

City Council

Mayor Neysa Hinton
Vice Mayor Diana Rich
Sandra Maurer
Jill McLewis
Stephen Zollman



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City of Sebastopol

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
MINUTES FOR Meeting of January 31, 2023

As Approved by the City Council at their regular meeting of February 21, 2023

The City Council Regular meeting was held via teleconference pursuant to AB 361. Pursuant to AB 361 (2021), Teleconference Restrictions of the Brown Act Have Been Suspended, as Well as the Requirement to Provide a Physical Location for Members of the Public to Participate in the Meeting. The City of Sebastopol City Council meeting will not be physically open to the public and all City Councilmembers will be teleconferencing into the meeting via Zoom.

COUNCIL PROTOCOLS FOR MEETING:

- This meeting is being conducted utilizing virtual settings for teleconferencing and electronic means consistent with State of California Executive Orders regarding the COVID 19 pandemic and AB 361.
- Live stream and zoom are being utilized for this meeting.
- Members of the public may view and listen to the meeting by use of Zoom and Live Stream as noted on the City’s website and as noted on the agenda.
- Members of the public wishing to speak to the City Council may do so during public comment or may comment on agenda items during the discussion of each item and must be logged into Zoom. Live Stream is a viewing only format.
- Anyone using abusive, vulgar, offensive, threatening, or harassing language, personal attacks of any kind or offensive terms that target specific individuals or groups will be muted, will be asked to adhere to protocols and /or will be removed from the meeting.

Reminder please leave your microphones on mute until called upon and if you would like to provide your name during public comment you are welcome to do that but do not have to.

Please note that minutes are not meant to be verbatim minutes and are meant to be the City’s record of Actions Taken (Approved Motion of Agenda Item(s)).

6:00 pm Convene City Council Special Meeting (ZOOM VIRTUAL FORMAT)

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Hinton called the Regular meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mayor Neysa Hinton – By video teleconference
Vice Mayor Diana Gardner Rich – By video teleconference
Councilmember Sandra Maurer – By video teleconference
Councilmember Jill McLewis – By video teleconference
Councilmember Stephen Zollman – By video teleconference

Absent: None

Staff: City Manager/City Attorney Larry McLaughlin
Assistant City Manager/City Clerk Mary Gourley
Administrative Services Director Ana Kwong
GHD/City Engineer Mario Landeros/Toni Bertolero
Police Chief Ron Nelson
Public Works Superintendent Dante Del Prete

SALUTE TO THE FLAG: Mayor Hinton led the salute to the flag.

STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: Conflicts of interest may arise in situations where a public official deliberating towards a decision, has an actual or potential financial interest in the matter before the Council. In accordance with state law, an actual conflict of interest is one that would be to the private financial benefit of a public official, a relative or a business with which the Councilmember is associated. A potential conflict of interest is one that could be to the private financial benefit of a Councilmember, a relative or a business with which the Councilmember is associated. A Councilmember must publicly announce potential and actual conflicts of interest, and, in the case of actual conflict of interest, must refrain from participating in debate on the issue or from voting on the issue and must remove themselves from the dais.

There were no statements of conflicts of interest stated at tonight's meeting.

STUDY SESSION AGENDA ITEM:

Fire Department Feasibility Study. MATRIX, City Consultant, will provide a presentation and Results of the Fire Department Feasibility Study. The Matrix Consulting Group was retained by the City of Sebastopol to review the current fire service delivery system and to examine the feasibility of alternative delivery systems. This Study Session will discuss the results.

This item is an informational presentation and discussion of the report. A final action is not proposed for this meeting. Council action for direction to the Staff will be conducted at a future City Council Meeting

Mayor Hinton provided the following comments:

- This special meeting is to discuss the study session for the Matrix fire department feasibility study.
- I want to reiterate to the public in attendance that this is a study session only.
- There will be no decisions made tonight.
- This is only for us and the public to understand more about the study that has been done to give an opportunity for Council to ask clarifying questions, and to indicate any additional information for further study that we may want staff to undertake.
- This is fire department feasibility study Matrix.
- The City consultants will provide a presentation and results of the fire department feasibility study.
- Again, this is a presentation with an opportunity to ask questions and to receive public comments and provide Council comments to City staff for additional information as requested.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin introduced the consultants and commented as follows:

- Introduced Robert Finn and Terry Lewis from Matrix
- Matrix consulting group and was retained by the City to study our current fire service delivery system and to provide feasibility on alternate delivery systems has been emphasized a number of times
- As stated that is a study session only.
- We will certainly hear comment from all of our citizens who are on the meeting call tonight.
- Council will not be making any decision tonight.
- We anticipate at the conclusion on the public testimony Council will ask any questions of staff
- In addition, anything else you would like staff to provide information about, you can get that direction at the conclusion of the meeting.
- This will then go to the agenda setting committee for any further subsequent Council meetings.
- This is a study session to hear from Matrix.

Robert Finn and Terry Lewis, Matrix, provided a presentation to the City Council.

Mayor Hinton opened for questions of the presenter or staff.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows:

- What strikes me and strikes a number of people in the community including a couple of our volunteer firefighters is the fact no matter what we do, whether we keep the status quo, you will need to raise revenue.
- Matrix mentioned taxes - a parcel tax.
- It seems like you have done this work and other similar municipalities and it seems like you have worked yourself personally with other municipalities.
- What has been your experience with cities similar who have found themselves in similar situations trying to do a parcel tax?
- Have they been successful
- Have the voters understood

Matrix commented as follows:

- We are familiar with a number of cities and tax measures to fund public safety services in their community.
- There is a California Website go on to see how it is written and whether it passed or failed.
- There are other times where there is a risk do they understand what they are going for
- Do they understand the need
- Your City doesn't have the ability to take on this more robust fire department with the current funding.
- That was clear from the finance director and review.
- You don't have those extra millions laying around.
- I would add to that that you elect to go that direction, education of the public is important
- In my experience if you talk to anybody and with the improvements are going to be, they are a little more apt to understand what they are voting for.
- Wording is something that needs to be watched but educating the public on what you're trying to accomplish.
- Education is key. Talk to people. Discuss improvements.
- Voters will be apt to understand what voting for
- Wording is key for ballot language

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- A question about other options that you may consider.
- Can you help us understand whether you looked into an administrative oversight option?
- I see that you do note it in the report but there is no indication of why you decided that wasn't an appropriate or workable option for us.
- Of course, we have other options out there and others you may be more aware of than we are here on the City Council. Did you look at the other options

Matrix commented as follows:

- We did not go with the JPA option, because the scope of work was very specific for staffing a 24-hour or potential consolidation and there were other agencies.
- You can always do a JPA. The one issue is it is easy to go in and it is easy to go out.
- There is always have that risk of somebody not wanting to play in the same box anymore and they wind up leaving.

Vice Mayor Rich commented it sounds like that wasn't something you specifically looked at as a part of this report.

Matrix stated that is correct.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- The cost pieces are confusing to me.
- The bottom line without looking at all of the other numbers and comparing, the bottom line the cost of operating from your perspective the cost of operating an independent fire station on a combination model meaning to career firefighters and a volunteer on-site at all times, versus consolidated.
- The total cost is relatively similar. That is what I am hearing..

Matrix stated that is correct.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows:

- Thank you for your report.
- I just had a couple of questions going back to the costs.
- I am looking at the presentation.
- That would be if the parcel tax is implemented.
- That is the revenue it would generate.
- The projected surplus is based on what you said and it sounds like you recommend it could be negotiated and determine if not necessarily given that the surplus would go to Gold Ridge?
- That is what I have heard a lot of.
- Just wanted from your perspective maybe that is not totally the case

Matrix commented as follows:

- That wasn't clear in the estimates they provided.
- The fact that it showed when we did the budgets and we looked at City contribution, there was a surplus.
- Those numbers probably have to be tightened down.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows:

- If there was a surplus it poses another question looking at a report and it sounds like you are seeing the remodel of the station is something that has to happen before we can do our 24 hour staffing.
- Then, it causes you to ask how do we actually afford the remodel and any changes that need to occur if that surplus were to go.
- Where do we get that money from
- It makes me wonder too, as that is what we are going to have to do is actually have another tax on top of a parcel tax
- Is there supposed to be another tax and to afford all of the upgrades and such that we need to pay for

Matrix commented typically projects on that magnitude it would be a bond.

Councilmember McLewis commented we have a bond in addition to a parcel tax? Am I understanding that?

Matrix commented as follows:

- That depends if the City has the revenue that can pay the bond.
- If they can pay the bond without implementing a tax specific to the bond that is another option.

- I think every year the rules are different it is now going to allow you to improve the fire service in your community.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows:

- Based on experience, do you know how common it is
- We talk within our community a lot about grants.
- I got a lot of nonprofit experience in grants and I know it can be a big wild-card at times.
- Based on your experience, how frequent are those

Matrix commented as follows:

- The assistance to fire grant is an ongoing grant program.
- It is Federal. It is currently still funded.
- That is the most common and most attractive one.

Councilmember McLewis commented is it a given that if you apply for fire departments receded.

Matrix commented as follows:

- It is not a given.
- They only fund a certain amount of projects and there is only a certain amount of funding.

Councilmember McLewis commented that is what I was wondering just so everyone could understand it is not clear-cut how we would pay for everything.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- I know this study gave you a scope of work.
- The slides bring up a lot of questions for me too.
- I recall and I don't know if it addresses in the study that there would be two seats on the seven seat board if we were to consolidate.
- Now we are talking about a surplus of \$760 thousand on the screen in the first year.
- Where does the surplus go?
- Does it come back to us for improvements to our station house which we need desperately?
- All these things in a negotiation and in your study where they at all discussed
- It is hard for me to come to think about it when I don't know if all of those things are totally negotiable.
- Of course I wouldn't want to give away \$760,000 to a department general fund when we need our own firehouse updated.
- I really didn't get it out of the report.
- Was that a part of your scope of work or was that something that may be determined in the future?

Matrix commented as follows:

- That would be determined in the future.
- When you negotiate the final numbers it may be that the City's contribution number goes down.
- There is not that large of a surplus.

Mayor Hinton commented it is hard to look at the bottom line so we would know all of the answers. Am I missing something?

