

**CITY COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**MINUTES FOR Regular City Council Meeting of August 8, 2023**  
**As Approved by the City Council at their regular meeting of September 5, 2023**

Please note that minutes of meetings are not meant to be verbatim minutes and are meant to be the City's record of a summary of actions that took place at the meeting. The vote/action is the required information of the meeting actions that took place. Approved minutes are available on the City Council Meetings page.  
<https://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us/Meeting-Event.aspx>

Meeting was held in Person and Virtual /Remote Participation  
Zoom Link used for providing public comment/Live Stream is utilized for viewing only of Meeting

The public is advised that pursuant to Government Code section 54957.5 all writings submitted to the City and City Council are public records and will be made available for review.

**6:00 pm**      **City Council Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order:** Mayor Hinton called the Regular Meeting to Order at 6:08 p.m.

**Roll Call:**

**Present:** Mayor Neysa Hinton  
Vice Mayor Diana Gardner Rich  
Councilmember Sandra Maurer  
Councilmember McLewis  
Councilmember Stephen Zollman

**Absent:** None

**Staff:** City Manager/City Attorney Larry McLaughlin  
Assistant City Manager/City Clerk Mary Gourley

**STATEMENTS OF ABSTENTION BY COUNCIL MEMBERS:** None

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

**Addition of Urgency Item/Proclamation in Celebration of the 30th anniversary of Sebastopol and Chyhyryn's Sister City Relationship**

**MOTION:**

Mayor Hinton moved and Vice Mayor Rich seconded the motion to approve the addition of an urgency item as it came to the attention of the City after the posting of the agenda. Proclamation in Celebration of the 30th anniversary of Sebastopol and Chyhyryn's Sister City Relationship

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

**VOTE:**

**Ayes:** Councilmembers Maurer, McLewis, Zollman, Vice Mayor Rich and Mayor Hinton

Noes: None  
Absent: None  
Abstain: None

City Council Action: Urgency Item approved to be placed on the agenda.  
Minute Order Number: 2023-186

**PROCLAMATIONS/PRESENTATIONS: NONE**

**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.

Mayor Hinton commented she had a conflict of interest with item number 1 and would be recusing herself from the dais.

**PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA (FIRST COMMENT PERIOD):**

Up to Twenty (20) Minute Time Limit (Two Minutes for up to ten speakers). Additional public comment will be held at the end of the discussion and action items for up to an additional twenty (20) minutes. Mayor has discretion to allow for additional time beyond the 20 minutes allocated for public comment dependent upon the subject matter or number of speakers.

Process for calling on Speakers: Mayor or designee shall ask for public comment as follows: Speakers to be called on in an alternate manner (One speaker in person to be called on first; then one speaker remote to be called on second with additional speakers to be called on in the same manner) based upon the time limit.

Craig commented as follows I'm a resident. I wanted to say something positive because I remember sitting up there and sometimes people show up when they have things they want to complain about but I contacted Public Works recently about a smell in my water at my business. There is a smell and I talked to a couple of people and they said that's your hot water heater. You need to flush it out and it was confirmed with a neighbor that they had that issue, flushed out the water heater and it worked right away. They were prompt. I got calls back. I called the front desk, got calls back right away and I was very grateful for that. Thank you for a job well done.

Kyle commented as follows: Just really briefly, I'm hoping we can get an update on the crosswalk improvements that are happening. There was kind of a last minute delay, unforeseen, but it seems to happen regularly when we are contracting out some of these Public Works projects. At the corner of Bodega and Robinson, we had to experience no access to crosswalks at that intersection, forcing pedestrians to walk out into busy traffic for multiple days in a row. Those crosswalk intersections are still not completed. I wanted to know what the original timeline of that was, what the expected delay was, will it continue to be and delayed when that will be finished up. Historically, we have seen some of these projects end up with a delay. The contractor says the delay is only going to be two weeks and then up till the six weeks later, the contractor is still continuing to work on these things. We are in a tight budget situation. To see projects like this get extended out, I'm sure ends up costing us more money, even if it is a budgeted amount for that that with the bid amount originally was. I think the public deserves an update on that project and both economic increase of cost as well as a timeline for completion on these crosswalk intersections that are causing pedestrians to have to walk into the street in a pretty busy road.

Mayor Hinton departed the dais for consent calendar item number 1.

**CONSENT CALENDAR:** The consent agenda consists of items that are routine in nature and do not require additional discussion by the City Council or have been reviewed by the City Council previously. These items may be approved by one motion without discussion unless a member of the City Council requests that the item be taken off the consent calendar. The Mayor will read the consent calendar items; ask if a Councilmember wishes to remove one or more items from the consent calendar; and then open public comment to the members of the public in attendance. At this time, a member of the public may speak for up to three minutes on the entire consent calendar and request at that time that an agenda item or items be removed for discussion.

If an item or items are removed from the consent calendar, the item shall be placed at the end of the regular agenda items unless otherwise determined by the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tern.

Councilmembers may comment on Consent Calendar items or ask for minor clarifications without the need for pulling the item for separate consideration. Items requiring deliberation should be pulled for separate consideration and shall be placed at the end of the regular agenda items unless otherwise determined by the Mayor or Mayor Pro Tern.

Vice Mayor Rich read the consent calendar.

Vice Mayor Rich asked if any Councilmember wanted to remove a consent calendar item. There was none.

Vice Mayor Rich opened for public comment.

Public Comment:

Kyle commented as follows: So, we are looking to hire a new City Manager and currently we are also in a pretty serious budget deficit, which is requiring us to look at the possibility of a sales tax measure to try to recoup some of the losses. However, these two things are very much connected. I'm very much wanting to hear the Council's decision-making process for raising the budget for the City Manager. The dollar amount that City Manager budget was raised and what conversation was had about actually being able to recruit a City Manager at the pre-existing rate and why there was this urgent need to increase the City Manager budget as part of the last budget cycles proceedings.

1. Approval of City Manager Recruitment Brochure. This item is to approve the brochure to be distributed for the Executive Firm Recruitment for a City Manager for the City of Sebastopol (Responsible Department: City Management/Human Resources)

MOTION:

Councilmember Maurer moved and Councilmember Zollman seconded the motion to approve consent calendar item number 1.

Vice Mayor Rich called for a roll call vote. City staff conducted a roll call vote.

VOTE:

Ayes: Councilmembers Maurer, McLewis, Zollman and Vice Mayor Rich

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: Mayor Hinton

City Council Action: Approved brochure to be distributed for the Executive Firm Recruitment for a City Manager for the City of Sebastopol.

