

**Town of San Anselmo
1996-97 Proposed Budget & Work Plan
Minutes of the Meeting of July 17, 1996**

Introduction

Town Administrator Pollard said the preliminary budget presented earlier to Council showed an approximate \$1 million shortfall. Council asked staff to come back with a balanced budget with work prioritized. Included in this budget are the six goals established for the upcoming year. These goals include improving the infrastructure, enhancing public safety, disaster preparedness and traffic safety, revitalizing of the downtown, enhancing customer service and work efficiency, involving youth in local government and providing affordable housing. The budget has been balanced by deferring several projects and proposing several new fees, and includes the use of fund reserves to balance the budget. Potential new sources of revenues are downtown revitalization, fundraising and grants.

Kroot asked about the use of fund reserves to balance the budget. Town Administrator Pollard said gas tax reserves are used for one time project costs. Insurance reserves were set aside for future use and weren't needed so they are available now for use.

Chignell asked about the proposed assessment on stormwater; what have other Marin cities done and is the work mandatory? Town Administrator Pollard said the work is mandatory. Three cities have funded the work out of their General Funds. Belvedere accomplished it on the sewer bill and the remaining cities utilized a benefit assessment fee.

Town Administrator Pollard said with regard to the Revenue Summary that a 4% increase in assessed valuation is anticipated. Garbage fees are expected to increase as of January 1 and a jump in revenue is expected in business licenses. This year a drop in vehicle code and parking fines has been experienced. Interest earnings are projected to decrease due to the use of the money for the Library project. Construction revenue has decreased although activity in this area has not. The decrease is reflective of the method of figuring the fees.

Chignell asked if Pollard considered using LAIF funds in the budget and what is considered a prudent reserve. Pollard said LAIF funds are planned for the Library project. Council policy is not to dip cash reserves below \$500,000.

Hodgens asked about the ERAF money. Pollard said the Town received \$58,000 last year from ERAF, but we cannot rely on this at this point.

Regarding **Planning**, Pollard said the budget is similar to last year's. We now have a full time Assistant Planner on board. Eliminated from the budget was money to codify the General Plan.

Chignell asked about the Town's affordable housing goal; will a consultant be needed or can the Planning Director handle this work. Pollard said we would have to appropriate funds from Contingency for this.

Hodgens asked why there is a decrease in projected fees for Planning when staffing is increased. Pollard said lump sum payments of prior year fees accounts for this discrepancy.

Louise Mathews, Foothill Road, asked why a printer shows up in both Engineering and Planning when they'll be sharing the printer. Pollard said the amount should be \$550 in each budget, instead of \$1100.

Regarding the **Police** budget, Pollard said money is included for a retired police officer on a limited basis on the high school campus during daytime hours when school is in session to be shared with the high school.

Hodgens asked about the compelling reasons for this expenditure.

Police Chief Del Santo said there is a tremendous amount of drug and alcohol activity at the high school, as well as gang activity in the area. Several narcotics arrests were made at the end of the school year. The Drake Vice-Principals made this suggestion because of all this activity. This would be a partnership with shared costs.

Hodgens said she has a problem with this. Do other communities in the county have police officers on campus. How do families feel about this? How about the Principal? She would like more information.

Del Santo said that Bill Levinson, Superintendent of the Tam District, is supportive.

Chignell asked what is total amount to be spent. Del Santo said it would be \$8,000 for the Town, \$8,000 for the school district.

Hodgens said she would like to have this brought to Council as a separate issue on an agenda for further discussion.

Under Services and Supplies for Police, Del Santo said that the closure of Lincoln House will make a difference in the costs for dealing with intoxicated people. He will come back with an estimate on this.

Town Administrator Pollard said the budget calls for the purchase of one police car. The management information computerization project will cost \$40,000. State moneys identified for law enforcement can be used next year for this project.

Chignell asked how the personnel retirement planned in December will affect the budget. Pollard said there could be a whole configuration in the Department.