Matrix commented as follows:

- They are going to want a fund policy
- It wouldn't be uncommon for them to have a reserve fund.
- Understanding that just like the City should have one, that would give you a better idea.
- That could be earmarked for things like capital improvements to your facility or purchases all of that would be negotiated.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- People look at the independent firehouse as a combination model, to career on-site +1 volunteer at times
- Similar staffing model which gives a similar response time and advantages we also have similarities between those two options and facilities have to be paid for.
- I am struggling a bit to glean from what I have heard from today and what I have seen in the report.
- Can you also help us understand.
- Can you list those advantages so we understand why consolidation would be better?
- The one advantages their chief and battalion chief.
- The City doesn't have to go out and recruit a Fire Chief.
- The other thing is done by the fire district and the City has those responsibilities.
- The big negative that we talked about, you are giving up local control and going with the district that has the extra funding piece built in and you don't have a risk of voter saying no.
- It is really a town decision on that local control peace.
- Volunteers will still be a part of that program but you are a part of a district instead of a City run department.
- The funding piece would be resolved because would have a parcel tax would automatic apply to our property owners.
- Of those what you see as the possible three?

Matrix commented yes.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- As a follow-up question, is the primary issue here as you look at assessing our services, is the primary issue we are trying to grapple with that is driving for any change at all, our response time in particular, our turnout time.
- The 5+ minutes added to a time an individual can expect to have a firefighter on site just because they have to come from home.
- Getting from home to a firehouse in 5 minutes is amazing.
- That what we are talking about the problem we need to address

Matrix commented as follows:

- The main issues we heard from volunteers we interviewed as well as from the former Fire Chief was the ability to recruit and retain volunteers is getting more difficult.
- The volunteers you have many of them work in Santa Rosa and other areas. So, they leave to go to work.
- The day time staffing has relief of a few volunteers in the daytime hours.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- So it is the ability to recruit volunteers, but isn't there a response time issue we are trying to address too that has been identified as a problem in terms of service delivery?
- The community sets the service level expectations.

Matrix commented as follows:

- I think a community like yours, those three-minute travel times are outstanding but you have the issue of availability of volunteers in the daytime and a long turnout time to let them assemble.
- One person cannot get the truck and respond by themselves.
- You need the team to respond together.
- You have that, waiting for 2 to 3 people to show up and respond.

Councilmember Maurer commented how many other districts does the Gold Ridge oversee and are there any pending that may be consolidating with or overseeing in the future.

Matrix commented I am not aware of any pending. I believe the number they are overseeing is 14 smaller volunteer agencies from around the region.

Councilmember Maurer commented can you tell me about how many square miles that is in terms of oversight.

Matrix commented no, I don't know how many square miles it is. I know it is a large area.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows:

- This question may not apply to you, but I was interested in understanding the ambulance services.
- What I understand is the medical calls have gone up dramatically.
- The ambulance services are the first responder.
- Neither Sebastopol nor Gold Ridge are certified to use certain equipment for saving lives.
- Isn't it most important that the ambulances for those medical calls, they are the first responder
- I guess, I would like to understand in Sebastopol, how many of ambulances serve the community
- Coverage has 1 or 2? Do they roam around the area. Are they parked.

Matrix commented as follows:

- I am not familiar with the way the system typically works, the transport ambulances cover a larger area than what you would your station.
- The fire becomes the first responder. They initiate care.
- Then, the ambulance can get there and provide advanced care.
- We didn't study the EMS system as part of this

Councilmember Maurer commented if council voted to consolidate, could the Sebastopol fire department retain their logo, their name on their trucks or clothing or not because of property taxes?

Matrix commented as follows:

- You would be in the Gold Ridge fire district.
- They may rename your station Sebastopol station.
- That is something again you could be negotiating that you want on the fire apparatus.
- I have seen it where they just have something on the back that says proudly serving Gold Ridge fire protection district where it is a contract situation, or fire district in an area where they have a historical presence of a fire to like you guys do.
- You may want to keep some of that local feeling local branding.
- That would not be a hard negotiating point of it is something that is into the City.
- You could do whatever depending on how that all works.

Councilmember Maurer commented will consolidation affect the volunteer stipend? Or does Gold Ridge has a different stipend program?

Matrix commented as follows:

- Stated yes
- Gold Ridge has a different stipend program than Sebastopol has.
- Most of their stipends are for staffing in the station.
- I do not believe they have anything in terms of a retention stipend, or a weekend officer type stipend that Sebastopol has.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows:

- I am wondering about the personnel.
- Would all personnel be retained, in particular, Sebastopol has I believe one admin.
- With her position be retained? Or not?

Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- That person works for the City of Sebastopol.
- We would probably reallocate her time if that were to happen.
- Maybe the City Manager could step in on that, but I suspect that is what would happen.
- It is an administrative position that services two departments

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows:

- This is an administrative position that services multiple departments
- I would second what you just said.
- I would say we have a staffing study in the initial stages that are being reviewed.
- We have also discussed departments to better serve the public.
- There is a multitude of options in the future that the City may want to take advantage of to make changes in terms of how they allocate where departments are, but nobody would lose their job from that.

Mayor Hinton commented I am sure Interim Chief Piccinini can address the ambulance situation and those questions

Interim Chief Piccinini commented as follows:

- I will answer that question.
- Quite frankly, I think there is a lot of other questions that have been asked that I can answer with a little bit of detail.
- I also have a number of observations I can share if you are inclined to allow me to do that.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- For now, I would like to address this question
- If you could just answer that specific question, we will hear from the public after the Council questions and come back to this question and answer periods.

Interim Chief Piccinini commented as follows:

- Specific to the ambulances, there are some generally posted as a part of the franchise system.
- Again, the ambulance is posted in a residential unit.
- It is not a moving post.

- When it gets dispatched to West County, the system moves an additional ambulance into a post area.
- That is the ambulance available to the citizens of Santa Rosa through the franchise system.
- There is an evidence to the Gold Ridge fire district.
- That was secured by contract with the private provider in ridge fire district as a result of one ballot initiatives.
- That on one level is not a system ambulance.
- At the same time the ambulance can get put into the system.
- There is no change or impact consolidation or standalone fire department that would change the coverage of ALS resources in Sebastopol.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows:

- Perhaps this may not be the right time and I am not sure who we need to answer, but I always heard from the insurance perspective that ISO ratings are important.
- I am wondering, are they important?
- From what I see, Sebastopol rates better than Gold Ridge.
- Could you explain that more for me?
- Is that not an important rating anymore
- I just hear that from insurance agents a lot.

Matrix commented as follows:

- It is less important than it used to be.
- It used to be a huge component of how rates were determined by insurance companies.
- Now, it is one piece of what they use.
- It covers a number of things.
- It is your water supply.
- Level of protection.
- You get so many points in each volunteer is worth so many points.
- Type of apparatus verse the risk to the community.
- Most insurance companies only use it as a piece of their rate structure.
- It is not the sole piece anymore.
- It would make sense that you have a better ISO rating.
- Response time is key.
- Your station to the proximity of the risks and City versus Gold Ridge being more of a rural area and more rural setting is going to have a lower rating.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows:

- To help us understand, we are talking response time.
- We need to improve hours and it is not as good but yet, the ISO is A.
- I understand the territory but is it splitting hairs with all of these different things
- I am just trying to ask so the public will understand the difference between the ISO and the importance of it, versus the turnout time.
- I was wondering, based on your experience with all of this, have you ever seen a merger occur in be reversed

Matrix commented as follows:

- I have seen it with JPA.

- When you are annexed into the district, it would take a vote to annex from that district to go back to City department.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows:

- Would that be a vote
- Would that be the City of Sebastopol or the Gold Ridge district?

Matrix commented it would depend on who is initiating it.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows:

- As far as your experience with mergers, do you have any experience on how they get to that point?
- The reason I ask that is thus far with our process in my opinion, we haven't included the key stakeholders, Fire Chief, the community.
- I think we could do a better job at that moving forward, but based on your experience, how have other cities handle data size committees?
- I am curious just since you have so much experience with this type of thing.

Matrix commented as follows:

- Typically what happens is you will see the City put a committee together that includes someone from the City management team.
- The Fire Chief would typically be on that team.
- It may include 1 or 2 members of the council to fully explore and go through all of the issues that need to be vetted out and brought to the table as a part of contract negotiations where obviously your City Attorney will be involved with City management.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows:

- Were talking about the bond and during the remodel, for some reason we are not able to figure that out have the funds to do the remodel, I guess I feel concern.
- Where would that leave us?

Matrix commented as follows:

- I think your best option, short of being able to fund the remodel would be go to the 16 hour Monday through Friday staffing model.
- You can do the two career and a stipend and it would require the two shifts with volunteers covering nights and weekends.
- Basically, your staffing costs are offset.
- You would need to pay as many stipend firefighters because of the types of calls.
- The volunteers handle the second call and they handle nights and weekends.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- I want to follow-up on what you just said.
- This is directed to Robert Finn in response to Councilmember McLewis question.
- I have been functioning under the assumption that a fire truck requires three firefighters, whether they be career or volunteer, be available to load up and leave.
- It sounds like from your answer a few minutes ago, in fact, for certain calls, I think you said medical, that to volunteer firefighters could go out on those calls?

Matrix commented as follows:

- If that was the staffing plan.
- There is no staffing mandate for how many people have to staff the fire truck.
- Many fire department staff a quick response vehicle with two people.
- The primary goal is to assist with medical calls.
- It is a less-expensive a little more maneuverable vehicle.
- It doesn't have any of the fire fighting equipment on it.
- There are departments that do cross staffing where one person would drive the ladder truck that is following 2 or 3 people on the fire engine.
- The goal is to get enough people on the scene to be able to mitigate the emergency.
- That is a local policy decision.
- Most departments don't let an engine company role with 2. It requires a third person.
- Even on the medical call, if a structure fire were to break out, you have it staffed incorrectly for that.
- They would have to wait until secondary apparatus were to get on scene.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- It does suggest a potential that doesn't have been haven't been fully investigated thus far as a look at next steps.
- I have a few more questions, but I would like to correct a statement made a few minutes ago.
- I have been on the committee.
- Our Fire Chief did participate in those meetings.
- I was in attendance so I know that first person.
- I have a question regarding the tasks that would be allocated out if we were in a consolidation format.
- The first, the staffing proposal there would be no Fire Chief, the level individual assigned to our firehouse in a consolidation.
- Am I correct about that conclusion

Matrix commented as follows:

- Yes
- That would be up to the fire district where the chief's office is located.
- Currently, it is a few miles outside of your City.
- That is also where the battalion Fire Chief is located.
- It may come down when you're doing it that some mid-level deputy chief or assistant chief position may be needed in the City as a part of it at some point.
- That is not the original estimate provided to have that level of staff in your City.

