the CDC staff and the CAO's office, and we are due a report on that sometime in the new future.

Mayor Glass asked for questions.

Councilmember Hinton questioned where did the name Elderberry Commons come from and is it related to Sebastopol.

The Housing Sub-Committee commented as follows:

- Elderberry is one of the Native American names for this area.
- It had to do with an elder berry patch that was important to the Native Americans who lived here in Sebastopol before there were white people here.
- That's why it came to elder berry commons.

Councilmember Hinton questioned if they not want to keep it Sebastopol Inn or did they not buy that name?

The Housing Sub-Committee stated they did not know and would ask that question next time.

Vice Mayor Gurney questioned if there is a plan to continue to meet with and coordinate with the County and the other interests?

The Housing Sub-Committee stated we are planning to meet with them.

Vice Mayor Gurney commented that it is hoped that the sub-committee can keep in front of everybody the need for the Park Village and the Barlow communities to get out when the Morris street intersection was flooded.

The sub-committee stated that is one of the issues discussed as well as access.

Mayor Glass opened for public comment. There was none.

Council Deliberations:

There were no further comments or deliberations.

City Council Action: None Required. Received the report.
Reference Order Number: 2021-018

CITY COUNCIL REPORTS:

9. City Manager-Attorney/City Clerk Reports:

City Manager McLaughlin commented as follows:

- Received many emails after the January 6th attack on the Capitol that the Mayor referenced in the beginning of the meeting.
- Since that time, we have remained vigilant as to any potential threats.
- The reason I mention this is because we received a number of emails, quite a few of them, especially last week, and raising concern about this.
- We had concerns raised about the farm market and the safety of the farm market.
- We specifically devoted some police attention to the farm market.
- But to date, including this evening, there have been no specific threats identified whatsoever in our operational area in Sonoma County.
- That vigilance will continue.

10. City Council Reports/Committee/Sub-Committee Meeting Reports: (Reports by Mayor/City Councilmembers Regarding Various Agency Meetings/Committee Meetings/Sub-Committee Meeting /Conferences Attended and Possible Direction to its Representatives (If Needed) on Pending issues before such Boards)

Councilmember Rich reported as follows:

- The Climate Action Subcommittee had its kickoff meeting.
- Vice Mayor Gurney and I were there.
- What a dynamic group.
- They created their own organization system.
- The variety, the diversity of this group is impressive.
- Age wise, it goes high school to 30 something all the way to retired.
- The interest of the educational interests, environmental studies, health sciences, there's landscape, there's physics, computer interest.
- There's Green transportation mentioned.
- It was an amazing initial meeting and I think it will be a very dynamic group.
- Reporting that the emergency volunteer groups, Sebastopol neighborhood communications unit, and map your neighborhood have been meeting regularly and moving forward.

Councilmember Hinton reported as follows:

- Had the legislative committee meeting last Friday.
- It is quiet right now. There wasn't much going on.
- In February, we will be selecting a new chair as Councilmember Rachel Huntley will leave her position in Sonoma and she has been the chair of the board two years.
- Vice chair is Mayor Chris Rogers so it's likely he may step up and take that seat.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- Had to leave meeting early because I am serving on the grant committee for open space and we were looking at all the asks from the matching grant applications on that Friday.
- Hopefully some new parks will get funded in cities around Sonoma County.

Vice Mayor Gurney reported as follows:

- Received my written report on the last two CPA meetings.
- Documents and the links are in the report.
- They have visually very attractive and accessible, and the front running things, particularly the highway 37 resiliency project, that is a four-County project.
- Also, for the two meetings, we had a transition in the board as the newly elected were sworn in, and cities were making appointments.
- We have three new people, supervisor Lynda Hopkins, and the city people were sit on the executive committee, similar to our agenda review committee, working with staff to manage a work plan and as a great opportunity for people so new to public service.
- It's remarkable how the three transit operators are interested in collaborating.
- Our big goal is to get to one consolidated service provider with a unified brand and a unified system for payment and routes that connect well so they are fast and efficient.
- They are working on telephone systems that can transfer to each other.
- They are looking at how to coordinate their websites.
- It's a spirit we are starting to see resonate throughout the County in many ways.
- I've attended my first meeting of the health action coalition.
- Met people who are deeply professionally into the issues they face in their lives with their communities, work communities, very intelligent, bright people.
- Met with LANTERN.
- Looking for body members right now.
- They are also reaching out to the center for the arts to do a collaborative project which will actually be an outdoor art protect that will culminate in a walk event that the Sebastopol Walks team will advertise.
- We are starting to see synergy where people connect with each other.

Councilmember Slayter reported as follows:

- Reported on Sonoma Clean Power
- The big news is it's organized and it's a charter member of the JPA of JPAs.
- It's a joint powers agreement or authority between other CCAs that have certain characteristics.
- This is a way for Marin clean energy, San Francisco, central coast, all these independent CCAs to pull together to facilitate and be large scale clean energy forces that are yet to be conceived or constructed.
- Anybody who wants to build really big project needs to have someone to sell the energy to.
- To have a group on a clean energy projects, production, generation of electricity is where the rubber hits the road, and this is a major step in the right direction to renewable energy being common place across the state.
- The store front in downtown Santa Rosa is very close to being open and they have rapidly been able to change their method of service delivery there where everything's going to be COVID compliant and tons of stuff online.

Mayor Glass reported as follows:

- Going to do a fast report on the Mayor's meeting last Thursday.

City Council Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021

DRAFT

- With all nine city Mayors and we had a presentation by the County health department.
- We had Dr. Mase there, and Barbie Robinson and a new person that is the vaccinations and they made a presentation about vaccinations and basically, what it came down was they are working on finding, creating a vaccination sites, figuring out public outreach, to get people vaccinated.
- The one point the public has been confused about is that their framework for how people get vaccinated is that the first line of defense for people who have a primary care physician, they're supposed to get vaccinated by their primary care organization and physician.
- I think the public is getting confused because of articles talk about vaccination sites and getting it at drugstores and CVS when in fact really their number one choice is that if you have a primary care provider, that is who should you be contacting.
- I think that is a very important thing.
- I think we should have it on the city Website so that the public knows that.
- When I talked to the public, everyone is really confused and a lot the people I'm speaking with have a primary care provider and they don't need a CVS or one of the sites.
- I thought is one of the most important things they talked about and basically, it comes down to the system is very slow right now.

11. Council Communications Received

Vice Mayor Gurney reported as follows:

- Poetry reading January 9th.
- The support for our first ever poetry reading was truly remarkable.
- 224 registrants and the response is overwhelmingly positive.
- A longing for the poetry and kindness.
- The power calls us to listen, imagine, create, show up, speak out and take action to hope and heal for the common goods and the poet featured is Phyllis Meshulam, the County poet laureate and it's important to know that kindness may prevail here.
- She says thank you for your support.

12. Future City Meeting Dates/Events (Informational Only): (See Agenda City Web site for Up-to-Date Meeting Dates/Times)

CLOSED SESSION: None

ADJOURNMENT OF REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING:

Meeting was adjourned to the City Council Regular Meeting of February 2, 2021 6:00 pm (VIRTUAL ZOOM PLATFORM)

Mayor Glass adjourned the meeting at 11:06 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Mary C. Gourley
Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, MMC