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July 26, 2013

A WORD FROM THE TOWN MANAGER



Bankruptcy and Pensions

Detroit's recent bankruptcy filing sent some shock waves throughout the world of local government both for cities trying to manage municipal liabilities and for pensioners who fear that, even after retirement, the pension they considered secure may be threatened. While we here in Tiburon have no need to fear bankruptcy (far from it, our reserves are very healthy and revenue projections are improving), it is nevertheless a good moment for reflection on our liabilities now and into the future.

The Town has no debt - a very good and rather unusual thing. (Our residents do pay property taxes for some voter-approved debt issued by other agencies, such as the Marin County bonds for open space acquisition.) So the Town starts out from a pretty strong position. We have two other things in our favor, both due to long-standing conservative fiscal policies adopted by Town Councils throughout the years: modest pension obligations to employees, and minimal Town-specific retirement benefits, often referred to as OPEBs or "Other Post Employment Benefits".

OPEBs

Regarding the latter, many cities have a lot of OPEBs, and they tend to be woefully underfunded. A typical OPEB is lifetime health insurance for retirees and their spouses. When these benefits originated, their costs were minimal and they were commonly offered in both the public and private sector, but of course that has not been the case for some time. Tiburon has but one OPEB, a contribution for medical coverage that is capped at the time of retirement (and thus does not rise with increasing medical costs) and ceases upon the employee's death. It is a fairly modest benefit that ratchets up slowly to its maximum level (the Kaiser one-party rate) only after 25 years of service to and subsequent retirement from the Town. Most importantly, it is now a finite liability because the Town ceased offering this benefit to new employees many years ago. Thus our sole OPEB

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exposure is small now, and will disappear entirely in the future.

Pensions

On the pension front, Tiburon has long been on the lower or "less generous" end of the pension spectrum. During the free-wheeling 1990s, many public agencies in California increased pension entitlements for employees when it appeared that there was almost no cost in doing so. What poor calculus and lack of foresight that involved! Fortunately for us, Tiburon's leaders were steady at the helm and kept our pension benefit unchanged despite increases elsewhere, including here in Marin. Those smart decisions by our predecessors positioned the Town well to weather the recent economic downturn and have kept our pension costs, which are a pay-as-you-go system with existing employees, at a manageable level. Nevertheless, we expect significant growth in pension costs due to the PERS (California Public Employees Retirement System) method of passing costs through to its member agencies.

In the hope that this subject is not boring you to tears, I'll expound just a bit further.

Like almost all cities and towns in California, Tiburon participates in PERS for retirement benefits. The Town and its employees both pay into the system based on the Town's pension formulae. (The Town does not pay into, nor do employees derive benefits from, Social Security.) This expense is computed as a percentage of current salaries, and is intended to accumulate funds with PERS for employees' eventual retirement. It is important to note that once someone is retired their pension becomes the responsibility of PERS, not the Town.

Unfortunately for us and every other city and town, PERS lost a lot of money during the recession. It has the legal ability to rectify that by passing increased costs through to member agencies. Thus, the percentage of payroll we are required to pay is expected to grow every year for some time before it stabilizes. While unwelcome, this is a cost of doing business we can manage. On the positive side, recent changes in state law dictate that new employees, that is, employees that are not already in the PERS system, must come in at a substantially lower pension level. This will help to mitigate future costs for everyone.

So why not pull out of PERS altogether, you may wonder? Setting aside philosophical issues related to pensions and past obligations, there are several practical concerns that impact the feasibility of this option. One is that PERS is an all or nothing system. Unlike OPEBs, which we control, we cannot simply declare that new employees will not be in PERS. Pulling out would require the Town to withdraw all of its employees from the PERS system, necessitating complete pre-funding of the full retirement obligation (actuarially

determined) for all current employees. This would be a huge, multi-million dollar cost exceeding our current capability, although in theory the Town could seek voter approval to raise funds for this purpose.

Another important factor to consider is that it may be difficult for the Town to function smoothly outside the PERS system. Since almost every public agency participates in PERS (or an equivalent retirement system), it would be a big challenge for the Town to successfully recruit and, more importantly, retain quality employees without offering this benefit, so the Town might be placing itself at a competitive disadvantage, at least given the current public sector landscape. The best hope for meaningful change may be additional legislation at the state level, similar to their recent mandate lowering the pension level for new employees. State action would keep all cities on a level playing field when vying for the best employees. While it is a fool's errand to predict what Sacramento might do, I think there is a strong, and perhaps even inevitable, trend underway to reduce the future costs of public pensions that will prevail.