Vice Mayor Rich commented you have identified the front desk person currently at our firehouse is not a part of cost estimate with the consolidation plan includes, that is correct, right?

Matrix stated that is correct.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- A task I don't see called out in the report that our Fire Chief does perform is the fire Marshal tasks.
- Those are substantial in our town.
- Are those discussed at all in a consolidation model
- Who would be performing those

- Those would be a function of a district
- The fire Marshal tasks would be taken on by Gold Ridge as you understand it

Matrix commented that is correct.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- My final question is related to stipends.
- This one goes back to the full report.
- I do appreciate the summary presentation you provided which hit the highlights.
- In the report, you described stipends and what we have been talking about for quite some time which is with the consolidation and within an independent firehouse.
- I see amounts proposed it in either case, the number of volunteers needed would be 6 volunteers to cover various tasks.
- I see in the report, the total stipend amount is substantial.
- I don't know whether I am adding it up and correct, but it seems to me that total is \$226,000?
- I am looking on page 6 and 7.
- I don't want to pick apart the numbers.
- What I want to do is make sure I understand what is going on here.
- Discussed comparison of stipends for consolidation, versus for an independent fire department
- That kind of aligned with the numbers I was able to pull out when you were talking about 47 volunteers and the amount of money that would be distributed amongst them.
- It looks to me like the total for volunteer stipends is \$266,551 it is distributed among 6 volunteers.
- If you can help me understand that. I am looking on page number six where it says the salary part times shift in the final column \$73,000.
- Those are the fire shifts. Salaries part time for calls and drills, \$113,000 950.
- Then, we have the retention, \$80,000.
- What am I missing there?
- I can't imagine we are going to be paying out that will amount to 6 stipend volunteers.
- It is important, because to the extent that number can be reduced, then, we start looking at the independent firehouse option being substantially advantageous.

Matrix commented as follows:

- To begin with, the \$73,000 that is strictly for the stipend on station people.
- It has nothing at all to do with the other stipends that Sebastopol is doing.
- None others matchup with anything Gold Ridge is doing.
- Not the easier way, but the better way is to match apples and apples.
- Also understands, when you say 6, that is the minimum you are going to for the \$14,000 FLSA ceiling
- You will need more than 6. That is the minimum you need. You are going to need more than 6.
- That is what you will need for the minimum.
- Just like the 47 when you look at the 24 hour shifts doing all stipends.
- We said you needed 47 volunteers. You will need more than 47.
- That is the minimum you need in order to maintain \$14,000 FLSA ceiling

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- That does call a thank you for the answer, but that does lead to an additional question, which is, this has to do with what Councilmember McLewis was asking.

- To do have in the combination staffing dollar amount not just \$73,000 for the shifts, but also \$113,000 \$550 for calls and drills and \$80,000 for retention amount.
- My first question is do those necessarily get included for FLSA purposes and would we need to modify those if we are looking at an independent firehouse?

Matrix commented as follows:

- First, I left them in there because they are part of your current stipend program.
- That is not my decision to say you can't do that.
- We left them in there because we felt it was best to show that is to understand what the total cost could be.
- In terms of stipends and awarding those to the volunteer members, think about it in terms of I am a volunteer, I can only get \$14,000, which is 20% of the full-time salary.
- Once I reach \$14,000 I can no longer receive a stipend.
- Regardless of whether I am out here working a 24 hour shift and doing that stipend, or if I am doing the drills and I am doing the and I am doing things for the retention.
- It is hard to really determine how many more people you need to maintain that.
- That is why I did the station stipend in showing what you needed, just to cover that.
- That would be fairly parallel \$73,000 on the combination of an independent warehouse versus \$85,000 for Gold Ridge fire district.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- I had one final question and then I know we need to move on.
- Did I understand in terms of staffing model that was the combination staffing model, that the expectation would be that we would have two career firefighters and one volunteer on-site of the fire station and they would be there for 24 hours?
- Not a series of shifts, but one person for 24 hours?

Matrix stated that is correct. That is a normal shift for a fire department.

Mayor Hinton opened for public comment.

Loretta commented as follows:

- I want to thank the people who did this report, but I think the part we are missing tonight is hearing from our Chief Jack Piccinini.
- He is if not the most respected firefighter in Sonoma County.
- Is one of the most respected in the state.
- He is vital to our information.
- I think it is a shame that we haven't heard from him yet.
- I am hoping before this meeting is over we will hear his opinion on this report.

Alex commented can you explain to me in one sentence what the problem is we are trying to solve here?

Roberta commented as follows:

- I want to backup the first speaker who wants to hear from the Fire Chief.
- It is so important.
- I was surprised it was set aside that Mayor Hinton decided to wait on his speaking.
- I am looking forward to hearing what he has to say about the consolidation versus independence.

- I do like the fact that the chief is in Sebastopol.
- I think it is great.
- But, I also think vital resources can be shared in an opportunity.
- I want to hear from the Fire Chief.
- I am from, by the way, Burbank senior community.
- So, it is great to walk past that fire station.

Kate commented as follows:

- First of all, I am thankful for this report.
- It is very transparent in the fact that it kind of shows there are many options that are not on the table with this report.
- As the council moves forward, we need to make sure that the citizens get to vote on whatever happens.
- I personally as a person who believes in democracy I do not think that not voting is advantageous.
- I also do not think that not voting on a parcel tax is a type of government process that we want.
- I don't think anybody was elected to City Council not to have people vote.
- I want to stress voting is key to our process and our democracy.
- My second point is any plan must include funding for a fire house remodel.
- Everything that has been proposed is predicated on the fact that the fire station needs to be remodeled.
- The third point is in this proposal with the parcel tax coming from Sebastopol residence and 11 percent of our budget, we are coming in higher than the current Gold Ridge expense per person.
- The current budget for Gold Ridge is about \$5 million divided by 20,000 residents, which is about \$253 per resident with Sebastopol's parcel tax and 11% of the budget.
- That would mean Sebastopol residence would be given \$314 toward the district right off the bat.
- I think any proposal regarding merger needs to bring us in equally.
- My final point is we have to hear from our Fire Chief.
- I believe he is a subject expert on this matter and has been through several consolidations before.
- Once again, we, as citizens in a democracy need to hear from the experts, especially if the experts are with our own community.

Oliver commented as follows:

Thank you to the Matrix guys for the reports.

- I think a key question I have for the Matrix consulting company, what is the urgency here?
- We have a really important thing on the table.
- Surely, we should slow this all down until we have a new City Manager which we will be hiring in June, hopefully, to replace Larry.
- This is a huge decision.
- We have got three new Councilmembers who are only one month into a lot of moving parts.
- We are in a recession.
- It is a very, very difficult time to be taking this on.
- My question to Matrix, is there any urgency for this?
- Then, my second point there was a comment by Matrix about educating the public about this if we go forward.
- What they think is the best way to educate the public?
- I put in my written public comment that we should have a working group of citizens as subject matter experts and local services when we reboot local community processes.

- Then, I think my third point for everybody on this call, this presentation is a small piece of a much bigger puzzle that we need to carefully explore this year.
- Don't do anything hasty.
- Finally, I know this is like a first attempt at this, but from the analysis I have done, the numbers don't add up.
- I am curious. You mentioned earlier you talked to local citizens.
- I would like to know who those people are and who recommended those to you.
- We are not hearing from the Fire Chief who is sitting there.
- I can see his face on the screen but we are not hearing from our local subject matter expert's.
- Why is that?
- We need to open this up and be a lot more democratic and community orientated.

Dennis commented as follows:

- I want to mention a few things in reference to what councilmember said.
- Really, the ambulance is not the first responder in our City.
- The first responder is the police department followed by the fire department, followed by the ambulance, generally.
- We have a very excellent record of emergency response and critical care.
- I just wanted to make sure she was aware of that fact.
- Secondly, I have been through 2 or 3 different consolidations.
- I will say I am not speaking against this, but I want people to be aware that the consolidation is rarely less expensive than the status quo.
- It comes with additional expenses.
- I love the Sonoma county sheriff's office, but you have to understand, there are serious expenses going on right now in Windsor as a result of consolidation with bills they may not be able to pay.
- I think that would demand some research.
- Surplus -- I sort of take challenge to that.
- I don't think it is very optimistic to think there will be a surplus and budgets should we consolidate.
- I am not speaking against it, but I think it takes very special research as we move forward.
- I do agree, we are at the very beginning.
- I think Oliver for his comments.
- We are at the very beginning of this. It is time to throttle back a bit and take it very slowly.
- This is a very serious commitment by the City. It is a very serious commitment to our citizens.
- The remodel of the station was mentioned. That has to be done, no matter what.
- This station was built in 1975. It has not been remodeled much since then.
- It is a responsibility of this community to take care of that.
- Of the last 34 years I served, the fire department has sort of been left behind.
- I think it is time to put the fire department ahead and give them the attention they need financially.
- We have been blessed with a volunteer fire department that has been extremely effective, extremely efficient.
- It is time to put the horse in front of the cart and look at resources and finances and take care of them.
- Daytime staffing, I agree with what was said.
- I agree with comments that were made.
- Daytime staffing is necessary.
- Typically, it is to full-time guys etc.
- I guess that is all I have to say right now.

- I think we are at the very beginning of this and at the end.

JP commented as follows:

- To follow up if I could follow up on what Dennis was saying, with the fire station I completely agree with what he had to say with the remodel.
- It is an old building.

Michael Carnacchi commented as follows:

- Discussed reasons to increase
- Provide citizens with local services
- That is the reason we incorporated it.
- This seems to be moving backwards toward un-incorporation.
- Then I have a couple of questions.
- What is the process for protesting LAFCO
- That is the first question.
- The second question, how many of our citizens living in Sebastopol have died because the fire department did not arrive on time.
- Not that we know revenue, let the fire department develop the plan to see what they can do with those monies and bring that back.
- If we put this to our citizens, we would much rather stay with having our own solely controlled fire department where we have five City Councilmembers overseeing the fire protection for our citizens rather than being a seat of one on a board of 7 or 8.
- Those are my comments. I hope my questions can be answered.
- Process for protest and how many citizens have died because the fire department did not arrive on time.

