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June 24, 2010

A WORD FROM THE TOWN MANAGER



TOWN BUDGET AND PENSION REFORM

Town Council approved the annual budget for fiscal year 2010-2011 this past week. In doing so, they addressed the most serious budget challenge we have had in many years. Perhaps more importantly, they did so by simultaneously making a subtle but fundamental change in the way the organization pays for employee benefits. I'll speak first to the money issue (balancing the budget), and then to the structural issue (changing benefits).

Balancing the Budget

As readers of this column know, the Town's major revenues have all been in decline since 2008. Property tax (the bread-and-butter revenue), sales tax, hotel tax, permit income and almost all other indicators are down. Were this phenomenon a one-year anomaly, such as the consequence of a singular incident like a landslide or downtown flood, it might be appropriate to respond by tapping reserves to keep the organization intact. Unfortunately, that is not the situation we face. In fact, we believe it will be quite a few years before the current situation materially improves.

Since it is the Town's policy to live within its means (that ongoing expenditures not exceed ongoing revenues), less revenue dictates reducing the operating budget regardless of the status of reserves. That is exactly what the new budget reflects. What is unusual, though, is that this was accomplished without sacrificing service for residents. How did that happen? In addition to belt-tightening in every department (including a continuing freeze on three vacant positions), all employees, with the exception of six public works staff members covered for one more year by contract, agreed to an average effective pay cut of 4% of their salary. There is no offsetting furlough or reduction in workload as a consequence of this action, and hence no reduction in services to the public. That this was possible with the consent of the staff is a tremendous testament to their team spirit and I am immensely proud of them for their conduct and cooperation throughout this difficult

Facts About Marin Clean Energy

"DID YOU KNOW?"

*Town welcomes its
new Building Official*



Fred Lustenberger joined the Town staff in April as the Tiburon Building Official, replacing Dean Bloomquist, who retired after 20 years of service with Tiburon.

Fred has 14 years of experience as a Building Official/Inspector, including positions with Sonoma County, Mariposa County and the City of San Carlos, and was a self-employed building contractor for 10 years prior to that.

The newest member of the Town's staff, Fred has a Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration from the University of San

period.

Structural Change - Pension Reform

If you regularly read a newspaper or periodical, you are aware of the attention increasingly focused on public pensions. Overly generous pensions have been making the news, and, in my judgment, do constitute a significant part of the budgetary problems facing state and local government. The Marin Manager's Association, which as its name implies is the organization of chief executive officers for the eleven Marin municipalities and Marin County, published a paper last year calling for cities to take leadership in reigning in excessive benefits. Even though Tiburon's employee benefits fall well within the middle of the range and are not "excessive", the Town Council, our Administrative Services Director Heidi Bigall and I set out to re-evaluate our local benefits and to examine whether change was in order.

In an effort to avoid making your eyes glaze over with the minutia that forms the backbone of this subject, let me simplify by saying there are two means by which pensions are funded at the local level: there is an employer payment, and an employee payment. Both are a percentage of payroll. Historically, Tiburon and most local governments in California have paid both portions - employer and employee. Under state law, the Town has no choice but to pay the employer portion, but it can, through negotiations, require that employees pay their own portion. Of course, such a new requirement would constitute a pay cut for employees.

Because the Town Council felt it would be an appropriate corrective measure to start having employees pay their own portion of pension contributions, the Town reached an agreement with its employees to essentially split the difference. The formula: the Town would start requiring employees to pay their portion (a payroll deduction of 7% to 9%) but would raise employees' salaries one-half this amount to soften the blow. The result is an effective pay cut for employees of an average of 4%, and a savings to the Town of \$100,000 in this next fiscal year and thereafter. This new approach corrects an imbalance in how pensions are funded and saves money for the Town.

I do want to add that a recent nationwide study showed that even when pensions and other benefits are taken into consideration, public employees are paid less than their private sector counterparts based on experience and education levels. To me, this means some of the anger directed at public employees, or making them into budget-busting villains, is misplaced, although clearly some pensions (not those in Tiburon) are outlandishly generous and aggravate budget gaps at all levels of government. More pension reform is needed across the board.

Francisco and is currently pursuing his Masters Degree in the same field.

He is one of only a few hundred Certified Access Specialists in California with specialized training in disabled access requirements. Fred brings a practical and helpful attitude and well-rounded experience to the position. We are delighted to have him on board. Fred lives with his family in Sebastopol.

Scott Anderson
Director,
Community
Development

Meanwhile, I am very proud of our effort to advance pension reform here at home in a manner that helps the Town's bottom line and does right by our employees. Remember, we need to hold the line on costs, but we also want to be sufficiently competitive to attract and retain a talented workforce. Finding the right middle ground is the key, and I think the Town Council has done just that with these measures.

Thank you, Town Council, for your leadership on this issue and many thanks again to our wonderful employees who stepped up to help solve a problem. In particular I want to express my gratitude to our police department, whose three-year contract was up for renegotiation this year and whose members agreed to make these important changes. My hat is off to them!

Sincerely,



Peggy Curran

NEWS BRIEFS

Tiburon Gets Greener: New Weekly Curbside Food Waste Pick-Up Begins August 1st



Did you know that food is the third largest waste stream after paper and yard waste, comprising up to 23% of the waste sent to landfills in California?

Many cities, including Oakland and San Francisco, offer curbside food waste pick-up and, thanks to a recent Town Council decision, Tiburon is about to have this same service for residents.

Starting August 1, 2010, Mill Valley Refuse Service will pick up food waste placed in residents' yard waste cans at the curb. The yard and food waste will be transported to a new Compost Recycling Center at the Redwood Sanitary Landfill to be made into soil amendments that can be put back into the earth.

