

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: December 3, 2024

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**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers  
**From:** Mary Gourley, City Clerk  
**Subject:** Waive First Reading of and Introduce an Ordinance Repealing Ordinance Number 1132 (Electronic Filing of Campaign Finance Disclosure and Statements of Economic Interests). This item is to repeal use of City’s On Line City Portal (Vendor: Granicus/Southtech) for Submission of Campaign Statements and Form 700’s (Statements of Economic Interest). Effective January 1, 2025, all 87200 filers (City Council, Planning Commission, City Attorney and City Treasurer) are required to utilize the State Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) Portal; thereby rescinding use of the City’s online program

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** The item is to request the Council to waive the First Reading of and Introduce and Ordinance Repealing Ordinance Number 1132 (Electronic Filing of Campaign Finance Disclosure and Statements of Economic Interests). This item is to repeal use of City’s On Line City Portal (Vendor: Granicus/Southtech) for Submission of Campaign Statements and Form 700’s (Statements of Economic Interest).

**BACKGROUND:**

In March 2021, the City of Sebastopol approved an ordinance for electronic filing of campaign statements and Statements of Economic Interests (Form 700) and Campaign Reports. Since that time, all Form 700s and campaign reports have been filed on line through the City of Sebastopol portal through the City’s Vendor (Granicus/Southtech).

Effective January 1, 2025, all 87200 filers (City Council, Planning Commission, City Manager, City Attorney and City Treasurer) are required to utilize the State Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) Portal; thereby making use of the City’s online program largely redundant. This item will require all Filers (other than the 82700 Filers as noted above) to submit an Original Copy of the Form 700 to the Office of the City Clerk rather than submit it through an on-line portal. A scanned copy of the form(s) will be posted on line at the City of Sebastopol Website for Form 700 and campaign Documents. This does not change any mandated submittal requirements as required by State Regulations; it repeals the ordinance for use of City portal.

**DISCUSSION:**

Form 700s: Statement of Economic Interest:

In 2021 when the ordinance was adopted, local jurisdictions could require the filing of campaign statements and reports solely in an electronic form through an adopted ordinance to specify that requirement.

However, effective January 1, 2025, public officials for whom the Fair Political Practices Commission (“FPPC”) is the filing officer (“Commission Filers”) must file their Form 700s electronically via the FPPC Portal; and can no longer file through the City of Sebastopol online portal. No other means of filing will satisfy the FPPC Commission Filer’s Form 700 filing obligation after January 1, 2025.

Government Code Section 87500, subdivision (a), lists the local and state officials who are subject to this requirement. The following local officials are considered Commission Filers and must e-file via the FPPC Portal:

The following filers for the City of Sebastopol are considered Commission Filers and have been notified by FPPC that they are now required to file on line.

City Council  
Planning Commission  
City Manager  
City Attorney  
City Treasurer/Administrative Services Director

Currently, the FPPC posts on its website the Form 700s filed by elected officers. The public can email Form700@fppc.ca.gov to request all the Form 700s filed via the FPPC Portal. City filing officials are not required to keep copies of Form 700s filed through the FPPC's e-filing system. The decision of whether to post the Form 700s of additional FPPC Commission Filers on the FPPC website is under consideration by the FPPC.

All identified employees Commission Filers are still required to submit an Original Copy of the Form 700 to the Office of the City Clerk rather than submit it through an on-line portal. A scanned copy of the form(s) will be posted online at the City of Sebastopol Website for Form 700 and campaign Documents.

Campaign Reports:

The Political Reform Act requires candidates and committees to file campaign statements by specified deadlines disclosing contributions received and expenditures made. These documents are public and may be audited by the FPPC and FTB to ensure that voters are fully informed and improper practices prohibited.

As part of the repealing of this ordinance, campaign reports will no longer be submitted through the City's online portal but the campaign original report will be submitted to the office of the City Clerk and will then be redacted and posted to the City of Sebastopol Website for transparency.

**STAFF ANALYSIS:**

Since the adoption of this ordinance, City staff has contracted with Granicus/Southtech for the online portal for reporting. Although the intention of the online reporting was to conserve resources, advance the City of Sebastopol's Zero Waste goals and ensure the public has access to information disclosed in campaign statements and reports in a timelier manner, it has been reported to City difficulties with the online reporting. City staff have received complaints from Council, Candidates and City staff as to the complexity of the online program; length of time for response to issues, hard to follow training videos, that rather than file online, City staff has received paper copies of the reports and has redacted the reports and uploaded them to the city website for transparency. This was thought to save staff time, but that has not been the case.

Repealing of the ordinance will also result in a savings of \$2000 per year for the online portal as well as for City staff time to address the issues as discussed above.

City staff believes that although it will require some additional time to redact original documents for posting, it will reduce the fiscal impact of the cost of the subscription of the program.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There is no fiscal impact with the action tonight; but will result in a \$2000 a year savings for the current subscription.

**RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:** That the Council waive the First Reading of and Introduce an Ordinance Repealing Ordinance Number 1132 (Electronic Filing of Campaign Finance Disclosure and Statements of Economic Interests). This item is to repeal use of City's On Line City Portal (Vendor: Granicus/Southtech) for Submission of Campaign Statements and Form 700's (Statements of Economic Interest).

**OPTIONS:**

That the Council can deny the request to repeal the ordinance and require all filers (other than those that are now required to file through the FPPC portal (Council, City Manager, City Attorney, City Treasurer and Planning Commission) to file through the current online portal.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

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

**PUBLIC NOTICE:**

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

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: Ordinance

**APPROVALS:**

Department Head Approval: Approval Date: 11-25-2024

CEQA Determination (Planning): Approval Date: 11-25-2024

The proposed action is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Administrative Services/Financial Approval: Approval Date: 11-25-2024

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget:  Yes  No  N/A

Account Code (f applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

City Attorney Approval: Approval Date: 11-25-2024

City Manager Approval: Approval Date: 11-25-2024

ORDINANCE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL REPEALING ORDINANCE NUMBER 1132  
(ELECTRONIC FILING OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE DISCLOSURE AND STATEMENTS OF ECONOMIC INTEREST)

**WHEREAS**, in March 2021, the City of Sebastopol City Council adopted Ordinance Number 1132 requiring the electronic filing of campaign statements and Statements of Economic Interests (Form 700) and Campaign Reports; and

**WHEREAS**, effective January 1, 2025, all Government Code section 87200 filers (City Council Members, Planning Commissioners, City Attorney, City Manager, and City Treasurer) are required to utilize the State Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) Portal; thereby making use of the City’s online program largely redundant; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a cost to the City of maintaining its own online portal, and non-Section 87200 filers will still be required to submit paper copies of Statements of Economic Interests to the City Clerk, who will then post them online; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council desires to repeal Ordinance Number 1132 to eliminate redundant filing portals.

**NOW THEREFORE**, the City Council of the City of Sebastopol does ordain as follows:

**Section 1.** Ordinance Number 1132 is hereby repealed.

**Section 2.** This Ordinance shall become effective thirty (30) days after its adoption. The City Clerk shall have this Ordinance published in a newspaper of general circulation within fifteen (15) days after its adoption or have a summary of the Ordinance published twice in a newspaper of general circulation, once five days before its adoption and again fifteen days after its adoption.

The foregoing Ordinance was PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Sebastopol at a regular meeting of said Council on XXX by the following vote:

**VOTE:**

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

APPROVED:

Mayor

ATTEST:

Mary Gourley, Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, MMC

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Alex Mog, City Attorney