Lisa commented as follows:

- I have two questions.
- The first of which who is paying the contributions in the healthcare contributions and the workmen's comp contributions if we move through a consolidation?
- That with a clear to me in the report I read or in the presentation.
- I noted there was a contribution from the City and there was also a revenue from the taxes that we would be paying as well.
- First contributions and healthcare contributions and also workmen's comp.
- My question is who would be paying for that?
- The second comment I would like to make that is I actually worked for a City that went through to consolidations.
- Had a fire consolidation and as a City employee, we are suffered greatly because of the hidden costs much like Dennis mentioned.
- My fear is our essential services are not going to be funded.
- Our City employees will not be well compensated and we are going to fall behind paying our folks what they are deserving of.
- We are going to have positions unfilled.
- I lived with that for about 10 years before I retired from my City.
- My concerns are that our City will remain in tact and have those essential services and not be burdened and overburdened by these hidden costs that come up.

- Those are some things that come to mind for me and my concerns for all of the folks that work for our City.
- I am deeply grateful and I want them well paid for and compensated.
- The last thing I would like to say is I would really like to hear from our Fire Chief. He is our subject matter expert.
- I have great respect from him and I would love to hear from him and have a written statement that is made public or a report done by him so we can actually see his thoughts as far as alternatives and also his thoughts on the consolidation report put forth by the Matrix gentleman.

Kyle commented as follows:

- Discussed the turn out times. Report stated 5.47 for 90 percent of calls. That is not an accurate matrix
- Hearing this stated so incorrectly is concerning
- Are you stating that 90 percent of the calls are exactly 5.47 minutes. No it is likely 90th percentile
- That is getting down to average of what this means
- Without providing a graphical distribution of these turn out times you are not providing a proper statistic
- National average is 9 minutes and 27 seconds for a response time which we are not that far off
- Really the motivation behind this isn't quite there if we are talking about turnout times and overall response times within reason of the national standard.
- Suggesting the 2027 Sebastopol contribution will be the same is also misleading considering revenues grow over time.
- Fixing the City's contribution in dollars actually represents reduction in the City's contribution essentially offsetting.
- We are offsetting the funding of the fire department to the property owners through a parcel tax by suggesting the contribution will remain the same, but that is ignoring the fact the actual percentage will be reduced.
- 16 hours stipend saves even more money than consolidation.
- The difference between that and the status quo is less than what I see the police regularly slipped on consent calendar items throughout the year.
- Councilmember Rich asked an interesting question suggesting to the consultants other available options.
- The response was outside of the scope of work, which they also stated in the introduction that they were asked to only look at 2 options.
- Both are a rapid departure from the current staffing model. Mainly 24/7 stuff for consolidation.
- My question is to the Councilmember Rich or the consultants themselves to describe the specific dialogue regarding the scope of work and why at that time the restriction scope of work was so limited that it was quite clear from public comment back in May that all options were to be explored.
- In particular I provided reference to the East Bay grand jury reports suggesting options of Fee-for-Service or emergency services in such a number of calls.
- To answer the question about where the surplus will go. I would suggest my background indicates that half the surplus based on this will end up in the police budget and I am out of time.

Linda Berg commented as follows:

- I thought that was an interesting question that the fellow asked about.
- There is no problem. This is a wonderful town.
- We have a model police department and a wonderful fire department as far as I know that fits our needs and services but we can't give up local control.

- In my opinion this whole thing is brought about by the same misinformed Councilmembers that brought the audit to the model police department which should have been celebrated as the exemplary police department that they are instead of being audited and demonized
- It seems to me it is the same kind of a thing wasting time and money trying to fix a problem that does not exist.
- Would also like to know how many tens of thousands of dollars they acquired from the pancake sale when I am assuming every other resident of the town got a request for \$25 to be sent to them and an invitation to come to the pancake feed.
- The point of this is I know the people in the town are very generous
- My request is the Mayor and Vice Mayor stop doing these stupid things about trying to get rid of and demonizing our exemplary public services.

Shawn Paul commented as follows:

- I just want to say that looking at the report there is on the 2 option solutions we have talked about.
- There might be a solution other than what was proposed in the document of working a Monday, Wednesday, Friday, which could reduce it down from six people to even four people
- There are a lot of other options out there that haven't been explored.
- With that in mind I hope our City and community can slow down and take a moment to really deeply explore this issue before moving forward with potential solid nation or any other actions that would be hard to change when they have been made

Mary Cone commented as follows:

- I think we all need to hear more about the ISO they brought.
- I believe it may have something to do with our insurance that might go up if we consolidate, so I would like somebody to answer that.

Karen commented as follows:

- I have a question for Matrix, which is why I am wondering why the projections and monitor projections only went out to 2027 and why there was not projections looking at something more long-term like 10 or 20 years out.
- Why was this so limited?

Dorothy commented as follows:

- My public comment is that we have had a close relationship with all of these services.
- Provided to us by our fire department and I am one of them in an emergency medical situation.
- It has been quick and very personal.
- It has been helpful in many circumstances and a lot of people I know say that.
- This is an invaluable relationship that we must consider in our decision about consolidating.
- I think we would lose it if we consolidated and there are other ways to provide services and continue this close relationship with our fire department.

BKL commented as follows;

- My concern was the fact that our consultant mentioned there could be in addition to the parcel tax that would be transferred without any citizen vote of control just to inherit a tax
- Discussed bonds and my experience living being a property owner is the bonds usually get transferred as an additional property parcel tax and we already have three parcel tax for the healthcare hospital that has since dissolved of over \$300 that does not even exist anymore.

- With that history and every time we get our property tax bill and see something that is how that was handled at that time that we are still paying that doesn't exist.
- I am hesitant to think that would be a viable option to then load the citizens with more parcel taxes with the option of I have already seen them dissolved.
- I am already paying another property tax for a school that has since closed.
- It just seems kind of terrifying, and I suggested that would probably happen because the City obviously doesn't have the money for that is what it will be doing.
- Any type of generating income that would be thrown on the citizens that is about another \$250 or whatever a bond would be.
- That would be like another \$600 that you are kind of theoretically proposing.
- The citizens should have a voice and I feel they should be having a committee to be a part of that.

Angela Ford commented as follows:

- I just want to support all of the previous speakers who have asked that we hear from the current Fire Chief.
- I think it is a shame to have a special event such as tonight and not to be joined on his experience and information from the ground.
- I think that is primarily it.
- I think slow and steady.
- I think it is time to support our fire department and start curbing back on our expenditures and additions to the budget of the police and start putting some of that into our own fire department.

Gayle Bergmann commented as follows:

- When I found out about this proposal or this idea to perhaps join the Gold Ridge fire protection district Matrix was hired to do this study, I looked into some of the other studies that they did, and I saw that Santa Clara county fire service is engaged Matrix as well, and they had a survey monkey that they put out to the public who could sort of weigh in on it and I would like to know if that was a recommendation of Matrix or a recommendation of the people who hired Matrix, and I would suggest that maybe they would want to do something like that so the people here could weigh in on this very important decision.
- I want to point out that they do not really have an oversight function.
- They are pretty much administrative, so we really can't depend on them to sort of oversee the use of funds, and I did just get from the county people how much we still owe, and we will be paying for that until 2033.
- I believe it is about \$20 million. Of course, that district is off two years ago.
- It is a big decision to turn all of this responsibility over to what pretty much will become an anonymous board.
- I do not think that guarantees that the needs will be met.

Dana commented as follows:

- My first question for the very first caller asked if we would restate what the problem is that we are trying to solve for those of us who came late to the party.
- I would appreciate hearing that.
- Secondly, I would like to know why we only looked at 4 options when the gentleman who was speaking said there were others.
- I know the other counties have contracted out additional overflow services when there has been a need for it.
- Third, I really want to support hearing from the current Fire Chief.

- I have been impressed with the City's services and fire department for many years and would like to hear his input and recommendations for that.
- I would like to clarify why we would consider giving up control to another district when if my understanding of whatever it is correct and a parcel tax may need to be adopted the voters and citizens would lose the ability to vote on that and it would be inherited.
- I agree with the other speakers on that.
- The comment from another person who said that the process has been very quick with the changes in recent Council.
- What I believe they said when we do consolidate on doing it is very difficult.
- If there is a process for slowing it down it would be appreciated.

Mayor Hinton responded to public comment.

- I am going to try to go through all of these and do my best to answer what I can.
- The first question out of the gate was what problem are we trying to solve?
- Why are we even hear?
- I can speak for myself.
- I have been on the council six years.
- Response time has been increasing in our fire department.
- It has been a topic that has been discussed.
- I started serving three years ago on a long-term fire staffing subcommittee to look at long-range goals for our local department.
- This is not a new situation.
- This has been discussed for the years that I'm aware of and three years ago we created a subcommittee with Council to discuss and look at the situation closer.
- That is the answer I think too that appeared a part of the challenge has been both response times and retaining new volunteers that can respond to fire calls Monday through Friday as the report shows when the call volume is up between 9 am and 3 PM.
- The protest period. I do know the answer to that although I know people that would not because I am very familiar with the home drive parcel tax and that we are still paying that bill that was brought up by another caller.
- I do not have the answer tonight. I can call on the City manager.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows:

- I am actually not sure what the question was referring to because it was specific.
- Normally we use the term protest period to refer to the benefit assessment or a parcel tax to be assessed in the protest period that is inherent in that.
- Perhaps the consultants know what the question is referring to and potentially how to answer.

Chief Piccinini commented as follows:

- It may have been are they allowed to protest the decision.
- I believe there is a period, but I am not familiar.
- We start the process in one phase is that they will send out informational cards giving the opportunity for people to protest.
- They can do it in person or by way of a mail back card.
- If they receive 25% protest it forces the issue to a vote.
- If they receive 50% it kills any further efforts towards the annexation.

- That is kind of in a nutshell the answer to that question.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- Did anyone die because our fire department did not arrive on time?
- Again, I will go to the chief, but I think the response rates are still in our window, and I do not know anything about that.