Minute Order Number: 2023-187

Mayor Hinton resumed her seat at the dais.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS:**

**Presentations are to be 10 minutes or less.**

**PUBLIC HEARING(s):** NONE

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS:** NONE

**PUBLIC HEARING(s):** NONE

**REGULAR CALENDAR AGENDA ITEMS (DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION)**

2. Discussion and Consideration of Resolution Calling an Election to ask the Voters of the City of Sebastopol to Approve A Transactions and Use Tax of 0.25%; (2) Approving the Ballot Question and Form of the Ordinance to be Submitted to the Voters; (3) Requesting that the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors Consolidate the Special Election with any other Said Election to be Held on November 7, 2023; (4) Directing the County Elections Department to Conduct the Election on the City's Behalf; (5) Setting Deadlines for Submission of Arguments and Rebuttal Arguments; and Providing for an Impartial analysis by the City Attorney; and (6) Approval of Resolution for Budget Amendment of \$5000 for education and outreach for Said Ballot Measure (Responsible Department: City Attorney/Ad Hoc Committee for Ballot Measure)

City Manager McLaughlin commented as follows: Just a brief background, at the July 18, 2023 City Council meeting, City Council received a request for consideration of placement of a ballot measure on the November 7, 2023 special election. The Council appointed a committee at that time and authorized the city to enter into a contract with consulting for polling not to exceed \$10,000. On August 1, 2023 at your regular Council meeting, Council received the polling results from and based on those results and upon further Council deliberations, and in recognition of the city's deficit and potential service reductions, the Council directed staff to come forward this evening in a special meeting with a report for presenting a ballot measure to the voters on the November 7th, 2023 election. The actions that the Council would potentially be called upon to take tonight include the adoption of a resolution. That resolution would call an election to ask the voters to approve a transaction and use tax of one quarter cent or 0.25% approving the ballot question in the form of the ordinance to be submitted to the voters. Back to what this means, before you tonight as part of the staff report, you have the current wording of the ballot question returning to you from last meeting. The Council will also be asked to approve the form of the ordinance. That is not adopting an ordinance. It is approving the form of the ordinance, that is to say, it is wording that would be submitted to the voters. Revenue and taxation code section cited in the staff report, 7285.91 requires that under such circumstances the approval of the form of that ordinance will require approval by a 4/5 vote of the Council. Tonight, four out of five of you at least would have to approve the wording of the ordinance for the election to go forward. Other actions tonight would include a request at the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors consolidate our special election with any other election that would be held on November 7, 2023. It directs the County elections department to conduct the election setting deadlines for submission of arguments and rebuttal arguments, providing for impartial analysis by the City Attorney and approval of resolution for a budget amendment of \$5000 for education and outreach for the ballot measure. Per California law, the city is restricted to informational presentations concerning any valid that you sponsor. So you will not be able to, for example, point a committee to prepare arguments, to submit mailings, to do normal things you expect to see in an election. If any of those things were to be done, they would need to be done by some form of citizens committee that is formed to assist in the ballot measure and to do those kinds of things to promote the ballot measure. The city is restricted to informational items. The resolution for the budget amendment for education and outreach is intended to cover the cost of informational items that may be submitted to explain the city's financial situation and give such other information as may educate voters about our city's budget situation and the need for the ballot measure. So, that's what that is for. That is to potentially hire somebody to help the city promote educational items only. So, again, the staff report goes through and presents to you under a number of actions. Review the draft questions, decide whether to go with it or propose changes as you feel might be

needed for the draft ballot question. The other items as I said is to approve the form of the ordinance. The ordinance is attached to your staff report and to take the other actions, directing election be summarized at the beginning of the staff report. Mayor and Council I would suggest potentially first turn to the ballot question and discuss with the Council wording of the proposed ballot question. That concludes my staff report.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: I did appreciate the fact that in the staff report is there was consultation by our outside law firm who looked at it and I'm assuming that's the reason why some of the wording was changed as far as the listing of the various items to be funded. I concur with that because it's actually based upon the polling result. I do appreciate there being another set of eyes reviewing this and making sure we are investing this amount of money and that we do it right and that there is not going to be any legal problems down the road.

City Manager Attorney commented as follows: if I can elaborate on that. We discussed this matter again with our outside counsel twice today. We focused the attention of one of our calls on the actual ballot language and pros and cons for various options for the Council. At that time he did indicate to us that the preference for a longer version of the ballot measure as you alluded to because it is based on the polling results and because voters tend to focus their attention in his experience having done over a dozen ballot measures fairly recently, voters tend to focus their attention on the ballot questions and they like to see all the various things that the special text measure may pay for. So, yes, because it is based on the polling and yes because of the way that the voters often approach these election questions. So, he did review that. He also reviewed other optional language that was submitted recently by members of the public as well as reviewing with myself and the city clerk to be followed tonight with regard to the adoption or approval of the form of the ordinances I alluded to and the requirement of the revenue and taxation code section that would require a 4/5 vote in the Council this evening. Again, currently we talked with them as recently as 4:00 this afternoon.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: My question has to do with two of the elements of this ballot language as proposed. That would be the library and mental and behavioral programs. On those items, I think people who have been following my comments about this ballot measure up until now are aware that my interest is in looking at our current budgetary situation and finding a way to cover, to maintain, to provide a sustainable way into the future to pay for our current expenses. That is where I look at this. I love the library. Obviously, I think people are where well aware I'm a big supporter of mental and behavioral programs. However, when I look at our budget, I have to say I do not see where we are spending money currently, specifically on the library, nor do I see specifically on mental and behavioral programs. So, that's my question and this would be a question to staff or information that the ad hoc committee that worked on this would be able to provide, but where is the money for the library that we are already spending and where is the money for mental and behavioral programs we are already spending.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: If I could address this from a budgetary perspective. The city does financially support the library. We are responsible for the building and the improvements and repair of the building including its HVAC systems and other things as they require repair. The ballot language there is not intended to imply that the city itself necessarily has mental or behavioral programs. That refers to library programs. Financial support of the library tends to financially support those programs.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I would press back on that. I would be looking for a number. What is the amount of money that we are spending on those services now? That is important for me to know.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I had a question because I thought we had come to a consensus that we were replacing the word maintain with enhance. We talked about this a lot. We talked about enhance, we were adding to it and I thought we had agreement on maintain. So, I was surprised to see the ballot question bring back enhance when I'm pretty sure, and I'm seeing nods, that the four people at the table at the last meeting had already agreed in my notes say that it was changed to maintain. So, if that's the agreement, I just want to clarify because I know we are in question time. So, I think that we did lead with fire services instead of the other items. It felt like this ballot question had all the stuff but it was kind of mixed in different order.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: It is rather moot because we already anticipate there will be wording changes in this particular item and that is the purpose of tonight's meeting. I will take this opportunity to mention we discussed with our legal counsel this afternoon potential alternative language of the Council wishes to make changes in a certain direction. We may have language for that.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I do have a pending question and I'm hoping that staff will at some point be able to reply in terms of library and mental and behavioral services. The amount especially since we are looking at maintain language.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I will say that when I looked at, and I think we did have discussion about the behavioral health, we were tying that to the homeless coordinator. That's my recollection. Not necessarily tying it to the library come although Stephen made a point that the library is a place, but we did also talk about the homeless coordinator.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: I don't want to over assert because I do see there are members of the library administration on the call and I want to push them in any direction. They are in charge of supplying people and coming up with the programming. The last time I remembered this, it was something, between the library and behavioral programs, which we had discussed.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I have watched all the meetings, every one of them. In fact I just watched the one you were talking about right before I got here. A lot of questions and concerns, but the first question I have is, just to play off vice mayor rich's question, is there anything out of the ordinary going on with the library that suddenly we need to be taxing our citizens for maintenance of the library? I know we maintain the Community Center. I have a lot of experience with that. I'm just curious how that became a focal point here. We serviced so many different nonprofit buildings.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: I can't exactly explain how it became a focal point but I will say the need to finance and support the library's building comes and goes depending on equipment and how long it lasts and what its current state of repair might be. So, we know of no present urgent need to financially support the library. But we have provided support, financial support for the library over the years as the need arises. We are legally obligated to do that, but it doesn't always require it.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: Just like we do with the Community Center when it needed a new roof and the Senior Center when they need services. I negotiated the Community Center lease so I'm very familiar with the city. Another question I had and it stems from the videos I was watching, there was one thing that I think it was mentioned that it would be answered this time. It was about the audit and the cost. I was trying to wrap my head around that. I was curious when you audit this, are the costs, will this be covered under the current audit cost or is this an additional cost that wasn't clear to me.