I, for one, lament that our society has gone away from the greater security for retirees that pensions offer, a benefit once commonplace in both the public and private sectors (my late father being a good example - he was an engineer for an automotive corporation for many years and retired with a comfortable pension for himself and my mother), but, for better or worse, the country has moved in the direction of privatizing retirements through 401Ks and other personal tax-deferred investments, and thus the public sector needs to move in that direction as well.

As for Tiburon, I believe our prudent fiscal past and the comprehensive steps taken in recent years by the Town Council to rein in pension and OPEB costs (with great cooperation from our dedicated employees) have given us a very favorable liability profile that will serve us in good stead for a long time and position us well for the inevitable shifts to come in this area. The proverbial financial chickens really do come home to roost; I'm very glad we've kept the coop in good working order.

Excellent New Shuttle Service!

Traffic on Tiburon Boulevard got you down? We all have the opportunity to do something about it by patronizing, to the greatest extent possible, the new shuttle service being started up by Marin Transit on August 4. The new service will be a big improvement over the existing Route 19 bus: smaller, more user-friendly shuttles will replace the larger vehicles and operate between Strawberry and downtown Tiburon with shorter, 30-minute "headways" (the time between buses at any one location). Perhaps the most exciting element: there will also be a reinstatement of the old "ferry feeder" service with shuttles running through some

neighborhoods to connect people to the ferry terminal downtown. Check out new Routes 219 and 219-F (for ferry) at the Marin Transit [website](#).

See if you can't use the shuttle yourself (perhaps employ a little creative thinking about how you can combine a walk and a ride to run your errand or get to work) or recommend it to friends, employees or others who might find it of value. It is up to us as a community to make this service a success. The last thing any of us needs is for it to go unused, as that will eventually result in no service at all with a concomitant jump in Boulevard traffic. Let's cut traffic and be greener in the process. Support the Shuttle!

Art by the Bay

This was mentioned in the last Tiburon Talk, but this art extravaganza is too remarkable not to repeat. Don't miss the upcoming **Art by the Bay** (August 10-18) in Blackie's Pasture and beyond, and related **Tiburon Art Festival** (August 17-18) on Ark Row. Please note the announcement further down in this issue.

Two Great Employees Retire

This July, two long-time Tiburon Public Works employees, John McKelvie and Denis Williams, are retiring. You may or may not know them, but if you are a resident they have helped you out. John and Denis have worked to keep the streets and plumbing (think storm drains) and much, much more in this Town functioning well for years. They have spent innumerable nights on call, come out in the worst weather and over weekends to solve urgent problems and just generally been there doing the right thing when we have needed them most. I wish John and Denis the very best in their well-deserved retirement and great fishing each and every time (more often, soon!) they head out to the pond. We will miss them!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peggy Curran". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Peggy Curran

NEWS BRIEFS

Reducing Crime -- What You Can Do

Reports of serious crime have declined in Tiburon in recent years. Since 2008 the numbers have dropped steadily from a high of about 150 crimes per year to just under 100 per year. More than 80 percent of that number is burglary and theft.



The most common crime by far is simple theft, most of it from cars. About half of the thefts occur during the daytime and usually involve a purse or other valuables left in an unlocked car or in plain view in a locked car. One theft of a purse in plain view in a locked car resulted in a smashed window and a loss of close to \$50,000 in jewelry.

Several recent thefts have occurred in the Blackie's Pasture parking lot. Thieves move quickly through the lot, break a window if necessary, take a purse or other valuables and disappear in just minutes.

The likelihood of identifying perpetrators has improved since we installed the security cameras, but criminals rarely leave fingerprints and often dispose of stolen property within hours making prosecution or recovery of the stolen items unlikely.

We recently learned that some thieves are now using an electronic device that will unlock a car just like the key or device you use to unlock your own car. It won't be long before we experience that if we haven't already. This raises the risk for all of us.

Even with new technology in the hands of thieves, most of these crimes are preventable. We urge you to take just a few extra seconds to avoid leaving valuables in your car, or at least place them out of sight, and always, always lock your car.

Tiburon continues to be one of the safest of communities in California, but we can make it safer still by making it harder for thieves to succeed. These people are opportunists. Let's cut down on their opportunities. Take a second to hide valuables under a seat, in a glove box or the trunk of your car and lock up - every time.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Cronin
Chief of Police

Marin Transit -- New Service Starts August 4

As noted in the Town Manager's message above, Marin Transit is making a variety of improvements to local bus service.