Chief Piccinini commented as follows:

- The short answer is no we cannot point to an incident where there was a fatality of a result of our response times.
- To that, I would just remind and will take the opportunity to say you have a strong fire department that is predominantly volunteer staff.
- It provides a great economy of scale, as one speaker mentioned.
- The volunteers are extremely well trained and well equipped.
- The response time has actually gone down the past year, so that is one of the core issues that we need to deal with.
- There was a dispute about that, so I think the measurement to all of this is we do not have the community complaining about your fire department and quite the contrary.
- They have greater levels of admiration and respect for the fire department but we are getting the job done, but it is getting challenging.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- Who is paying?
- Are there hidden costs?
- I have to assume if we were to hire full-time employees there would of course be retirement costs, but City manager can you address that?

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows:

- Enhancing our own fire department would result in further cost, as he referenced.
- Salaries, benefits and PERS contributions, etc.
- If it was a consolidation any responsibilities for whatever benefits the firefighters received would be that of the fire district.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- I think I have covered most things, but we had a number of speakers that ask why we were not hearing from the interim chief tonight.
- The interim chief was not on the agenda.
- This is a Matrix report.
- However, now that we are going back to Council I would assume we would hear from Council.
- We can ask for staff to come back with any questions that we might want be I could be a report from the chief.
- Again, we are not making decisions tonight.
- We are learning about the Matrix report and asking questions. Learning together in the process.
- I am going to take this back to Council, and if Council has additional questions especially directed for staff on a follow-up we may want them to research further.

Council Discussion:

Councilmember Maurer commented how many new recruits are there for the fire department.

Chief Piccinini commented as follows:

- The organization started a pretty aggressive recruitment program driven by one of our volunteers that kicked off in November.
- Since November we have been able to recruit seven volunteers that are just finishing the process.
- We will schedule an intensive double weakened academy to bring them up to speed in terms of firefighter training.
- We will continue to advance the initiative of volunteer recruitment and our goal is to secure between 35 and 40 volunteers by the end.

Councilmember Maurer commented can stipend problem be fixed

Chief Piccinini commented as follows:

- It can certainly be managed.
- I concur with the report this is something we need to look closely at the we need to address the issue of the stipend compressing against the rules.
- That being said, I would like to avoid going to go down that rabbit hole tonight.
- I have worked with the City Manager and Assistant City Manager, and we tend to treat this as a standalone issue outside of this topic and bring in a report and potential action item to a meeting in the very near future to cover that.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows:

- A part of my initial question was some of the feet back that I have heard and received from the public along with at least two members of the volunteer fire department is referencing about needing to have more discussion about different ways to raise the revenue no matter how this all turns out the weather we end up staying separate as a department or consolidation people still need to raise a lot of revenue for the equipment and potentially the building, as we heard if we do 24 hours.
- What I would like to have the staff address between now and the next meeting is about the parcel tax.
- I am really not interested about the bond because similar to what the community expressed I think they are risky and we have experienced that locally having to pay that, but I am interested about what it would take and how fast we could come up with information on a potential parcel tax.
- I have seen that it is \$30,000. I do not know whether that is true or not.
- I would like somebody to research it so we can let our citizens know if we want to remain so low it would require all of us to step up and potentially pay \$263, which is a big thing considering we have not had to pay anything up until now.
- I would like them to work on that between now and the next time.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- In terms of process might I ask from my perspective there are some next steps that need to be taken.
- Is that something we will be discussing at a future City Council meeting?
- For instance the possibility of an ad hoc committee
- I wanted to supplement and just make sure I understand this.
- You answered in terms of the urgency and problem we are addressing.

- I think also the problem in addition to what you mentioned and I would like confirmation from our consultants about this is that we are now aware of this question and so that now requires that we address it and hear that from the chief too.
- That would be the additional answer.
- Is that consistent with your understanding?

Matrix commented that is consistent.

City Manager McLaughlin commented as follows:

- I do not know if now is the time to add, but the other thing that has changed is we have a current interim Fire Chief.
- I think that is a part of why the discussion is happening at this time.
- Those are the issues that we have in addition to things we have stated.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- My next question is there was your interviews.
- Can you give us a sense of the depth of the interviews that you engaged in?
- I know there were many in your presentation and the report and the slides.
- What aspects of the community did you speak with?
- How many interviews did you have?
- We would like to get a sense of that.

Matrix commented as follows:

- I would have to look back at my notes, but a lot, so we were on site for four days.
- We did 15 minute interviews eight hours a day for each one of those days, so stick the staff and then members of the community that were identified as well as reaching out to people who weren't available for refused to do virtual interviews after we returned back, so the City provided us the list of stakeholders from the downtown association president to senior group said the different institutes.
- Service clubs in the community.
- We were provided contact information for them and reached out.
- We met with everyone that asked to be interviewed.

Vice Mayor Rich commented I will guess to say it will be fair to conclude that you spoke to 40-50 people? Are we in the ballpark?

Matrix commented yes, easily 40-50 people.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- My next question is there was a question about the five-year plan.
- I think you did a five-year plan because that is what you were requested to do.
- Is that the answer to that?

Matrix commented that is what we did in our proposal was to develop a five-year budget.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- My final question is as we look at next steps what would you recommend?
- I am concluding that asking the question is within the scope of the agenda.

- Asking them direction about next steps.
- You have dealt with these situations.
- What would you recommend we do as next steps?

Matrix commented I would recommend you give the ad hoc committee consistent with the chief leadership within the volunteer fire department and councilmembers and then the Assistant City Manager or City Manager to start looking into it and developing a plan for how the City chooses to move forward.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- Thank you for that.
- Clearly it is a matter of with the council wants to do, but it is good to know you have that input related to the question.
- As a ready report and listened to your answers here and heard from the public I would like you to help us understand in a general sense what you would see as the remaining questions highlighted that we need to have answered in the next step, and I hear what is the funding?
- What is needed to improve our facilities?
- How much will it cost?
- What is the timeframe?
- Secondly, I hear what do we need in terms of apparatus?
- Again, how much money?
- What is the plan?
- Is it a lease option?
- Those are elephants in the room.
- The second one is I believe what is ultimately the cost for the options that we drill down to?
- Because we have heard some suggestions that the cost we are currently aware of needs to be inquired into more deeply.
- What staffing is involved?
- Whether the stipends were what does the City want in terms of the structure?
- The actual costs.
- Then there is some peripheral questions we have heard mentioned like how much the tax would cost to pursue in the insurance question.
- It seems to me it is funding the facility.
- How do we do that issue and address the apparatus issue?
- What are the true costs of our options?
- Do you see that and engaging as we have heard for many the current Fire Chiefs input and active engagement.
- Do you think those are the key issues that we need to pursue in next steps?

Matrix commented yes.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- It is not just when we get down to the options how they compare, but what are the options?
- There is a need to inquire into the other structural options.
- It seems like an item that is on the best.
- Is that on the list of future issues that need to be resolved?

Matrix commented as follows:

- Gold Ridge Fire district is already a legal entity.
- The way you would consolidate with them would be through the joint powers.
- Unless the City decides to contract for a certain service from them.
- You can get into a contractual relationship with them, but it would not be for that.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows

- Discussed backing off and looking at the bigger picture.
- Finding out from our citizens and community do we want Cadillac services?
- Can we afford them?
- Or do we want and need and are able to afford some sort of a lesser option?
- That seems to be the primary question that seems to be floating around?
- There are these other things like the 16 hour and 24 hours that it hasn't been resolved and that is key to driving the other decisions like the facility improvements and the cost

Matrix stated that is correct.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows:

- I wanted to ask first and foremost in a future meeting can Fire Chief to do a presentation with different options with pros and cons for each option
- Also including and that if we increase the percentage that we give to the fire department how would that look?
- I know we are going into budgeting for next year.
- I also think we need to look at the community to understand in the reserves for equipment replacement currently and then I also hope that we might be able to hear from the chief as far as what he thinks the process should be.
- I know we have received a lot of public comment and obviously this is really very important to the community.
- I want to see what is the best and the easiest way for us to include the community in these discussions whether it is a town hall or community meeting.
- What is the best way to have a conversation?
- Like we are doing now, but even at the community center we have done this in the past because I think it is not just about the fire department.
- It is about our community.
- I think clearly the number of people we have had in the call today reflects how involved everyone is and how they feel about that.
- I guess that is first and foremost.
- We had a number of people send us emails regarding there were errors in the report.
- I do not know if that is something that is significant or not.
- Maybe it can be answered in the future.
- There have been a lot of different things going back and forth to address those errors.
- I guess the final thing I would like to know is the whole renovation.
- That is a huge issue with the cost associated with it those are the things I would like to see.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- Discussed the errors in the report.

- I heard from a member or volunteer member of the fire department there was an error in the pay that was reported.

Matrix commented the table that was sent to us when they filtered it.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- You only had what you were given to work with, so I am not blaming that at all.
- I just want to make that clear.
- That led me to ask the question about paid volunteers, which we can look up.
- What I would like to know is more about paid volunteers and when they volunteer for Cal fire and get compensation how are we putting that through our City budgets?
- Is the way we are doing that appropriate in following all accounting rules?
- I would like to hear more about that.
- I also heard that we have seven new volunteers.
- I run a company in which different people have different roles and different jobs.
- I would like to see a volunteer scorecard.
- I would like to see volunteers and learn more about if they work in town and if they can respond to these emergencies that we have from 9 am until 3 PM as the Matrix report points out is our high point.
- I would also like to learn more about our current volunteers that we have because I did hear on the report we have a lot of them that are active and they respond and more frequently than others that don't.
- I do think we are considering going with a paid model versus a volunteer model that we need to learn more about our volunteer scorecards.
- I am interested in that.
- I am interested in hearing from a lot of people have talked about the chief tonight. I respect our chief.
- I know him, but I would really like to hear from a report to that shows our pros and cons because they are on both sides.
- I am not a veteran fire person. That is not my background. I want to help make the best decisions.
- I really would like to hear a neutral situation because I feel like this is a big decision.
- A lot of our public does not even know, as they tend to in my years do not know about times the big issues we are talking about.
- We need to get that out to the public, so I do want to have a community meeting upcoming, and I would like to have more information that shows the pros and cons from people that know more than I do.
- Those are kind of the note that I made tonight that I wanted to ask the staff for in the future agenda item.
- I do believe this is going to come back and not just once but more than once, so anyway.
- That is my comment tonight.