City staff commented as follows: In the weeks since the last meeting, information we generated so far is that our current auditor can audit the election results but it would be an additional charge and unfortunately we do not at the present time have an estimate as to what that cost would be. I believe there was a number in the staff report. I believe the number was ranging from \$10,000 - \$15,000 but that was just an estimate because they have to know how many transactions and everything like that. That number could go up. They gave us a range of \$10-\$15,000. Again, that is an estimate without knowing all the facts behind it and all the transactions. It would be separate from our current contract with the auditor.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I guess because I haven't been at all these meetings, but again I watched all the videos, I'm trying to wrap my head around how in our budget talks we had many discussions about infrastructure. We need to fund our roads, our water, sewer. We have all these different items that we as a city are responsible for yet I see Senior Center, Pol, Library, mental and behavioral health, behavioral programs and none of those are actually things that we as a city are taught by already. I'm trying to understand how all of those things came into play. I understand, there are certain things that voters like to hear and they want to vote on, but it I'm trying to understand the transparency and how these things became the priority of this when it first started out as a safety, public safety measure ordinance and now we are looking at all of these different things that actually in my mind are not necessarily the priority of the city. I understand we pay for some of these things but one we are looking at all of these other things that we talked about in our budget and also funding the positions that the police and fire, which I voted for, could someone help me wrap my head around why we have so many of these services, these items listed that are not top priorities.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I can address that since I started this fall with the original proposal. I brought forth the public safety theme, I guess you would call it, because we voted for a fire and police position, which I thought were needing to be funded. Yet, we were borrowing from reserves and that made us borrow even more from reserves. So, public safety I believe is a vital service. It is true that we also fund a lot of other things. I just heard today and I don't know the details, that the pool is going to be closed because for months. Our one public pool -- I have to confirm that -- has repairs that are needed. Obviously, the Community Center in the past. If you add up senior center, Community Center, pool, and then add fire to it, and police, we are past what the sales tax would even raise for us. I think what we are trying to do is make sure that we have enough for our vital services but also to maintain, that's the wording that I think we all agree to, our current services that we enjoy that are like our senior center. We have cut, as we all know, all support of our nonprofit share. If we don't figure out a funding source, that could be more cuts. What gets cut first, it will be the extras. So, this is a tax measure we are trying to come up with consensus for that the community will support and it seems like the community members that we represent all have a little different hot button. We are trying to bring a lot of things into the fold here. Maintain services.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: Just to clarify, we didn't cut all of our nonprofits. We are still funding the Community Center.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: We cut a hundred thousand dollars we used to give to a number of nonprofits, that has been cut. Along with some other major services like the becoming independent, et cetera.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: Would that be considered a general fund type?

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: A general fund tax we can do anything with. That's why we have to specifically states what we are willing to continue to maintain.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: With all of these listed here, all the monies we receive will need to go to these services. I know this was discussed a lot in the videos and I did watch them all. For my own clarification, are we discussing -- every year I understand the City Council makes the budget but the concern I have is that when we do this, cut projects come into play. I watch it over the years and it concerns me that we are not talking -- first it started out as a public safety tax and now we are looking at servicing all of these other entities but we are not discussing how much money they are going to get and will it truly cover the fire position? I guess, is it ever customary to have certain percentages allotted in these types of things or is it just left to the discretion of whatever counsel is seated?

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: This is structured as a special tax at this particular election. That is the only type of tax measure we can bring. So, as the ordinance states, this is a special tax. So the special tax requires you to tell the voters what special purposes you intend making use of the money to support. You are not necessarily required to give them a complete list of every single item that you may fund. You can give them a more general category and this ballot language was intended to give specific examples of things that the monies are to be used for and then state that for other similar programs that support the community. Then also, fire, in the way that fire is written. It is not just limited to parks, senior center, pool, library and the two programs. It can be used more broadly. It is typical in these special tax measures that the Council set these priorities and expenditures yearly during the budget process. Each year, depending on the city's needs, in these particular areas as well as other areas, the Council would meet during its normal budget process and determine how the fund these various possibilities and in what amounts. That's left up to the discretion of the City Council to do that during budget time, that is still considered to be a special tax. This does not set forth a formula or something similar as to how you would spend these monies. It's done by the City Council in the yearly budget process.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: This is a question for our City Attorney. Has the City Council in the past ever initiated a special election for special tax. If so, when was it and for what purpose.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: I would review the history of the city but in my time here, I do not recall a special tax.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: My question has to do with the inclusion of the word and in the proposed language. I just wanted to make sure when I read it, my concern is that, that and, could be interpreted to mean that every single one of those items has to be funded in some way each year out of proceeds of this sales tax as opposed to it becomes a series of items that the City Council can decide based on exigencies or needs to allocate 02 some and more to others. Can you help me, can you reassure me about that.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: One thing I will say is, this language has been reviewed multiple times by outside legal counsel, so I don't feel like there is a legal issue. If the Council is more comfortable with an alternate wording, we can explore that if you want to try to make it clear or more clear.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I guess the question is, was counsel asked whether the word and would require that every item listed gets some amount of money more than zero each year.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: He was not asked that question.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: From your legal perspective, what would you say.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: I don't think we are limited because the entire record of the City Council discussions as part of the record and any challenge to our ballot measure, I think it is quite



clear in the extensive discussions that we have had, what the intent of the Council is if it adopted this particular ballot language. That said, we can rewrite it as you see fit to clarify what you want to clarify.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: I'm imagining, for example, Ives Park. Somebody could have a perception of Ives Park as not being maintained. If you say we are going to maintain the parks, for example we will add a fence around the pond. They could say that you were not maintaining this and then is it possible that could become based on the wording of this measure, that could become a form of litigation as well as if we are not enhancing the fire services, only providing similar funding to the fire services that could also become a form of litigation against the city for not enhancing or maintaining the parks? Does that make sense?

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: I understand your question but I'm sorry, it would be very difficult for me or any other attorney to try and forecast every single potential litigation that could be brought over a tax measure. Anything is possible, litigation is filed every day. I do not know the answer to your question, whether that possibly would or any other question would bring rise to litigation.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I would say that regarding our roads because they are not in great condition, this question has come up at Council before. As long as we had a plan for spending money, my understanding is, we are doing our best.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: It would be my argument, you can always allege, not maintained enough, but you are spending money to maintain something. I think you have proven you are spending to maintain.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I'm just wondering in the ad hoc committee that you had, has the discussion come up as far as saying we will maintain using the verbiage maintain Sebastopol fire services. In the event that the county tax did not pass and we pass this and it is supposed to be utilized for all of these things, did the discussion come up as far as the future of trying to fund anything with the fire department? I understand we haven't come back with any recommendations, but regardless, we are still responsible for the building and equipment. Did that come up in the discussions? If we go now for a tax, what is the plan for down the road if we need more money for fire? I'm trying to understand.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I'm with you on the ad hoc committee. I'm on the tax committee. We didn't discuss fire specifically because we didn't want to go there. I will just say that we have woefully underfunded our fire department. We have a small city with a very limited budget. That was before I got on Council. I don't think I'm speaking out of turn here but, we need more money for fire. We have no guarantees about what is going to happen in March. We could use all the money, and we are only going for a quarter as discussed at the last meeting because that gets us to the same level of Petaluma and gets us hopefully over the top if March passes with a countywide fire measure. If March didn't pass, I would think we would have to go back to the voters again, personally. But that would be a full Council decision and we would have to be looking at what we are going to do. We don't know what we are going to do. We vote for this tonight and it doesn't pass. Specifically to your answer, we did not discuss that in specifics. I'm just kind of speaking transparency here.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: I thought my recollection is we did discuss fire and the fact it would be there and then we would discuss the community services because we have not funded them this year by way of the grant. My recollection is we did discuss fire and the consequences of whether we went now or later. My thought was it would be great if we got more money for fire now and then the one next spring, it would be better for us because we would have more money to give to fire.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: We did discuss when we should go and that we needed money, as I just stated. But we did discuss, what if we don't have enough money? What would we do? And what the future is of our fire department.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: My rationale looking at the Matrix report, which stated regardless of whether consolidation was a path or independent our department was a path, the city would be expected to contribute from its general fund. I think at least \$1.4 million. Clearly it also indicated a functional fire department no matter what its format or structure, would require a whole bunch more than that. I think it was something like \$5 million. But it was a lot of money. Looking at this measure, it was clear to me that the money that would come in from the sales tax measure would be important regardless of what happens with our fire department in the future, and sticking with a quarter percent sales tax would allow the ad hoc committee's fire committees recommendations, whatever they might be, to not be hindered in any way by our action with the sales tax. That's just my perspective on that. I would like to hear the options that our City Manager has run by legal counsel in terms of the ballot question language.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I had circled that we thought we would need 30,000 for outreach from the last meeting but I'm seeing a cost in here of additional 1\$0,000. But then it had a resolution for \$5000 education and outreach.

