

Dear Council Members,

In light of the fact that Council has major topics of importance to Sebastopol on the 2/20/24 agenda including the cost allocation of the General Fund to the Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds and the Recology Trash Contract, I ask that item 4, Ceasefire Resolution, be pulled from the Agenda.

Council Members are not elected to give their opinions on international politics; they are elected to make sure that tax money and other citizen revenue is spent to provide basic services such as fire, police, water, sewer, roads, and parks. In that regard, Council needs to concentrate its energies on these basic services as all are in jeopardy.

Council Members have not done a survey to see how residents feel on this issue so if the resolution is approved, it is either the personal opinion of the Council or the influence of a particular activist community. In either case, it is not appropriate as the Council is supposed to represent the citizens of Sebastopol and their best interests.

At this point in time, the best interests of the citizens of Sebastopol would be met by Council focusing on the Water and Sewer Fund, how money paid by residents for Water and Sewer Services has been misappropriated for at least a decade, and how the City is going to repay the Water and Sewer Fund. Agenda Item 5 which details the fact that the City has misappropriated over \$700,000 in rate payer funds to support the General Fund is an issue which needs Council's full attention.

Council is not in legal compliance and has not been in legal compliance with California Prop. 218, which explicitly states that fees related to a property related service such as water and sewer "shall not be used for any purpose other than that for which the fee was imposed." (See CalCities Prop. 218 Implementation Guide, page 71.

<https://www.cacities.org/uploadedfiles/leagueinternet/c2/c2f1ce7c-2b14-45fe-9aaa-d3dd2e0ffecc.pdf>

Given the fact that water and sewer rates were set to increase by 100%, water and sewer rate payers need to be repaid the money which the City erroneously has syphoned from the Water and Sewer Fund for at least a decade. It appears that the City owes the Water and Sewer ratepayers at least \$7,000,000. If this money is repaid to the Water and Sewer Funds, then rates can stabilize and there will be some money left for important infrastructure upgrades.

Given Sebastopol's budget crisis, it seems that one way to remedy this situation would be to levy a sales tax increase and earmark all the money raised to repay the debt that the City of Sebastopol owes to the Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds.

Until there is resolution on the major issues facing Sebastopol - water and sewer rates and infrastructure, budget crisis (Council has declared a fiscal emergency), road infrastructure, sidewalk infrastructure, and basic park maintenance – Council meetings, staff resources and

City focus needs to be on the 2 square miles of Sebastopol. We can't solve the world's problems until we solve our own.

Thank you,  
Kate Haug