Matrix commented the updated table was sent to us but we could update that in the report and in the executive summary and summarize the pros and cons, and I can get the City a clean PDF version of the updated report.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- I would like to see the Fire Chief working with the consultant to correct any errors that happened in the report.
- I think for the public and to have some corrections come back I understand why they happen, but I would like to see the City staff working with the consultants so we can bring it back to the public.
- Any errors to have them corrected for the public.
- That would be a positive.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- Can you help me understand what is going to happen next?
- I know you explained it once but I am still confused.
- We have the study session and we are closing the report from Matrix.
- Will the next step be for the full City Council to consider next steps?
- For instance, at a later meeting could we at that point form a new ad hoc world working room and define the tasks and talk about the timeframe and expectations?
- Is that something that would be a next step for us?

Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- My understanding is there was a report out to the community.
- City manager I'm going to ask you to step in here because it the end of the it day ultimately you are the head of the City and department has referred to you.
- If the council desires to form an ad hoc committee it would not take long before this could return to the council solely for the purpose of appointing an ad hoc committee.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows:

- Staff reviewed agendas this afternoon and there is room on the February 7 agenda for a Council item that would the appointment of ad hoc committee.
- Nothing else and just that appointment of the ad hoc.
- Otherwise that is a full agenda.
- If there is an interest in the council that is not on the agenda for the evening you could see if there is interest by at least a majority of the council and you could decide to come back the next meeting if the idea is to form an ad hoc.
- If you want the City staff to develop an agenda item we have noted all of the questions including that you want a report from the chief.
- We could generate the and ignored the agenda studying committee to decide how long that would take.
- About when that would return to City Council as a staff driven item.
- I can see the pathways here.
- One is the formation of an ad hoc.
- The other is leaving it to staff if you form that we can still do what I referenced.
- That can certainly be a part of either of those pathways, but if you want to get going on the formation of an ad hoc committee that could return as soon as the next period.

Councilmember Rich commented as follows:

- I am very much in favor of moving forward the ad hoc committee idea that you are proposing could be placed on the February 7 agenda.
- Would there be time on that agenda to define the tasks of the ad hoc committee and identify the timeframe?
- Would that be workable?

Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- That would be workable.
- I do not have the February 7 agenda in front of me.
- Staff can advise us how much time is available that meeting.
- I did here today we could bring back the ad hoc issue for the next meeting.

Staff commented as follows:

- We can add it as the last agenda item for that meeting.
- To define specific tasks at that meeting.
- Staff could create that.
- I can work with the City manager and chief to see if they have a task proposed for that, and the council can add on to that if that is the direction from the City Council tonight.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows:

- I am wondering if instead of jumping into another ad hoc committee could we have an agenda item just to discuss the next steps?
- Ad hoc being one possibility.
- Another possibility could be to send the issue back to our interim Fire Chief to have him work on the issue and report back to us.
- There could be other possibilities, but those are my thoughts.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows:

- I'm going to echo that.
- It was what I thought with that and also the question I had is what would be the pros and cons of having an ad hoc versus the report and discussing the steps
- I appreciate what she had to say.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- I already have indicated in a previous committee meeting I am in favor of an ad hoc committee.
- I will move that item and propose that we create an agenda item on the next agenda to discuss an ad hoc committee.
- I believe they are useful because you can have two councilmembers to focus on an issue.
- They are not always the same.
- I have indicated that I have worked on the fire ad hoc committee and that I didn't work on the committee.
- I think that it allows us to move in a way that is more pointed at the issue, and can get the information to the council on a quicker basis so we can get to the public quicker.
- I will move this issue and I am looking for a second.
- On the creation of an agenda item to discuss the possibility of an ad hoc committee on the February 7 agenda.

Councilmember Zollman stated the second.

Mayor Hinton moved and Councilmember Zollman seconded the motion to direct staff to return to the February 7th 2023 Council meeting, an agenda item regarding creation of Ad Hoc Committee.

Discussion:

Councilmember Maurer commented I would like to see in inclusion of not just the ad hoc committee, but including other possible steps.

Mayor Hinton commented the motion it so just move with the ad hoc committee on the agenda. At that point we could give direction or we could not create an ad hoc committee, but that is it.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows:

- Just to clarify my understanding for the councilmembers benefit.
- My understanding is there is room on the February 7 agenda for creating the ad hoc end of finding its tasks and no more discussion other than that.
- I am in favor of doing that and moving forward.

Mayor Hinton commented that is my understanding as well or to not create it if that is the will of the council.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows:

- I have mentioned the ad hoc committee and long-term view.
- I am in support of that, but I do not want to feel we are rushed in any of this.
- This is a huge decision for us.
- I just do not feel that we have to rush it.
- Just putting that out there.
- I like the idea of the multiple options.

Mayor Hinton re-opened for public comment on this item.

Kate commented as follows:

- I do not agree with supporting an ad hoc committee until we heard from the subject expert.
- I do not see how Council could define any tasks for research unless the hear from the Fire Chief first, and I also strongly believe that any discussion of finances must include the cost of the fire station remodel in a financial pathway to pay for the fire station remodel.
- As a citizen wants more participation from the community I would like to say that everyone including Council should hear from the sub check matter expert and after hearing from the Fire Chief the ad hoc committee or working group, which was the recommendation by our consultants was actually working group and not an ad hoc committee be formed.
- Once again, if Council wants to respect the constituents and the people who voted for them I would recommend not going for the ad hoc committee because it is moving too quickly and not giving people necessary information.

Oliver commented as follows:

- I agree with the last five or six speakers.
- I think they are rushing too fast.
- There are a lot of questions.
- I heard somebody asked could Chief work with Matrix to correct the errors.
- I think that is number one.
- We need to know that and I think what everybody has said from the community.
- We want to hear from the chief.
- That is the next step.
- He has to make a presentation at the next board meeting or a special board meeting to give his views.
- He is the expert. We pay him to do that and he has done it his whole life.
- He has consolidated other districts. He is the one you need to listen to.
- I would strongly suggest that be the next step.
- I think an ad hoc committee is just rushing things.
- City Council has had a track record of rushing things too fast.

- That is all I have to say.
- Listen to the chief.

Michael Carnacchi Dennis commented as follows:

- I just want to reiterate what I said earlier.
- Now that we know the revenue let's let Jack come up with a plan with the fire department and put that before the people to see what they can do with the money.
- They have always supported fire measures.
- The last one passed while it failed on a county level.
- They were largely in favor of it.
- With regard to forming an ad hoc committee I am a little against that because the last ad hoc committee showed up at the fire station four days before the council meeting that would have started the consolidation process.
- The people that are here to save our lives and a dedicated their lives that are related to this had felt like they have been silenced all along and again tonight everybody is saying let's let him talk and he has been silenced.
- I think the first step is left look at me revenue that we are going to have and then decide if we want a committee to look at the proposals.
- It is just a waste of City staff time and City revenue.
- When what we should be focusing on is generating revenue for our City by focusing on the business community, which has been left behind.
- That is getting a little off subject.
- Money can be spent in a better way.
- It certainly would have been wiser.
- We would not be in the position we are and where we do not have any money to pay for a fire department.

Kyle commented as follows:

- The funny thing is that all it takes is a City Councilmember to put a motion forward and another to second.
- Suddenly in the other option is off the table until it gets voted on.
- That is what we are seeing here tonight.
- A movement in the direction of an ad hoc committee.
- I would like the public to take a look back at the May 17, 2022 meeting minutes where there is a great discussion coming out of previous ad hoc committee that was very clear in its intent in moving us in the direction of consolidation, which is why it is not surprising that direction the ad hoc committee gave to these consultants were to look at only 2 options.
- 24/7 staffing model or consolidation.
- What is interesting is one of the members of that committee tonight tried to question those consultants as to what other options weren't explored when it was clearly stated by those consultants their scope of work was limited to those options.
- Has given direction by the ad hoc committee that was so clear in its push in the direction of consolidation at that time.
- Here we are again looking at the direction of an ad hoc committee, which has not given a scope.
- I assure you the scope of that will be managing the direction at the next City Council meeting.
- Here is what I am asking. Go back and look at the City Council meeting minutes.
- There is a livestream of that conversation that is happening.

- Take a look at comments by Sarah where she says this is the third time in a row she felt, as well as recently we have filled our public comment in terms of transparency and listening to members of our community.
- She referenced how we had massive uproar and we continue to ignore and silence those individuals when they continue to make public comment.
- Then the RV lot in which we rushed through funding because the money is there but it is going away, so you better act on this outside of the scope of engaging with our public in a transparent way that has them heard.
- She referenced this as being the third kind in which we are rushing to a decision without hearing from our public
- Rather than hear from key stakeholders like the current chief we are instead silencing our chief hearing only about the ideas of 24/7 staffing model and consolidation because that is what the report is guided towards.
- Nothing else is on the table for discussion tonight.

Linda commented as follows:

- This removes the issue from public view and removes the issue from a public comment and public access and public influence.
- This is what we need.
- We also need to use our intelligence and not just appear to be taking steps to progress without using getting the information that will make the progress complete.
- They may support the idea of progress going forward and taking care of things and getting things done, but this is not the way to really get them done using all of our resources, and that is my comment.

Dorothy commented as follows:

- I would like to echo that I agree with the previous speakers in that the committee is premature.
- We have a huge decision that needs to be made in more information needs to be gathered and input from the Fire Chief is imperative.
- We have to have input from our Fire Chief.
- This is a big decision and a long-term decision.
- An ad hoc committee at this point I think is too premature.
- Let's slow everything down. Gather the information.
- Then we can make the best determination when all of that is presented to everyone transparently so we can all see what is going on but we do not have to have committees providing information in determining who will hear what like last time.
- Let's have a transparent and slow it down and gather information and move forward transparently.
- That is something I agree with everyone tonight.
- I appreciate the meeting. Thank you very much. I look forward to hearing from you.

Lisa commented as follows:

- I think it is a shame we had the meeting this evening and did not have the opportunity to hear from the chief.
- I do not know why the agenda item didn't include a presentation on his behalf on behalf of the fire department.
- I think you have heard loud and clear from your community members that at this time you are rushing this and we need to have more information.