City staff commented as follows: It was my understanding based on the last conversation that we had \$100,000 that was allocated in the budget, \$30,000 of that was already in there for education and outreach. So, if we did not spend all of that, we only spent up to \$10,000 to the polling, so we were still under the budget but it was discussed that would not be enough money for outreach. We added the additional \$10,000 back in, which puts us up to \$105,000. We have \$100,000 budgeted.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: That is not how I read the staff report. I read it as proposed \$30,000 for services for the ballot for the drafting of the ballot question and the ordinance and then \$10,000 in the staff report as presented last meeting for education and outreach and that we had during the last meeting requested an additional \$10,000 for education and outreach which would raise that to \$20,000, but approximately \$10,000 of it had already been spent through the polling effort. The second part of the report says the proposed fiscal impact is proposed as follows, \$30,000 for the ballot question. \$10,000 for marketing and outreach and then county election cost number \$55,000.

City staff commented as follows: The funding allocated in the current budget you have \$30,000 for the ordinance and then you have strategic outreach and election costs. We still have the \$30,000 for the writing measure and the ordinance for community services. There is the \$10,000 for the marketing strategy and outreach. So, if we are adding back in you are correct. We would need to increase the cost because that was not my understanding when we had the last meeting. I had a different interpretation.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I understood that what we had approved was \$30,000 for the ballot measure, the ballot question and ordinance. For strategist marketing and education outreach, the City Council agreed the number should be \$20,000. For the county election cost, the City Council agreed we should slot in \$55,000 which would have brought us up to \$105,000 total. That ignores the baseline question, which is how much money do we need for a robust marketing, education, and outreach program? I do not know. But I think that's where we were in terms of the numbers.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: That is what I recall as well.

City staff commented as follows: That was not my understanding. If that was my error, I will take that. If you go with the direction you just stated, you are putting \$30,000 total back into the proposed fiscal impact.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: That was not my understanding of the original discussion but I'm in complete support of increasing the line item in the proposed fiscal impact. It currently set strategist, marketing, education outreach for \$10,000. I think it should say \$30,000 given that we have spent \$10,000 on polling. I cant imagine how we can do outreach and education for less than \$20,000.

City staff commented as follows: For clarification, you are asking for \$115,000?

Vice Mayor Rich and Mayor Hinton commented that is correct.

The Council discussed the proposed budget allocations.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: I don't want to provide any further confusion, but I have seen a number of email comments about the wording in the ballot question, specifically the phrase, community services. What is community services? We were trying to anticipate where the Council may go tonight, and we did try to explore other potential language. What we did is we took out our community benefit program documents and policies. We took out the city budget and went through looking for wording that we would be able to point to in the future. Frankly, we did not find a lot of references to community services, but we did come up with something along the lines of city funded community programs. That is a phrase that we find repeated a few times in the budget and community documents. I would word it something along the lines should the measure ordinance so and so to maintain city funded community service programs such as and then put in the list. So that is the proposed alternate language should the Council elect to more or less go with the ballot question as written, but if there is any concern about the alleged vagueness of the phrase community services, we propose changing it to community service programs, city funded community service programs. We find that in the city record. Again, to reiterate, we brought this up to the attorney this afternoon. The long ballot question shorter ballot question any legal issues with regard to that and what is his experience. His experience is to ignore whether it reads well from a college English perspective and put as many specific soon as you can get in there under the wording limitation. I believe that is 75 words. It may not read well from an English perspective, but it is what the voters look towards as they are deciding whether to support a measure in his experience.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: In this alternate wording that you are walking us through, you are starting out with city funded community service programs such as, and I understand how many of the items that are being considered would then flow from that. What happens with fire though?

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: We intended fire to be separate. That is the intent of the language that is in the staff report. All of those community service examples et cetera proceed to enhance and provide continued support for fire services. That was intended to be a separately stated subject of the special task. If you are taking my phrase which would probably be along the lines to maintain Sebastopol's city funded community service programs such as list, and to enhance and provide continued support for fire services.

Mayor Hinton opened for public comment.

Michael commented as follows: In 2016 I was elected to Council. We all go to the new Mayors and Councilmembers seminar. One of them was on finances for the city. They said, as soon as you mentioned the word reserve that is the time that you need to start tightening up the budget. That happened in 2017. Brought it to everybody's attention. We just mentioned the word reserve and we need to start tightening the budget. That's

what they told us. Did we? No. We got a third dump truck. We have two perfectly good dump trucks and we got a third one. Do we ever use the third one? No. Study after study and consultant after consultant. All of these studies are piling up dust. Endless spending on homeless services. Unbelievable. So now here we are in 2023 and we want the businesses to collect and charge the sales tax's to save the city. Nothing in a tax measure. There is no benefit outlined in the proposed tax measure to improve shopping districts and increase sales tax revenue for the business community. I think that is really important considering how much the percentage of the budget comes from the businesses. For that reason I would oppose this and I think it is unbelievable we spent \$10,000 on polling that reached 100 some people. That was just unbelievable. I would oppose it; there are others that I would oppose. When idea is a \$0.10 coffee cup property tax. I did not get a majority when I proposed it.

Kyle commented as follows: To recap the budget. During the budgeting process a small group, two City Councilmembers, City Manager/Attorney, Assistant City Manager, and the financial director first discussed the idea of a ballot initiative. We did not see any City Council meeting discussion. We first learned of this budget proposal when Council funded the \$100,000 for the exploration of a budget proposal that was explicitly stated in the meeting to discuss what its purpose is for. Then the Council finalized the budget and saw a 32% increase in the City Manager budget. A 97% increase in the Attorney budget and a 50% increase to the Finance budget. These increases alone come to \$400,000. Meanwhile, all the other departments saw cuts. Cuts to services and departments but not those three. The three that just so happened to be on the budget subcommittee. Following this, outside of the budget subcommittee process, Council approved an 11th hour hiring of a police position and fire position. Whatever those cost. Finally, after the budget is approved for exploration of a ballot initiative that we do not know about, we hear that this ballot initiative is going to get put forward to members of the public. They were pitching this to sell under the guise of, let's market it under public safety. Then we realized it is probably not going to be so successful. This very biased telephone polling showed us that was not going to be the case. It has not been discussed is that the most consensus on that was to eliminate a police position as to reducing the budget.

