

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM

Meeting Date: March 7, 2023
To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Councilmember Maurer
Administrative Services Director
Subject: Request to Broadcast, Video Tape and Post the Budget Committee (Standing) Meeting
Recommendation: It is recommended that the Council Discuss and Consider Request to Broadcast, Video Tape and Post to the City web site, the City Standing Budget Committee Meetings
Funding: Currently Budgeted: _____ Yes _____ No X N/A
Net General Fund Cost: None

Account Code/Costs authorized in City Approved Budget (if applicable) AK (verified by Administrative Services Department)

INTRODUCTION:

This item is to request that the City Council Discuss and Consider Request to Broadcast, Videotape and Post to the City website the City Standing Budget Committee Meetings.

BACKGROUND

The underlying philosophy of California’s open government laws is that public agency processes should be as transparent as possible. Such transparency is vital in promoting public trust in government. City processes should base on trust and confidence in the agency and demonstrate the agency's commitment to transparency. Openness, accountability and honesty are essential to build high levels of accountability and trust amongst citizens and enable fully informed engagement in the democratic process.

DISCUSSION:

It is the duty of local government to serve the public, reach its decisions, and conduct its activities in full view of the public. This is especially true for use of City funds. For communities to be able to work through City issues, especially a subject such as the City’s complex and detailed budget, it is imperative that the Standing Budget Committee allow for broadcasting, taping and posting of the Budget Committee Meetings.

Information should be readily available; with exceptions for such items required under closed sessions. By broadcasting, video taping and posting the Budget Committee meetings to the City web site, this shows the City’s commitment to transparency of discussions of the Budget Committee, demonstrates good governance, reassures the community that Budget Committee is discussing and recommending use for spending of public monies wisely; and increases the confidence and trust of the community.

Analysis:

Staff has reviewed the request and determined the following process could be utilized for Budget Committee Meetings:

1. Creation of In Person and Remote/Virtual Meeting Format
2. Use of Zoom for Public Participation During Meeting
3. Use of Live Stream to Stream Budget Committee Meetings to the Public

4. Posting of Video to City Web Site after the meeting by use of Link to Live Stream (Similar to Council Meetings)

Staff Time Involved:

The Administrative Services Director who will initiate all of the budget meeting will also record the meetings. After each meeting, the zoom file to be uploaded to livestream where all the meetings are hosted. Depending on the duration of each budget meetings, it might take 48 hours before a meeting will be available and posted on the City website.

It is proposed that the closed caption feature of Zoom and raw text be utilized for rough minutes but should not be relied upon as the official documentation of the meeting. The City video will be the official record of the meeting and will be available for a period of one year per the City's records retention schedule.

CITY COUNCIL AND/OR GENERAL PLAN GOALS:

Goal 5: Provide Open and Responsive Municipal Government Leadership

5.3.3. Encourage and increase public awareness of City Policies, decisions, programs and all public processes and meetings, by investigating effective methods of communication and obtaining feedback from the community.

Goal 6: Maintain a highly qualified Staff that works to provide services to serve and protect the residents, visitors and business of this community.

Action CHW 5c: Practice an open-door policy in City programs, and actively engage and encourage participation from all individuals regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, class, disability, sexual orientation, and gender.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, if staff receives public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of the consent calendar.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

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

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact identified at this time since the meetings will only be recorded and post within 48 hours.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council Consider and approve the request to Broadcast, Videotape and Post to the City website the City Standing Budget Committee Meetings; use of closed caption raw text for rough minutes; video tape available for one year per records retention policy.

ATTACHMENTS:

None