- We need to hear from the chief and find out what errors were in the report and have those fixed and bring that back to the community so those errors are fixed and it is reported out to us.
- I think it is very important we get to hear from the chief.

Mia commented as follows:

- I am highly disappointed in this meeting.
- The fact that we have the Fire Chief who has been sitting here this entire time.
- He offered at the beginning to share his thoughts and was asked or informed that was not the format.
- I know there is official formats for public meetings, but because you have the Matrix consultant regarding this specific topic with this expert present I feel like it is just insulting to his time and to everyone's intelligence.
- I am a high school teacher. I am staying up late to join this conversation and be a part of this because I have been wanting to hear from the fire department since I have been reading about this.
- They went door to door and left notes this past summer. Flyers in the community. Trying to get the public engaged, then we do that the Fire Chief isn't permitted to even speak.
- Even though the format of your agenda wasn't specific because you had 100 people on this meeting and he was present and it was specifically about the department that he runs it just seems very bizarre that he is not permitted to speak.
- Maybe you could have changed that a little bit.
- I agree with everybody else that an ad hoc committee is how the City Council utilizes it to put things in a very private off the public purview.
- If that is how it is used that is so disrespectful to your constituencies.
- The fire department is not only about the citizens that live and own property in this town, but all those tourists that come through here, which is a lot of people from around the globe.
- This should not be a private discussion. This should be more open.
- I hope there is a reporter that has been participating or listening to this meeting.

Debbie commented as follows:

- I am concerned if you go forward with the ad hoc committee picking maybe mention the next meeting would until the entire Council coming up with questions for them to focus on.
- It seems to me there are a number of questions that are outstanding.
- All of which have been brought up in different ways tonight.
- It seems to me it would be premature to go forward with that next meeting before the council as well as them have full privy to the conversation.

Angela commented as follows:

- I am absolutely stunned by this unfolding before our very eyes over 100 people have been witness to and supportive of hearing the Fire Chief for this evening.
- He has been shunned and set aside.
- The people have not been listened to.
- This feels to me like an example of the kind of closing down of democratic processes that has been happening in our town since I have become involved a year ago when the water meters were slammed through in one night vote.
- Everybody that has been here gets to see the process that has been going on for quite a wild.
- I say to listen to the chief.
- I like the idea of working group and not ad hoc committee because it takes us away from the transparent process.

- We have no rush on this
- I want to also alert people as a part of this to the fact that the current Mayor has moved the public comment period from the historic traditional beginning of every council meeting to the very end.
- Meetings that often go on until 10 or 10:30. This will be an item for discussion next week as well.
- I urge everybody to come in please port the restoration of public comment in the beginning of our council meetings when people are still able to engage.

Jim commented as follows:

- It looks like it was slapped together for \$40,000 to me, but that aside trying to find the dust of the occasion for the recommendation to consolidate was incredibly weak and left out huge questions about financing that would still be left to be negotiated when we started the consolidation process.
- I really feel if there are people on the council but are convinced that consolidation is the right way to go you have to figure out how to convince me and a lot of people because you are not doing it.
- Having an ad hoc committee seems like another way to suddenly have a committee report that may reckon and, but you are not going to get the public behind you until you can really convince us it is the right way to go.
- I could be convinced if that is true for a financial thing and performance of service.
- Show me the numbers and how it is ongoing work.
- The whole picture. How we do the 24/7 and renovate the fire station.
- If you are not going to bring everybody along with the picture you will have resistance for a long time.
- I worry about pulling the trigger before we have those things in place and then we are going to be negotiating about whether it is 11% or 12% or 13% of our budget but we will be stuck with it.
- I think the pro-consolidation people need to do a much better job.
- I'm going to go along with it if you can convince me. It seems there are other options.
- If we are going to be taxing them let's tax ourselves to solve the complete problem.
- I just do not see that in the report.
- I am obviously in favor of what the chief has to say and in favor of people that are pro-consolidation.
- Laying it out so the average person can say this makes a lot of sense.
- It will solve our problems in the future.
- We have a lot of problems that need more money.
- That is what we should focus on.
- I am willing to go for taxation to get what we want, but we have to open up the discussion too.

Mayor Hinton closed the additional public comment for this item.

Returned to Discussion (with motion on the floor):

Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- We have to follow protocol and the agenda item tonight was fire department feasibility study Matrix City consultant provide a presentation and result of the fire department feasibility study.
- That is our agenda item. That is where we need to stay the course.
- I just heard from a number of people in the public, but we do have protocols in government.
- I appreciate and recognize our interim Fire Chief and his ability to be on this call.
- He also is a paid member of our staff currently.
- So I am sure we would love to hear from him in the future, but it will not be tonight.
- I have a motion to present an ad hoc committee.

- That gives us an ability to have 2 councilmembers ask some of these questions that had been brought up by the public and reserves the discussion further so we can actually get the pros and cons on the issue so we can make a decision.
- We are stipend volunteers on City Council.
- We generally work with the ad hoc committee.
- We generally select people that have different views on that subject.
- I have a motion on the floor.
- I can see a Councilmember with a hand raised.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows:

- I think the reason it moves so quickly into a vote for a possible ad hoc committee was because it was mentioned that there was space on the February 7 agenda.
- I do not see that this is that urgent.
- I am not generally opposed to ad hoc committees, but I do not see that this is the right time for that.
- I think the best thing to do is to have an agenda item to discuss the next steps.
- That would include a report or presentation from the Fire Chief and include possibly the next steps as an ad hoc.
- I do not support this motion.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows:

- I want to make sure everyone understands the point is to look into all the issues that may be remaining.
- Whenever this could come to a staff report that is one everyone on the City Council and with a push from the public as to define what that is doing and also I may point out the composition of the ad hoc.
- Every City Councilmember will have input on what parties will be participating in the ad hoc, and that potentially could include a broad group, so just understand it is defined in terms of its task and everyone on this council and anyone in the public will contribute to what that ad hoc is doing whether it will do community meetings or surveys or all of those pieces.
- I am open to all possibilities. I continue to be in favor of the side of being on the agenda on February 7th.
- Every City Councilmember will have an opportunity at that point.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows:

- I just wanted to reiterate, I am never opposed to ad hoc.
- I'm just more in favor of listening to the public.
- We haven't heard anyone that is in favor at that, and we really need to listen to the comments.
- I also think it would be good for us to actually hear a report from the chief before we actually moved to that next step if that is the next step.
- I just think that hearing the public say that they feel like they haven't been heard, things have been rushed in the past, and maybe with this new Council, we need to turn over a new leaf and on about they are saying and hear them.
- That's where I am at with this.

MOTION:

Mayor Hinton moved and Councilmember Zollman seconded the motion to direct staff to return to the February 7th 2023 Council meeting, an agenda item regarding creation of Ad Hoc Committee. Staff conducted a roll call vote.

VOTE:

Ayes Councilmember Zollman, Vice Mayor Rich and Mayor Hinton

Noes Councilmembers Maurer and McLewis
Absent: None
Abstain: None

City Council Action: Approved to direct staff to return to the February 7th 2023 Council meeting, an agenda item regarding creation of Ad Hoc Committee.

Minute Order Number: 2023-024

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:

Speakers are allowed to speak for a maximum of three minutes so that all speakers have an opportunity to address the City Council.

Power point or visual presentations for public comment shall not be permitted unless approved by the Agenda Review Committee two weeks prior to the requested meeting date.

Speakers may not "yield" a portion of their allotted time to others.

The Mayor has the authority to limit or extend the time allowed for speakers dependent on the number of speakers in attendance.

The Mayor can poll the members of the public for an indication of the number of people wishing to speak, then call on individuals to speak.

It is the goal of the Council to conclude the public comments portion of the agenda within 20 minutes. If the public comment period exceeds twenty minutes, the presiding officer, typically the Mayor, reserves the right to reduce the time per speaker or carry over public comments to after all business items are completed.

The City Clerk will monitor the time for public comments and inform the speakers when the time limitation has been reached.

The Mayor could survey the members of the public, as appropriate, to move agenda items up or back to address the members of the public items of concern.

Public participation is encouraged on all public agenda items.

Council and staff will treat participants and each other with courtesy. Derogatory or sarcastic comments are inappropriate.

The public will likewise be encouraged by the Mayor to maintain meeting decorum.

In Council meetings when citizens are agitated, the Mayor may call a short recess to calm the situation.

If a member of the public is unable to attend the Council meeting, written communications may be sent to the City Clerk by e-mail or by regular mail. Communications received after distribution of the agenda packet will be made available to the Council at/or as soon after the meeting.

Kyle Falbo commented as follows:

- Earlier this evening, the Mayor stated that the reason why we didn't hear from our Fire Chief was due to protocols that we have.
- Stating that the protocol was that we have a specific agenda item in the featured item did not include the ability for the chief to speak on this item.
- Let's think a little bit about the process. The agenda item is defined by an agenda second committee.
- The actual scope of the agenda item was defined by a standing committee.
- That agenda setting committee consists of the Mayor and the Vice Mayor.
- So, in terms of protocol, the development of an agenda item would have allowed for an opportunity.
- Now, the reason I bring this up is because we also have protocols regarding public comment.
- Discussed protocols for public comment
- To state that we have protocol for our meeting and to make a decision to experiment with that protocol for the last few meetings this year, to actually pay into the protocol that was taken by the council, namely the public comment begins at the beginning of the meeting, that the public comment consists of three-minute intervals, and can go for any amount of time.
- That is the protocol.

- Then at that point, there is an allowance for the Mayor to make changes once it reaches a particular time interval to very particular time interval, which is not being proposed in the future.
- We have abandoned that protocol.
- So, we can state that we are not going to let our chief talk makes the protocol, but then we can also just abandon protocol and decide the public comment is going to be at 10:00, 11:00 at night.
- Maybe we really need to be thinking about what her protocols are and maybe spend some time as a council to finding protocols as we move forward.
- And I'm hoping that maybe in our next agenda, next meeting will be an opportunity for us to really look at protocols of public comment, how they are established and how exactly we are able to abandon the protocols that were set placed by this council in the past to experiment with public comment late in the night when there's not going to be as much public input.