Craig commented as follows: Sebastopol resident and former Councilmember. I served from 2000 through 2008. We always struggled us a small city to make ends meet. It's tough. We have a full-time police department and a volunteer fire department and roads. Of course you have to raise funds. You are stuck in a hard place here. What will you do? Put it on the ballot down the line? We need the money now. What is ironic is if this was a regular election year it would be 50% plus one and he would not have to talk about this or that. You have to say what you are going to spend it on because it needs to be a two thirds majority specific tax. All you are saying is, we will keep funding these things we are doing the parks, nonprofits, fire department. That makes sense. You go to a voter and say we will keep funding this but we need your support. They will understand that means that the general fund is also there for other funds to continue to funding for nonprofits and roads. It's not going to be all of the money we need. It will be some of the money we need. We do need to raise the money pronto. I support this going on the ballot. I think it is the right time, but I would not worry too much about the specificity, because you can say what is important to the voter but you are really just saying we are going to go out there and fund this thing. I have 36 seconds. I think a lot of people will step up and support this. I think there are other things we need to do like the paper copy cup idea. There are a lot of ideas to raise money. We need to attract more business we need to look at cost-saving measures where we can but this is the fastest path to putting money back into the city fund and we need that. Thank you for your attention to the matter.

Robb commented as follows: I had a similar question as to the last gentleman. If the city calls a special election, can it not still do a ballot proposal that is a general tax subject to the 50% plus one threshold versus a special tax that would be required two thirds voter approval and limited only to the items enumerated in the ballot question.

Oliver commented as follows: For me it is a watershed moment. I think what Michael said earlier, any time the word reserves is mentioned at any point you basically have to be thinking very seriously about tightening about and looking at what you have been doing in the past. My feeling is risk and reward. We are talking about potentially getting \$750,000 in this, in theory. Then you are spending \$110,000 or \$115,000 to try to get it over the line. Risk and reward. If you fail you have lost a lot of money and credibility and rushed something through really fast. The budget was passed successfully for this fiscal year. It is there already and there is no huge hurry. I get that funding is needed but I think this is a really good time to think very clearly about future business strategy for the city and to generate sales tax, take a fresh look at that whether it is \$0.10 coffee cups or whatever it really does not matter but we are doing a terrible job bringing money into the city. We will be in a difficult economy for the next couple of years so my recommendation would be to move this to next June when we have a new City Manager and a new fire chief and things have settled down a little bit and we are more clear on where we are in terms of the economy and so on. This could fail and that would look very bad for everybody and we would be playing catch-up. That is my feeling.

Mayor Hinton responded to public comment as follows: For the member of the public that is still questioning general tax versus the 50% plus one, it cannot be offered for this special election cycle.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: That is correct. The November 7, 2023 election is not a regular general election. It is a special, standalone election. By law the only tax that can be presented to the voters in this special election would be a special tax.

#### City Council Discussion and / or Deliberations:

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: As I reviewed and pulled up at the last Council meeting for people that were not there, we did run a measure Q campaign. It only needed 50% plus one of a half cent. It passed by 68.16%. That had no expiration. I feel pretty positive and I have used the opportunity to speak to a number of people including business owners. Once said that the city does need funds and the business owners I spoke to would much prefer this kind of tax over property tax which is spread across a small group of property owners versus a quarter cent tax that would come from not just our own local citizens but also the people that use the city services and come to town to shop. I am interested in a little shorter ballot language and I am interested in leading with fire. I feel like the polling results showed us that fire is the strongest things that our citizens believe we need to maintain. We just added an extra position there. I feel like, Larry, you brought up that language. I think we need to lead with maintain and provide continued fire services in Sebastopol and other community services. Where is everybody else?

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: Similar to responses I have heard, the future revenue strategy is essential. A commitment was made to come back to that. I know that I have not abandoned that plan. We do need that but we are facing a huge deficit right now. I do not personally see a successful avenue to any sort of sales tax measure in 2024 given the fire tax, given the kids our future and possible library and the business roundtable attack on local and statewide provisions trying to enforce a two thirds majority making it retroactive to. There is just way too many challenges in 2024 from my perspective. We need to deal with it now. In 2025 we are again in an off year and 2026 is too late. The shopping district is very important. I see complete alignment between this sales tax and the need to support local businesses. How does the sales tax get maximized. Business transactions within the town being maximized. This is a go local, shop local opportunity. We are running hand-in-hand with businesses from my perspective. I did have that discussion with Myriah from the Chamber. It is an interesting opportunity. Homeless services. My understanding is that we pay for the homeless outreach coordinator which is \$80,000. The RV villages that is county funding obtained by the state. The Elderberry Commons is not city funds. There is \$80,000 toward the homeless outreach coordinator and I'm sure there is some police time committed to homeless services, but it is \$80,000 for the homeless outreach coordinator and

this year \$40,000 is from a grant facilitated by community services. I would like to correct that misinformation. Not that the amount of money is insignificant but it is not hundreds of thousands of dollars. We are now here in 2023 and we have a city that needs our services and attention. The parts that I am concerned about because I do not see dollar amounts associated with them, is the library. I do not see where we have spent money on library. Therefore, to maintain library I do not see requires funding. I have asked the staff and have not gotten a response. I have not gotten a response but in a dollar amount to that line item. Mental and behavioral programs, I see a lot of concern about it just being too vague. What does it mean? I have a concern about that language. I also have a concern about the use of enhanced. I do not think we want the word enhanced used at all. This particular language I feel would be misleading. Those are my general comments.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: To address the library issue, again that was the reason why I sent out the email to Larry to make sure that it is responsible for the building and the mandate. HVAC I know that. I was on the library commission and we had to pay a huge amount to the downtown branch for the HVAC. I know that to be true. Whether the numbers are there or not, as Larry explained we do not do this every year. It is when costs arise for the maintenance of the building. For that we would have no library at all because library people that are on the call can certainly jump in and correct me if I'm wrong, under the JPA they are just responsible for personnel. That is my answer. Hopefully that helps clear things up. As I stated before, I think we have done the best we can given the timing, given the vote for those on the Council that raised to \$1.6 to \$2 million in the deficit for this coming year. This is the best strategy to move it forward in order to get the money now and make sure we do the work to have it pass so we can get the money so we do not have to rely. I am wishing everybody well. Fire, everybody. In reference to the Mayor's suggestion of flipping it and taking the Vice Mayor suggestion. I am fine with flipping it. If they think the public will respond better and we can tie it back to how the polling worked out, I am fine with flipping it to maintaining fire services and community services such as yada yada yada. That is fine with me. For those that have been missed the last couple of meetings or may not have caught it on the tape, I do support fire and want it to succeed whether we stay local or end up doing the merger thing, I want that to succeed. I also want the basic services that our citizens have been expecting. I want that to be maintained for our citizens. I think that this is adequate representation of those services so I am planning on supporting this.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: Earlier, Mayor Hinton stated we had to borrow more money because we had hired, in the budget process we hired a police chief and police officer and a fire engineer. In may, the budget that was presented was \$2.6 million deficit. The budget committee worked on it and they brought it back and it was \$1.9 million deficit. The Council got together and we talked about it and hired two positions and it was \$1.67 deficit. It is still in deficit but it was not more. Did not have to borrow more unless I am misunderstanding something with the way the money was coming out of a certain fund or not but I just wanted to start their.