Regarding Fire Protection Services, Fire Chief Ron Zeise said the department is no longer dependent on revenues from the embezzlement payback. They are making plans in the disaster preparedness area, public education, and inspection. The Department is paperless in incident reports.

Yarish asked about the final payment from the embezzlement. Zeise said he expects it but it isn't worked into the budget; it would go into the capital improvement program.

Regarding Street Maintenance, Town Administrator Pollard said they propose to continue with full staffing. The overall budget is expected to decrease, partly because of the recommendation for stormwater assessment fees. An asphalt pavement roller is included in the equipment fund.

Regarding the Stormwater/Creek Pollution Control, Pollard said this is proposed to be a new fee. It is a Federal/State mandate to meet these requirements. Required improvements to the vehicle wash at the Corporation Yard are included. We will be fined if we don't do this work. The cost is about \$35,000. An enforcement program in this area is requested frequently and it will have associated costs. Also included is equipment to clear storm drain blockages. A similar assessment fee has been adopted by six Marin cities, with an average cost of \$15 per parcel. If passed, it could go on the tax rolls for '96-'97.

Chignell asked how much would be raised by this fee. Pollard said approximately \$70,000.

Steve Zieger, County of Marin, said the fees are based per parcel on how much runoff the property generates. Commercial property would actually pay more because they would have more asphalt-covered land.

Chignell said he is worried about loading up on the taxpayers. School parcel taxes are coming up for renewal. MMWD has the Fireflow tax coming up. He feels we should look at funding from the General Fund.

Kroot asked if this is the last year this can be done. Pollard said if the Jarvis-Gann measure on the November ballot passes, we may not be able to implement this without going to the voters.

Hodgens asked if we don't enact the assessment fee, what projects would be eliminated. This would be \$1.25 per month for residential property owners. She feels that residents and business owners, with an education program, could support this. We have no choice about participation in this program

Breen said we could go with any amount, not going all the way to the \$15.

George Buckle asked if this is a tax or a fee. Pollard said it is a fee, based on benefit you are to receive. Buckle said he is against this; it is inappropriate without an election.

Louise Mathews, Foothill Road, said she understands this is a cooperative plan with other cities and County of Marin. The \$23,000 is a yearly cost to monitor our adherence to the protocol. The Corporation Yard vehicle wash costs \$35,000, but this is a one-time cost, and the set cost per year is \$23,000. She feels the assessment could be one that paid the mandated cost per year.

Dan Goltz, Holstein Road, agrees with Ms. Mathews. He feels the public will react negatively. This should be discussed openly before it is passed.

Breen said perhaps it would be helpful for staff to prepare a chart showing what would it take to generate various amounts of money for this.

Wayne Bush, Public Works Director, said he doesn't feel the \$23,500 fee cost will hold for another year. It will probably go up. This is low cost in Marin compared to other counties whose citizens are not nearly as environmentally conscious.

Yarish asked if there would be any shortage of projects for this money.

Bush said the first priority would be projects that restore creeks, reduce pollution, and improve stormwater flows for flood control.

Steve Zieger, County of Marin, said individual cities just aren't doing enough. If the County gets permitted, then the State tells you what you have to do. To keep our costs down, we have to show them that we're being responsible.

Hodgens said the larger issue is to increase participation in the program to avoid getting a permit process brought down on us. We need to spend money to avoid the permit process.

Yarish asked if this money could be used for drainage improvements not covered by Measure G. Pollard answered affirmatively.

Louise Mathews, Foothill Road, said she would like SWARAC or SAVE to find inexpensive ways to get this message out.

Pollard said the Friends of Corte Madera Creek are doing that kind of volunteer work. But, they have told us that they are not an enforcement arm. They will turn enforcement over to the Town. The Marin City Managers met recently with the Water Quality Resources Control Board, and they are watching Marin very closely as it is the only Bay Area County that is not under the permit process.

Hodgens asked if this fee could be set at a different level each year. Pollard answered affirmatively.

