

Public Comment – Keep hybrid meetings – move on to more critical issues facing the city.

Tonight is the second meeting dedicating substantial time to denying the public the opportunity to participate in council meetings via zoom. The extensive staff briefing document and past public comment shows:

- The initiative is not consistent with the city's values and goals.
- The concept was universally opposed by the public. Among the council members only the mayor expressed support for the initiative in December.
- City staff has taken a firm position in favor of continuing zoom meetings with appropriate changes to policies to minimize meeting disruptions.

The agenda committee should have dropped further discussion of this item, saving the expense of staff time to prepare the staff document. We have a "fiscal crisis" – staff time is money too.

Equally important, time spent on issues such as curtailing public participation in city government takes away time for the city staff and the council to address critical problems currently facing our city.

1. Public Safety

What steps are being taken to address the mugging of children in IVES park. Should there be a system to alert parents about violence in the local parks or neighborhoods?

2. Water and Sewer Enterprise operations and infrastructure

According to the approved budget, Water and Sewer Enterprises run a \$268,000 deficit every month. This money is being "borrowed" from reserves and will have to be paid back. The city, in effect, is asking every homeowner to hand over another \$100 bill every month until the council addresses the shortfall in rates.

New water meters will cost rate payers \$200,000 in debt every year for the next 13 years. The last council was promised the debt payment would be offset by savings. When will the council examine the promised savings or have they disappeared for good?

Allocating a % of a department's operating expense to water and sewer, results in water rate payers paying for unrelated expenses. One obvious example: rate payers paid 24% of the last city council grant to the Apple Blossom parade. Possibly not legal. Probably won't be popular with rate payers.

3. Business Environment – Sales Tax Revenue/Quality of life in the city

Theft from our downtown businesses is increasingly widespread. Realistically Rite Aid and Copperfield's and Whole Foods are core businesses downtown and all three of those corporations have announced steps to close unprofitable stores. How long will it be before theft makes our stores unprofitable and close, transforming downtown Sebastopol into a ghost town?

4. Roads, Sewer and Water Improvements

The capital improvement plan has still not been discussed eight months into the year. Poor capital planning assumptions were credited as the explanation for why the 2019 water rate study was so flawed, doesn't it seem appropriate that Council review the CIP plan before the rate study is complete? A study showed our roads in need of serious repair. What is the plan?