Mayor Hinton commend as follows: I may have mis-spoke with the word borrow more. However, when we did that we negotiated and gave up other services and added the fire and police. While you are correct, we did lose other things to get to that amount. I just want to clarify.

Councilmember Maurer commented as follows: if my memory serves me right, I did not cut anything to create those positions. Anyway, I am looking at these services. The parks cost in this year's budget was about \$100,000 plus we had a lot of grants to cover the cost of the parks. The senior center received about \$70,000. I was not able to get the library information. The mental health and behavioral services, I will guess for the community service person was about \$80,000 roughly. The pool and Community Center combined gave them about \$600,000. The fire department got roughly \$1.5 million. I calculate that to be about \$2,350,000 that these services are currently budgeted for. We are talking about maintaining these services, \$2,350,000 with a \$750,000 ballot initiative. So that is kind of fuzzy math to me. I have said this at the last two meeting so I don't want to keep

going on about it, but I did look up the definition of the special election. It is an election schedule other than the usual date for a special purpose. A special tax is a tax levied to fund a particular government project or program. These programs are existing. They are not special. I can imagine a special tax would be for something like, let's daylight the creek. We will raise money for that specific purpose. That special-purpose. To me this is just another way to get money for the general fund. I have said that before but based on what Vice Mayor Rich said there are a lot of factors that we are facing. We are facing other tax measures that are coming on the ballot. The childcare tax, the fire tax, and then there is the business roundtable ballot measure. This all creates this difficult situation where, basically, it is a gamble. It is a risk whether you do it now. You are gambling \$115,000. Imagine, \$115,000. That's a heck of a lot of money to gamble. If you win, then you get \$750,000. That is pretty good. But if you lose, you have just lost \$115,000. So what is the risk of waiting? What if we waited? If you waited, possibly the county fire tax measure might pass. It might not pass. If it does we get \$1.2 million more than we are trying to get here. We also get \$5 million to remodel the firehouse. Is that worth waiting for? It sounds pretty good to me. Save \$115,000 and potentially get \$1.2 million plus \$5 million for the firehouse or say it doesn't pass and you wait until June. Put another tax measure on the ballot in June. It would probably cost the same as if you did it in November.. I think it is really gambling. I think we are gambling so we can wait or spend \$115,000 on a chance that maybe the public will support the idea of the tax which is pretty fuzzy if you are already spending \$2.3 million on these programs and you are raising \$750,000 to maintain them. It does not quite add up as a special project. That is not a special project in my mind. That is the place where I think I would have the most problem with this. It does not feel like a special project. I would be in favor of waiting.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I have taken a lot of notes and I want to be clear on my thoughts with all of this. I think that there are many ways to approach the problem. I feel like this is rushed and rushing is not something that I do when I am trying to make a tough decision. I think being purposeful and strategic is just how I function. It is my opinion that unless you are putting out a fire or saving a life rushed decision is not usually a good decision. I would say that what Councilmember Maurer just said, I believe there is no harm in waiting for even a June election. Knowledge is power and I feel like by waiting we will have that. We have a lot of variables coming up. We have been waiting to figure it out whether or not the county fire tax will pass. The City Manager position is open and we will have that filled hopefully by end of year. The fire ad hoc committee as part of that committee. I'm hoping we can have recommendations out there. I have thought about it all day, what is the plan if the fire tax does not pass and we bring this forth and spend \$150,000 -- \$115,000 as we have figured out. What happens if this does not pass and we are still responsible for the cost of the fire department? I realize if we are using the word gambling or whatever, nothing is guaranteed but I just do not see that we will have enough money. I am just concerned that we will not have the funds that we need if the county fails and we fail, we have lost the confidence of the voters and then where will he be. How will we figure out regardless of what happens with the fire department we are responsible for the building and we know all of that. It is my opinion that, as a new City Councilmember the city is in this current situation due to poor decision-making over the last decade. I have watched time and time again where we have made decisions to have consultants and all these different things come about and spent a ton of money. We are in this position because of poor decision-making and I think we need to be measured and strategic. When I ran for office, I promised that I would be different and I would be strategic about any decisions that we make. I think the voters need to see a different approach. After all, the status quo has not been working and the budget reflects that. Making rash decisions and putting this tax on the shoulders of the voters without all the information that we need, the ad hoc committee and county tax, there are so many variables that could impact the amount of money that we need in the near future. I think we obviously have a different opinion how and when the money comes in. I think we should be spending our time working together to come up with a strategic and economic plan that is more than just a band-aid. I think about, are we putting a little band-aid on the leaking dam ready to flood us? I just think furthermore we should be concentrating on funding items and services that are the city responsibility. That is why I asked the question about why we have these different items listed in there that we want to fund. We already funded them

in the budget. I understand we took from the reserve and I do not understand the library and mental health services. The county has funding through measure Y. I think we should be looking for if we want to have those types of things funded we should be looking at the county to help as well since we served west county we know the current supervisor even uses it frequently I am certain she could be sympathetic to the fact that we need to fund whether or not it will be closed. That just came up today. I just do not understand why community organizations are included in this question. We saw some emails today and I received some calls asking why isn't the Community Center listed in there. I represented the Community Center for five years as a board member. While I understand these discussions today and it makes sense to all of us. The public sees these things and they just wonder. It is a valid question why some and not others. I think that we need to be looking inward and funding public safety infrastructure like water, sewer, staffing before all else as that is the core responsibility of the city and it is our job as elected officials. I think all of the items I have mentioned could be part of the strategic plan. We owe it to the voters to be measured and diligent and that is why I feel like at this time it is more prudent to wait. I absolutely understand we need funding. I understand budgeting. I do budgeting. I understand all of that but I do not see the harm in waiting until we have so many other variables figured out and those answers before we actually take this to the voters and spend \$115,000 on something where if we wait and figure out and learn whether or not the county has, whether or not the measure passes with the county we will have a better idea what kind of funding we need and we can bring that to the voters and tell the story and explain it. We could in that time while we are being strategic and looking at these different items, we can figure out what does the library need? What does the pool need? We can have these discussions and we need to have some sort of retreat where we come together. I do this with the organization I work with. We don't always agree but we need to understand what we feel is important for the city. Mayor and Vice Mayor, I appreciate you giving me this time. It's not that I don't support you. I just think that right now is not the time.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I can appreciate that but I'm going to go ahead. We know that this would take a 4/5 vote so I want to give you a few more reasons to consider before we make a final decision. One, I have some notes in here that we can bring things in and we are responsible for city-owned holdings. Brought up a lot about city-owned buildings. We are talking about raising funds and can discuss adding in Community Center, the pool, city-owned buildings et cetera. I hear what you are saying about pet projects. I have heard a lot tonight about that and also from the public. I cannot change the past. We are here now to make decisions. Our city needs money now. I did not vote all the time on pet projects, but it is not about one person. It is about the Council that the voters have elected did. I will disagree with you about being strategic. I have been working on this for months. We are being strategic is what we are trying to bring to the voters now. I am sorry we need money. I think there is an argument to say if we come back in June after a failed measure, we will not be successful. We need money now. It's not just about fire. It's for the entire town and community services. It pains me that we could not fund apple blossom. That we could not fund becoming independent. That we could not fund the things that matter to the community. These are our values and we have to have a solution. I have to argue that I feel like we have been very strategic and trying to come up with this. Do I love spending \$115,000? I was sticker shocked. We spent that and more through the budget on economic development. You can argue, and people have, what do we get from that. But we spent it to support the community. Previous Councils voted on it so it happened. The sticker shock of \$115,000. We saw polling and we saw previous measures that the community is very generous and will support it. Many people just need to know how we will spend the money. I pledge that I will work on the campaign. Anybody knows that I walk the town. I do not feel like it is a gamble. I feel like it can pass. I have to respond to the last two because we know it is not going to move forward unless we have at least four members supporting. I think it is fair to let the other people that are in support get to state an opinion before we get further along. I do not know if we can change anybody's mind tonight. I think everybody gets to have a say and then we really need to deliver it fully up here before we make the final decision.



Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: It is responsible and I don't see it as a gamble. Some of us were actually here during the last discussion on Council, and Vice Mayor Rich said I don't do anything unless I have the numbers. That is why we did the polling. I have read all the emails that it is crap. It is the whole purpose of polling. If you are going to trash the results, trash the person we contracted with and their entities. We are not gambling. We are basing it on the numbers. I think it is only responsible given where we are with climate change and increased risk of fire that we definitely do our best now to get the money for fire and the rest for community services, it depends on how you define a city. For me it is not just about how much money you put in to police. It is about the fabric that supports society which is all of our community services. It was crushing to see them not funded and I would like to see that money go out. That is the most that I can say. I do not think this is an irresponsible decision. I think we have the data to support it and I ask our general manager who has been here 33 years about what he thinks the community will support and won't support countless times during the budget hearing. He is the one that set the community is most generous in giving as long as they know what it is for. I think this language actually demonstrates specifically what it is for told us accountable should we not have done what it is that we are planning on doing and I am sure the audit will correct us and we deserve whatever the audit says.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: It is so interesting to me to hear your comments because the comments you are making it's like a script for what I was saying about that evening for the budget discussion where the two positions got funded. For me, I was talking about we need to not make rash decisions. We need to be measured and strategic. We need to have time to assess which positions should be filled. We need to have a long-term plan. I wanted time for us as a City Council to try to figure out the best approach for tackling this situation that we found ourselves in. The majority decided to fund these positions. I sit here and ask myself, how do I respond to what I am hearing which makes complete sense. The strategic plan measured and considered. Those things resonate with me. We are where we are so I look at the paths. The only thing I can say to you is I have had this conversation with so many people recently. All sorts of people in the community and the question that comes up is what are the options? We are here with the budget deficit and we can either move forward now at great expense and do our darndest I have a lot of faith in this City Council and staff about getting the community educated. We can either go for now. Go for the quarter % sales tax or we wait. I understand the argument for waiting but I do not see waiting as creating any more likelihood that we will prevail in 2024 or 2025. I see it strategically being a mistake. It hurts me to the core because I know our city needs the funding and that the \$750,000 no matter what happens with the fire tax, that \$750,000 will not meet all the needs but it will help. It is really going to help. It feels like a missed opportunity. I was on the budget committee. We did not have a plan about pursuing a sales tax. I have to counter that implication that we heard during public comment. In fact, Councilmember Zollman and I were against the two positions that got funded. That was a shock to us. We did not have some sort of plan to bring forward a sales tax measure. We had a plan to do the measured strategic banning concept over a number of months on the forward agendas that have now been pulled. We have to be flexible and strategic. I trust Councilmember McLewis. Trust your instincts and I hear you. I hear Councilmember Maurer also about her concerns . We are where we are. It's not like it's going to be. It's going to be a problem for fire and pull and the people that we come up to have approximately \$750,000 to help what is a way bigger deficit in the budget. And on the change in the budget, I think it has to do with the \$300,000 for the fire truck being shifted to a vehicle expense fund and then it probably would have been substantially higher. Anyway, we are where we are and that is my answer. I think we need to take the risk and try to get this done for the town and at least get that \$650,000 this year and to our darndest to educate the look so they can vote. Thank you for giving me a chance to share my thoughts.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I wanted to say this is exactly why I have the concern about passing this tax right now. We have all of these infrastructure issues. We have all of these different costs at the same time I feel pain that we cannot fund an event or a nonprofit and I think about the core infrastructure that we cannot fund. We cannot fix the roads. There are so many things. That is the concern that I have is if we pass

that right now and we do not know what the critical services need funding. I am concerned because we are talking about specifics for where the money is going to go. In the past we have had so many pet projects. We need lves to be ADA compliant. We have been talking about that for years. I just think that the concern that I have, I have expressed these concerns about managing the infrastructure and all of the big-ticket items that we have that we need to fund but at the same time we are talking about nonprofits and events. I just think that we need to have a strategy for big-ticket items and we do not want to overtax the public without being very specific about what we are doing. When I look at this I do not see it happening. That is what I mean when I talk strategy. I think that we all need to be on the same page. I just don't feel like I am on the same page right now and I'm sorry for that. I am sorry. I'm just not on the same page.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: You do not have to apologize for not being on the same page. I will just say that I would love to fund the lves ADA sidewalks were people have actually fallen. I would love to fund the ADA pool. We would have those discussions if the tax measure passed about how we would spend the money and where the priorities are. The full Council would decide that after the tax measure passes. That is why we have the laundry list of all the options . We talked about a 10 year sunset. We can move the money around. It is true that the fire tax, if it passes we will get money for the fire department. That will be a windfall and I will publicly be voting for that tax. We have other needs and as Mayor of the city of my jurisdiction, this jurisdiction is where my first concern is. The fire, while we have been promised an allocation it is a countywide tax and we only have a small percentage of voters. Of the rest of the county does not vote for it even if Sebastopol does, there you go. It sounds like this is going down tonight but I am not going to lose hope until I actually take the vote.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: It occurred to me in terms about the risk that this money could be allocated in a variety of ways amongst the areas identified and the language does not say percentage in particular categories. If it is a general fund amount. If it's a general election it is money that goes to the general fund. Now the opportunity in terms of distributing it by any particular City Council is even broader. There is to the extent that that is a concern of anybody on the City Council, at least you're limiting it to the categories that have been agreed upon for the wording on the ballot measure. Just another piece of information to consider.

Mayor Hinton moved and Zollman seconded the motion to approve a Resolution Calling an Election to ask the Voters of the City of Sebastopol to Approve A Transactions and Use Tax.

Mayor Hinton called for a roll call vote.

Ayes: Councilmember Zollman, Vice Mayor Rich and Mayor Hinton

Noes: Councilmembers Maurer and McLewis

Absent: None

Abstain: None

The motion failed as the motion required a 4/5ths approval.

City Council Action: None. The Motion failed.

Minute Order Number: 2023-188

**Addition of Urgency Item/Proclamation in Celebration of the 30th anniversary of Sebastopol and Chyhyryn's Sister City Relationship.**

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: I will have to ask the city attorney and general manager what happens if one of us says no in a proclamation? I want it recorded.

City Manager/Attorney McLaughlin commented as follows: We do not normally vote on proclamations but if you wish to call for a vote on this particular proclamation I guess, like any other point of order in the middle of a meeting the point of order would be that you wish the proclamation to be subject to a vote.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: As a point of order I wish this current proclamation to be a vote.

Mayor Hinton opened for public comment.

Patricia commented as follows: I am on the board of Sebastopol World Friends. I am the chair of the committee. I really appreciate you taking this up at the very last minute, especially after such a tough meeting that you just had. The reason we have asked at the last minute for you to consider this proclamation is that we have been approached by neighbors and Sebastopol who are going to Ukraine on August 31 and have offered to take the box of well wishes, we are calling it, to Chyhyryn personally. We really think it would mean so much to them to receive this personally from a Sebastopol resident instead of through the mail. I think if you want to make some changes to this resolution we are fine with that. I think it would be more appropriate to make those changes than to have a dissent on the Council.

