

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Date: Monday, January 30, 2023 6:28:13 PM

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Jan. 30, 2023

Dear Sebastopol City Council,

We are writing regarding the Sebastopol Fire Department report. Please add this to Public Comment.

It has been no secret that the City of Sebastopol has been underfunding our fire department for years. Three years ago, the department itself reported to the city that it was behind on replacing apparatus and that the station was in need of repairs and updates. Their requests were ignored and not funded. The one thing that this report does address are these deficiencies which now makes this information a matter of public information. No matter who is in charge of our department these repairs and replacements will have to be addressed.

The report is incorrect in reporting some of our volunteer's salaries. These fire fighters volunteered to join Wildfire Strike Teams and were paid by the state and federal wildfire money, not by the City of Sebastopol. With the firefighters' willingness to help fight the wildfires, the city made enough money in equipment payments to buy the new engine at no cost to the city's general fund. The report says that this engine should be replaced, when it is actually it is already bought and paid for. The report combined 2 fire fighters' salaries into one person's salaries. Did they not realize that different first names, but the same last name, are different people? This makes salaries in the report inaccurate.

There has never been a problem with our department's service to our community. Our fire fighters are fully trained, as much as any full-time fire fighters and their response time is above the national average.

We recommend that the City Council ask for input from our own expert Chief Jack Piccinini, who has already worked with other cities in our county about such issues and that the City talk with our fire fighters. Until all stake holders are invited to be a part of this discussion, no decision should be made.

With our current City Manager retiring, no decision should be made until a replacement Manager is hired and our retiring Manager should recuse himself from these discussions.

With three new Council members, we should hold off on making any decisions until they have had ample time to study all of the facts. We also have one member of the council who stated publicly that her desire was to merge with Gold Ridge before any report was given or any stake holders were invited to the table.

There is no need to rush into any decision that is of such major concern to all Sebastopol citizens until further study is made including all the stake holders. As citizens of Sebastopol, we ask that this issue be given much more study and would include our Chief and our fire fighters.

Thank You, Chip and Loretta Castleberry

Sebastopol residents and business owners