These improvements include introducing smaller community shuttle buses in neighborhoods in Tiburon and Novato.



FIND OUT MORE:

Telephone: (415) 226-0871 or 711 (TDD)

Email: info@marintransit.org

Website: marintransit.org/2013changes

In Person: Look for representatives July 29th - August 10th to answer your questions at bus stops, on the bus, and at community events across the county.

Written Materials: Pick up a supplemental guide on the bus, at the San Rafael Transit Center, or call to request a copy.

Sincerely,

Marin Transit

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Celebrate Youth America's Cup -- Tonight at Friday Nights on Main

**Friday, July 26 - 6 until 9 p.m.
Main Street**



Meet America's Cup future sailors tonight, July 26, in downtown Tiburon!








Tiburon is the Official Home of Youth America's Cup Team USA45 Racing, one of two teams representing the United States in the first ever Red Bull Youth America's Cup. Team

USA45 Racing is spending the summer in Tiburon, practicing for the Youth America's Cup races from September 1 to 4 in San Francisco.

Tiburon welcomes Team USA45 Racing of the Youth America's Cup to Friday Nights on Main on Friday, July 26, from 6 to 9 pm. You are invited to come meet the team and enjoy a special evening in downtown Tiburon.

Wine & dine al fresco at one of the many restaurants on Main Street and enjoy live music with the Kyle Martin Band. Have your photo taken with members of Team USA45 Racing and wish them luck in their upcoming races. A special introduction of the team will take place at 7:20 pm.

And don't miss the rest of our exciting Friday Nights on Main this year!

May 31	A Little Bit Country	
June 28	La Dolce Vita	
July 26	Youth America's Cup	
Aug 30	America's Cup Salute	
Sept 13	Oktoberfest	
Sept 20	Annual Firemen's Ball	
Sept 27	RCP Tiburon Mile	

Friday Nights on Main is hosted by the Tiburon Peninsula Chamber of Commerce. For more information, contact the Chamber at 435-5633, or visit our [website](#).

Set Sail for Adventure:
A Fundraising Event to benefit Youth America's Cup



Thursday, August 15
6 until 10 p.m.
Corinthian Yacht Club (Public welcome)
Tickets - \$45 per person

Tiburon By the Bay is the official home of USA45 Racing, the team of top young sailors, ages 19 to 24, who are representing the United States in the first-ever Youth America's Cup races on San Francisco Bay from September 1 to 4, 2013.

The evening's program for *Set Sail for Adventure* features a private screening of "America's Cup: 150 Years in the Making," a film-festival favorite with Walter Cronkite as the narrator. Filmmaker P.J. Panzica will be on hand for a Q & A following the film.

Attendees will have the opportunity to rub shoulders with USA 45 Racing team members (and future sailing "greats") and bid on an original painting of the team's boat (pictured above) by local artist, Graciela Placak.

The ticket price of \$45 includes the private screening, tasty food, fine wine, and the chance to bid in a live auction on some coveted race-related experiences.

Proceeds of the fundraiser will help cover the cost of the team's participation in the eight races that comprise the upcoming international Youth America's Cup competition. Join the adventure, and support the USA45 Racing team.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit the team's shop at 45 Main Street, or visit the CYC [website](#).

USA45 Racing is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and donations are tax deductible. To become a sponsor or to make a donation, contact [Jill Rodby](#), Tiburon's Director of Marketing.

Tiburon Art Festival -- *10 days of Spectacular Art in Tiburon*



Art By the Bay: August 10 through August 18

A 10-day outdoor art exhibition from Blackie's Pasture to Shoreline Park.

Artist Reception: August 11

2 - 4 p.m.

Tiburon Town Hall

An opportunity to meet the artists behind Art By The Bay -- Kiril Jeliaskov and Jean Pierre Rives. Come find out how they created the magnificent pieces on view along our waterfront (see more below).

Plein Air Competition: August 10

20 artists will paint "in the open air" throughout Tiburon.

Prizes will be awarded and finished pieces will be auctioned at the Art Row Festival.

**Ark Row Festival: August 17 & 18
11 - 5 p.m.**

Ark Row 60 selected artists, food, drink and live entertainment, all for \$10 (free for 15 years or younger).