Kyle commented as follows: I really want to thank Councilmember Zollman for checking the language on this and catching this, I don't want to call it warmongering, but it essentially making statements about a conflict that is ongoing that could be considered controversial. In reality it is a proclamation celebrating 30 years of our relationship with our sister city. To speak a little bit to the topic here, the United States has committed more than \$60 billion in aid to Ukraine since the beginning of the invasion. That includes more than \$43 billion in military aid. That is more than the U.S. distributes in aid to any other country. The day after the invasion \$350 million was approved in military aid. Six months and, \$3 billion more is pledged by the pentagon and military aid. After one year, \$31.8 billion the Biden administration has announced an additional \$2 billion in security assistance. Let's be very clear about separating what we see as celebration of a 30 year relationship with a sister city and engaging in international were discussions when the very language we are including in here helps to contribute to policymakers and decision-makers to continue to spend billions and billions of dollars on war machines that do nothing other than kill human life.

Michael commented as follows: I would like to support Councilmember Zollman. Abraham Lincoln said, I do not like that, man. I must get to know him better. I would suggest there is an excellent series of interviews with Oliver Stone and Vladimir Putin. It is well worth the watch. It would really give you a different perspective of what is happening with Ukraine.

June commented as follows: I just wanted to thank Councilmember Zollman for raising this item. I was looking in the agenda packet frantically to try to read the language and I could not come up with it. I guess because it was last minute. In hearing it read there were a number of parts I was trying to catch that I was not sure about that part. I really feel like we do have a 30 year relationship to celebrate and I do not think it is appropriate to hijack that for some sort of political agenda that puts in a few lines here and there that are really divisive as far as how the community may view what is happening internationally and there is a lot of context and nuance and history. I would not like the sister city relationship that have a basin piece and promoting peace to be hijacked with slogans around international perspective that may not represent the whole community. Some pieces that were thrown and there around the current conflicts. It does note that the exchange was positive in 2014 so there's a lot of complex history there. I would ask that we hold off on any proclamation until the language could be further

vetted and I think it is too complex to try to do tonight when the community has not had a chance to see the document and weigh in with suggestions.

Discussion:

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I am a little frustrated, frankly. I would be willing based on our representative from World Friends to make some compromise on paragraph three although personally I was shocked when Ukraine was overrun and many of us in this town put Ukrainian flags in our homes and businesses, but I am willing to compromise on my position. As Council I have not always voted with the majority and proclamations. I can think of one recently this year that I voted against so I understand if somebody does not want to support it, but I would be willing to compromise on paragraph three. I would not be willing to compromise on paragraph four. I am excited to hopefully see Ukraine reconstruct and I am eager to start youth and adult exchanges. Having done and exchange myself to believe it is the best way to promote peace and learn about other cultures.

Councilmember Zollman provided his requests for changes to the wording.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I am struggling with what the concern is but would it be acceptable on paragraph four where you are suggesting we delete the City of Sebastopol, to instead have it read, to instead delete following Ukraine's assured victory? I think that maybe one of your concerns or would say whereas the city of Sebastopol and Sebastopol world friends stand ready to assist Ukraine in reconstruction and are eager and ready to assume exchanges.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: That was not the issue. If the rest of the Council wants to include citizens of Sebastopol that could be an option.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: The concern is you do not want your concern about a statement that the city is specifically wanting to assist. Is that your hesitation.

Councilmember Zollman commented as follows: That is correct. With reconstruction and eager to resume exchanges. That does not speak for me.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I'm struggling to understand any of this but I can certainly compromise with paragraph three but paragraph four with striking youth and adult exchanges, I myself was an exchange student. I went to west Germany and when I came home the wall came down and everything else while I was there. I think as Mayor Hinton said, exchange and understanding other cultures is so important for everyone in this world. There is no other way to actually understand. I am struggling with why we would need to strike that.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I would prefer not to strike it because our relationship is with the city.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: We are not saying every citizen in the city. We are just saying the city. That is our relationship. We have had a 30 year relationship.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: I am willing to compromise on paragraph three. I would prefer to keep city of Sebastopol in.

Vice Mayor Rich commented as follows: I have one alternate that would read whereas following Ukraine's assured victory the City of Sebastopol and Sebastopol world friends are eager to resume youth and adult exchanges.

Whereas, following Ukraine's assured victory, the City of Sebastopol and Sebastopol World Friends are eager ~~to stands ready to assist Ukraine in its reconstruction and are eager to~~ to resume youth and adult exchanges, and;

Councilmember Zollman was in concurrence.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I would be agreeable to that if it gets 100% support. The one question I have is just because they are sister city, how does that make us look that we are not willing to assist? I feel like we have a relationship with them and I don't want to get into a lot of contention here but it puzzles me that we declare that we have this relationship, it's on our signs and everything else but in a proclamation we are not willing to assist. It is just a comment.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: We do not agree necessarily in every word. I do not want to wordsmith every block the nation. It was brought to us by the world friends organization and the board. Again, I do not want to sit here and wordsmith it for them. I am happy to support them and I am agreeable to the changes recommended in paragraph three.

The Council then discussed paragraph 4 as proposed:

Whereas, youth exchanges were suspended in 2014 due to the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, and remain so until the present day ~~due to the unprovoked, unrestrained, and unconscionable military aggression from the Russian Federation; and;~~

Councilmember Maurer asked if the amendments works for SWF.

SWF stated yes.

Councilmember McLewis commented as follows: I think we are setting a precedent and now we will be debating these all the time. I do not want to debate proclamations as a rule of thumb. Unwilling to compromise on this but I will not do it again. I don't appreciate the chastising but I also don't appreciate emergency situations.

Mayor Hinton commented as follows: We made it happen because we took half the month off in our Council meeting.

**MOTION:**

Vice Mayor Rich moved and Councilmember Zollman seconded the motion to approve the Proclamation with the following amendments:

Whereas, youth exchanges were suspended in 2014 due to the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, and remain so until the present day ~~due to the unprovoked, unrestrained, and unconscionable military aggression from the Russian Federation; and;~~

Whereas, following Ukraine's assured victory, the City of Sebastopol and Sebastopol World Friends are eager ~~to stands ready to assist Ukraine in its reconstruction and are eager to~~ to resume youth and adult exchanges, and;

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

**VOTE:**

Ayes: Councilmembers Maurer, McLewis, Zollman, Vice Mayor Rich and Mayor Hinton

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

City Council Action: Approved proclamation as amended.

Minute Order Number: 2023-189

**ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:** Three minutes per speaker for up to twenty (20) minutes total for public comments but can be reduced at Mayor's discretion depending upon the number of speakers or Mayor has discretion to allow for additional time beyond the 20 minutes allocated for public comment dependent upon the subject matter or number of speakers. There was none.

**CITY COUNCIL/CITY STAFF REPORTS/COMMUNICATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/FUTURE MEETINGS:** NONE  
**CLOSED SESSION:** NONE

**ADJOURNMENT OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

August 8, 2023 Special Meeting will be adjourned to the Regular City Council Meeting of September 5, 2023 at 6:00 pm (In Person and Remote/Zoom Virtual Meeting Format)

Please Note: City Council Regular Meeting of August 15, 2023 has been cancelled.

Mayor Hinton adjourned the City Council Special Meeting of August 8, 2023 at 8:31 pm to the Regular City Council Meeting of September 5, 2023 at 6:00 pm. (In Person and Remote/Zoom Virtual Meeting Format)

Respectfully Submitted,



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