Angela commented as follows:

- At this moment, it's 9:00, a little bit after. A hearty 68 of us have managed to stay awake and cogent.
- Just imagine adding another hour to an hour and a half, and you may have a comment you want to make related to something totally unrelated.
- You have to wait for the entire meeting and come on at 10:00 or 10:30 or the council decides to extend the meeting, it could be as late as 11:00.
- So guess who shows up?
- People maybe like me once in a while, but most people are getting ready for the next day and are long in bed.
- I consider this a highly undemocratic decision by our current Mayor to suggest that we experience and move our public comment period from where it has historically been for decades at the beginning of every meeting to the end.
- This is just one more way of shutting down public involvement and citizen dialogue and opportunity to exchange and listen to new ideas for things that haven't been considered.
- So, I urge everybody that's here to show up for sure next Tuesday.
- It's going to be on the agenda, and it's at risk of becoming a permanent feature on our agendas if we don't stop it.

Loretta commented as follows:

- I want to in the meeting on a positive note, that the last minute, I was one of the people who did stay on for almost 5 hours to get my comment in.
- It was about the homeless encampment that was starting to build on community center parking lot.
- I want to thank Diana Rich and Larry McLaughlin that the next morning they sent me an email that that was the first they had heard about it, and in less than 24 hours, that was cleaned up be removed.
- We really appreciate that. So, thank you both very much.

Michael Carnacchi commented as follows:

- I echo what has been said about having the public comment at the end.
- In fact, this is the first meeting I have attended where that has happened.
- It really is the wrong move.
- It doesn't seem like it has much common sense.
- At this public comment, it is directed for the City Council liaison to the chamber of commerce into the Sebastopol downtown association.
- That would be Mayor Hinton for the chamber with the alternate Jill McLewis
- With the downtown association, it is Jill McLewis and Sandra Maurer

- This is a personal invite you. We have been working hard to get our business community united.
- On Thursday, next Thursday, February 9th, at 1:00 P.M., at the chamber of commerce, incidentally, Larry McLaughlin, you are also invited to this.
- The principles from the downtown association, the Sebastopol chamber of commerce, peace town meeting at the chamber to discuss methods by which we can operate in unity to benefit every business in Sebastopol and the greater 95472 zip code.
- I am personally taking this moment to personally invite you to please attend because we really need to generate more revenue, and we can do that through the businesses and for sales tax.
- We need your help with this.
- So, I'm really, really hoping that our liaisons to both the chamber and the downtown association will show up next Thursday at 1:00 P.M.
- There's no real set agenda other than to talk about ways in which we can all work together.
- Having the City there is really critical to that process.
- So, I will be sending out an email invite each of you, and hopefully you will respond as to whether or not you can attend or not.
- Only two of you can attend, but that's my public comment.

Dorothy commented as follows:

- An important part of your policy is the trust from your public, and if you have trust, then people will be working together.
- They will be cooperating.
- Putting the public comment way at the end, possibly a longer meeting, it doesn't demonstrate your willingness to be in trust to your constituents.
- And so, it's something we all are in, we are all in it together.
- Letting people speak early is more important than having a smooth flowing meeting, which is what I heard was a comment from our Mayor.
- It's more important than having things flow smoothly, and it would be very helpful to keep it at the beginning.
- Or maybe in the middle. But not at the end.

Linda commented as follows:

- You know, our wonderful Mayor and Vice Mayor just demonstrated once again how much they are hearing the public.
- There are so many other issues, you know?
- Ruining this town with their ignorance, arrogance, and absolute refusal to listen to many, many intelligent voices in this town that have been trying for months, and in fact, years.
- It is also in the general plan about reducing our exposure to wireless radiation.
- They have absolutely ignored the onslaught of the smart meters.
- Came in here like a bunch of Nazi storm troopers at the end of September and installed these plastic Chinese made meters on our homes and businesses whether we wanted them or not and then had to charge an extortion fee if we didn't want them that is outrageous.
- And then they also jam down our throats the wireless water meters, which again, Chinese-made plastic nonrecyclable pieces of junk that last five to seven years and don't work.
- I have told them, you know, they can go on google easily enough and google badger meters and lawsuits.
- They will find a bunch of lawsuits about how these measures don't work.
- It is costing us \$2.2 million.
- That's not the half of it.

- When they don't work, they will have to be removed and replaced, and the litigation that will follow.
- These people have proven, these two people, the Mayor has proven that they are uneducable and need to be removed in my opinion.
- We need to start thinking about how best to remove them.
- Kyle petition and you all, smart people, come up with good plans.
- They cannot be persuaded to listen in my opinion.
- Jill, good for you, showing some sparks of independence.
- Maybe there is still hope for the City as soon as we can get the responsible, competent members on the City Council.

Oliver commented as follows:

- Quickly, as a general point, it would be really great if the council had a big mission statement and goal.
- For example, raising tax revenue instead of coins in the bank, fire service, and so on and so forth.
- We need to be thinking a lot bigger.
- It would be really good, to echo what Michael just said, some sort of initiative to figure out how to get more sales tax coming into the City and be thinking a lot more constructively about how to rebuild Sebastopol after the pandemic, and now, this terrible recession, which unfortunately is going to last quite a long time.
- We are not well-equipped at the moment.
- Kyle said earlier, we are stuck in old processes, and some of the new generation are coming in and finally starting to break the old ways.
- The hard facts are, we are just going through an extremely lucrative period with a lot of people moving out of large cities.
- I moved out of San Francisco in 2013.
- Money has been pouring into the City. Money has been pouring out of the general reserve funds.
- We seem to be making decisions on smaller and smaller things. And now we are talking about getting rid of fire service.
- I won't dwell on that. A lot more vision and confidence about where Sebastopol is going.
- As I said in my written public comment, then we will have some money for all tourism to help the homeless and other people that need help.
- We are going the wrong direction right now.
- We have the City downtown looking very scruffy. A lot of people hanging around. I couldn't recommend it to tourists this spring.
- We really need to get our act together because we are in a very serious recession, and things are not going to be easy for the next two or three years.
- Just as a general point.
- I think that's fundamental to everything going forward.
- I think the guys have left from Matrix. I would like to thank the guys if you are still on the call.

Dennis commented as follows:

- Very quickly, I have been listening, and I really believe those folks that come to the council meeting to talk about items not on the agenda should be heard first.
- There's no reason for those things to sit through the entire meeting and be heard last.
- The whole purpose of democracy is for people to be heard.
- And I think the items not on the agenda that people broach are very important to the council, and I think we lose some of those people after three hours of meeting.

- So, I would like to suggest that you move that back to the beginning of your council meeting.

June commented as follows:

- if there is a move to new comments back to the beginning, I have a lot of requests for that.
- I would request that it be kept like a half hour because a lot of us to come for the decision items, and I know it's a balancing of having people that want to bring up new items and be heard when there is a presence, but there's also a balance of those who don't want to sit for hours and listen to people, and often just harangue members of the council.
- Sometimes it's great information, but sometimes it just goes more than the time for people to listen through it when they are waiting for an agenda item.
- Also wondering if there could be suggested times for the items, such as presentations, when we have a presentation from a study or community group, have what the recommended presentation time is just so we have a sense of gauging.
- And I know I can always go a little longer or shorter, but just it would really be helpful, and then everybody knows what the presenter was asked to provide and kind of helps us gauge that.
- Just hoping to help everybody get what out the meetings.
- I really appreciate the balance here tonight, and I know there was a lot of complaints about no public comment.
- But I really appreciated that Mayor Hinton actually gave us a time for a public comment when it wasn't required.
- I like to appreciate that the public comment I-I do feel there is a lot of respect for the input of the public, and I would like the public to be responsible with that.
- I know it's a lot of balancing.
- I appreciate everybody for their consideration.

Lisa commented as follows:

- I just wanted to publicly acknowledge Jill and Sandra.
- Thank you very much for acknowledging that you like to listen to the citizens and voting no on the ad hoc.
- Thank you very much for that.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows:

- I will just say for me personally, although I give the new representative for the chamber, and it is a conflict for me until late April due to AG and open-space committee
- I will be out of the country on February 9th, unable to attend.
- And for many of our council members, it is also the association night meeting.
- I am not sure how many members are already attending that, and maybe they can balance based on time commitments.
- I also wanted to address the speaker that talked about the agenda item tonight.
- As it is pointed out, if you read the agenda item, the agenda item was titled in from City administration.
- It was not brought for myself or Vice Mayor Rich.
- We did not title the agenda item, and we did not type it up.
- I encourage anyone who is interested in agenda review that is an open public meeting, we have a member of the public this but cannot attend our last meeting.
- Anyone is welcome to attend.
- Mayor of the Vice Mayor do not set all agenda items or the titles.
- I personally and can speak for Vice Mayor Rich do not set the agenda title of our item tonight.
- I'll address the public comments, and I did start this out as the trail.

- It has been brought to my attention that there is a policy on this item, which we will discuss at the next council meeting.
- The policy was created in 2017. Right now, the policy says that all 20 minutes of public comment need to be clustered at one time on the agenda. We will be discussing it.
- It is my hope that we can separate public comment and have part of public comment on the front of the meeting for items not on the agenda and the remainder of public comment at the end of the meeting, allowing maximum public comment, but also allowing for our meeting for posted items to be heard.
- We can't, as a member of the public ask, we can't pit times exactly because we never know how much public comment we are going to have or questions from the council, but we are trying to not run overtime as we did frequently last year, and many times published items that were on the agenda were postponed after members waited most of the night to hear posted items.
- Anyway, that will be a topic of conversation at an agenda item posted on our next meeting.
- So, I think that covers the items on public comment tonight.
- I appreciate hearing from everyone.

ADJOURNMENT OF SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING/CLOSED SESSION

January 31, 2023 City Council Special Meeting/Study Session will be adjourned to the Special City Council Meeting/Start Time of 4:00 pm on Tuesday, February 7, 2023 as follows:

4:00 pm Interviews for Climate Action Committee and Design Review Board Vacancies
 6:30 pm Special Start Time for City Council Meeting

Mayor Hinton adjourned the January 31, 2023 City Council Special Meeting at 9:25 pm to the February 7, 2023 City Council Meeting. Zoom Virtual Meeting Format.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mary Gourley
 Assistant City Manager/Attorney/City Clerk