For information, visit our [website](#)

For more information on the Artist Reception, contact [Joan Palmero](#) at 435-7373. Here's what she has to say about the event:

"As part of the groundbreaking "Art on the Bay" exhibit, the Heritage & Arts Commission is hosting a reception on Sunday, August 11, from 2 - 4 p.m. at the Tiburon Town Hall. This open-house style event will give people a chance to meet the two artists who have created these amazing, larger-than-life pieces that line Tiburon Boulevard and Shoreline Park."

"**Kiril Jeliaskov**, a young Bulgarian born painter of dramatic, brightly colored 20'x10' abstract pieces, and **Jean Pierre Rives**, internationally known French sculptor who transforms massive recycled I-beams into graceful and imposing sculpture, will both be on hand to share how they got their ideas, how they can work on this enormous scale and what their message is to the public. Don't miss this chance to meet the artists."



Calling All Golfers!

**Tuesday, September 10
San Geronimo Golf Club - Nicasio
(Register by July 31 to save money!)**



Gather your golfing friends and join us for a round at the Annual Belvedere-Tiburon Golf Tournament on Tuesday, September 10 at the San Geronimo Golf Club in Nicasio.

The fee of \$140 includes greens fee for 18 holes, BBQ lunch before the shotgun start, and appetizers and drinks post

play. Form a foursome, or sign up as a single player and we will add you to an open slot.

REGISTER BY JULY 31st and PAY ONLY \$120 per player!

To register, visit our [website](#) and click on "GOLF NOW". You can also contact the City of Belvedere at 435-3838, or Belvedere-Tiburon Landmarks at 435-1853.

Our thanks to the City of Belvedere and the Town of Tiburon for designating Landmarks as this year's tournament beneficiary. The proceeds will help Landmarks manage and maintain our historic sites--Old St. Hilary, the China Cabin, the Railroad Ferry & Depot Museum, and the Art and Garden Center.

Our special thanks to this year's sponsors, including Mill Valley Refuse, Belvedere Land Company, Ireland-Robinson & Hadley, Jones Hall, Pacific Union Realtors, Sutton Suzuki Architects, and many more, including Gay Keil, ILS Associates, WK McLellan, Wulff Hansen, and Merrill Lynch. The Belvedere Community Foundation and the Tiburon Peninsula Foundation are also proud sponsors.

If you are interested in sponsoring a hole, please [email](#) or call me at 435-1853.

Sincerely,

Alan K. Brune,
Executive Director
Belvedere Tiburon Landmarks Society

**Luxury Home & Boat Tour Supports Whistlestop
Wheels**

**Sunday, September 15
1 until 5:30 p.m.
Paradise Cay**

Tour starts at the Tiburon Yacht Club
400 Trinidad Drive
Paradise Cay, Tiburon

Driftwood Marin invites you to a luxury home and boat tour in Paradise Cay on September 15, 2013. Come experience the original California dream lifestyle developed over 60 years ago in Paradise Cay. This one-of-a-kind waterfront home and boat tour includes five luxury private homes and yachts.

This is a walking tour, but Whistlestop Wheels, the recipient of our proceeds, will also provide shuttle vans for those who prefer not to walk.

After the tour ends at 4:30 p.m., stick around for an hour to enjoy delicious delicacies prepared by Stacy Scott Catering, a fashion show by Koze, and the lively music of the Bill Canada Jazz Experience. All this is included in the price of admission.

Tickets are \$45 in advance and \$50 at the door and can be purchased at our [website](#).

We look forward to seeing you!

Deborah L. Wright
Driftwood Marin



Council and Commission Meetings

Town Council: First and third Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. (August 7; August 21).

Design Review Board: First and third Thursdays at 7 p.m. (August 1; August 15).

Planning Commission: Second and fourth Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. (August 14; August 28).

Heritage & Arts Commission: Fourth Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall Conference Room (August 27).

Parks, Open Space and Trails Commission: Third Tuesday every other month at 6 p.m. (next meeting is September 17).

Unless stated otherwise, all meetings are held in the Town Council Chambers located at 1505 Tiburon Boulevard, Tiburon, CA 94920.

Community Calendar

For the scoop on events and meetings sponsored by local nonprofit community and government organizations on the Tiburon Peninsula, visit the Belvedere-Tiburon Library's excellent [community calendar](#).



Sincerely,

Town Staff
Town of Tiburon
435-7373

Editor: Diane Crane Iacopi

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