Regarding Capital Projects, Town Administrator Pollard said there are \$1,000,000 worth of projects on the prioritized pending list, not counting preventive maintenance or regular work. Projected revenues amount to \$602,284. The funding threshold for Capital Projects would be at just before the Corporation Yard building project. Halpern Park needs \$80,000 worth of debris removal that has to be done before the next winter's storms to prevent damage to neighboring properties. The Isabel Cook lead abatement project didn't make the cut either. The Town will need to dip into the Corporation Yard money to get the Halpern Park work done.

Yarish said perhaps we should carryover some dedicated funds so we can guarantee that the Corporation work gets done next year.

Chignell said he would like more information on the Corporation Yard.

Public Works Director Bush said the \$350,000 estimate is an optimistic number.

Betty Manson, 45 Angela, said she appreciates all the efforts that have gone into taking care of the problems on Halpern Park as she is a downhill neighbor.

Town Administrator Pollard said with the consensus of Council it would be helpful to put this expenditure on next Tuesday's agenda so work can go forward on repair.

Bush said it may be difficult to get all the work done before next winter. There may be a need for some debris removal next winter as well.

George Buckle asked if anyone thought about buying her house rather than fixing the hillside.

Town Administrator Pollard said there are other homes involved as well.

Dan Goltz, Holstein Road, asked if federal or state money is available for this type of work.

Bush said he has applied for a grant for \$375,000.

George Buckle asked about if neighbors can raise money to pay for an upgraded project in their neighborhood, above what the Town plans to do.

Bush said if he was convinced that more work was necessary, they would revise the Capital Improvement Plan as needed.

Pollard said the Council may want to look at this issue on a cost/benefit ratio. Staff will provide Mr. Buckle with the resolution on Town participation on unmaintained streets.

Kroot said he feels this is a good idea and should go to the Measure G Monitoring Committee.

Police Dispatcher, Tracy Collins, spoke on the Police Department safety barrier. There are times, especially in the middle of the night, when there are unsavory characters at the counter that make them feel uncomfortable.

Captain Schmidt, Safety Committee, said the committee is committed to this barrier. The Committee represents a broad spectrum of Town employees. The dispatchers have been in threatening situations and they can't leave the 911 board even if they are afraid. This is an opportunity to prevent a tragedy. The barrier would be closed at night, but would have a speaker system.

Buckle asked about the screen currently in place. Schmidt says it takes too long to come down and has holes that things can go through.

Regarding Engineering, Pollard said the department has the same level of staffing, including a Plan Check Engineer. The recruitment process for this position has not yet been concluded, but preliminary results indicate it might not be possible to fill the position based on the current recruitment efforts. If this turns out to be the case, then we'll have to recruit again, and if so, we'll take another look at the design of the job and recruitment in order to get an engineer onboard by mid-year. The rest of the budget remains the same as last year.

Chignell asked if we are being pound foolish regarding the Building Inspector's vehicle replacement.

Bush said this isn't a cost effective way of doing it. The vehicle has a lot of maintenance costs associated with it due to its age.

Chignell said he'd like to see the vehicle funded.

Kroot asked if a small pickup truck be more economical for this job. He also asked if it has proven to be a problem having a plan checker and engineer in one person.

Bush said it is a combination of skills that's difficult to find. Recruiting and advertising, however, can help.

Regarding the Gas Tax, Town Administrator Pollard said there is a fund balance of \$250,000. This can be used to offset General Fund expenditures for street maintenance. She proposes to transfer \$100,000 to replenish the Emergency Reserves Fund, with \$50,000 going to the General Fund to offset the Recreation fund transfer for 1995-96. For 1996-97 she recommends the \$100,000 in Gas Tax go to the General Fund for one-time programs and capital costs.

Yarish said he would like to see gas taxes covering all street work.

George Buckle asked if this transfer is legal and approved by our auditors. He is concerned with putting this money in the General Fund. He feels the Town should look into this from a legal standpoint.

It was the consensus of Council to continue the last three items, Emergency Reserves, Council and Administration/Finance to the meeting of July 30, 1996.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Debbie Stutsman