How will it work?

Food waste will now be able to be added directly to yard waste cans. Items that can be included in the food waste program are significantly greater than those backyard composting systems can accommodate. Fruits, vegetables, meat, seafood, bones, dairy items, food soiled

paper, paper cups and paper plates are all eligible "food waste". (But all clean, recyclable papers and cardboard still go in the recycling cart.)

Some may wish to use a minimal amount of newspaper or a paper bag to separate food and yard waste to keep the green can cleaner. One can even put a pail inside the green can to separate its contents from the yard waste, so long as it is clearly visible on top of the other waste. Program details can be found at Mill Valley Refuse Service's website at www.millvalleyrefuse.com, or call them at 457-9760.

When food waste is added to yard waste, the law requires it be picked up every week. Consequently, the current bi-weekly pick-up schedule for yard (and now food) waste will be changed to weekly service.

What will it cost?

There will be a modest rate increase (\$1.63 per household, per month, on average) to cover the additional costs of the food waste service. Council also approved an unrelated annual rate increase for MVRS services of about \$1.05 per month, which brings the total average increase in monthly billing to \$2.68 per household. Some households may find that the new weekly pick-up of food waste enables them to reduce the size of their garbage can from 32-gallon to 20-gallon. If they do, they will more than compensate for these rate increases and will actually see their rates drop a bit.

Why Compost?

Composting will help preserve the life of Marin's only landfill by diverting a major component of the waste stream. Come learn more about this new service and what will happen to your food/yard waste at a Composting Seminar conducted by MVRS at Mill Valley City Hall next Tuesday, June 29, from 7 - 9 p.m. Call 457-9760 for more information.

Diane Crane Iacopi
Town Clerk

There's Still Time to Sign Up for Our Cool Camps!



You can still sign up for the cool camps offered by Belvedere-Tiburon Recreation this summer. From tots to teens, sports to art, there is something for everyone!

Angel Island Camp turns 30 something!

Angel Island Camp is one of Marin County's best known and oldest summer day camps operating since 1977. The four age-specific camper groups (5 to 6, 7 to 8, 9 to 10, 11 to 12) arrive at camp via ferry accompanied by our superior staff. Themed weekly sessions are offered from June 21st to August 6th.

Campus Kids

This is a four-hour-long camp designed to introduce your child (ages: 3-1/2 to 5) to a summer camp experience and ease his/her transition from pre-school to kindergarten. Located on the Reed School campus with a different theme each week and a wide variety of activities, your child will look forward to camp each day. Themed weekly sessions are offered from June 21st to August 13th.

New!

Art & Garden Camps at the Landmarks Art & Garden Center

We are pleased to introduce our week-long gardening & nature inspired art programs for youth grades 1 - 5. There are four different camps to choose from: Budding Artists for Beginners, Budding Artists for Intermediates, Kids in the Garden and Ancient Arts featuring clay and mosaics. Weekly sessions offered June 21st - August 13th.

In addition to our mainstay camps, we offer a variety of specialty camps including Cooking Camps, Chess Camp, Harry Potter Camp, Swim & Tennis Camps, Ballet Classes and much more.

For more information, please visit our website at btsummercamps.com, or call 435-4355.

Sincerely,

Sherry Burchert
Recreation Supervisor

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Annual Labor Day Parade



Sunday, September 5, 1 p.m.

Parade starts at Mar West/Tiburon Blvd. and ends at Community Park in Belvedere

*Volunteers are needed for all kinds of activities leading up to the event, such as **float decoration**, and **parade monitors** on the day of the event.*

Contact Sherry Burchert at 435-4355 if you would like to get involved in this fun, end-of-summer, community event.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Tiburon Art Festival Returns for Fourth Year



The Tiburon Art Festival is returning on August 28 and 29 for its a fourth year on Ark Row.

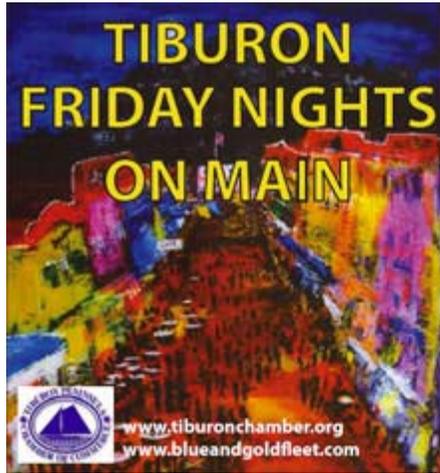
In addition to the 64 juried artists, there will be live music, family entertainment, activities, wine, beer and champagne.

Plan to visit the Youth Art Tent located on the west end of the Festival. It will feature facepainting, tattoos, a youth crafts table, and local youth musicians, as well as art!

If you are a Tiburon Peninsula student, K through 8th grade, you can submit your work by Friday, August 20th to be displayed at the event. There is a \$15 submission fee.

Contact the Belvedere-Tiburon Joint Recreation Department at 435-4355 for more information.

Friday Nights on Main Returns with New Extended Ferry Service



**TIBURON
FRIDAY NIGHTS
ON MAIN**

Every Friday night
June 11 - August 20, 2010
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Gather with your neighbors, friends
and family for live music, dancing,
dining and shopping on Main St.
every Friday night in Tiburon!

Friday Night Tiburon Ferry Runs
Depart Pier 41 for Tiburon
4:05 p.m.
Depart Ferry Building for Tiburon
5:25 p.m., 6:15 p.m., 7:15 p.m. or 8:50 p.m.
Depart Tiburon for SF
6:40 p.m., 7:45 p.m. or 9:35 p.m.

 www.tiburonchamber.org
www.blueandgoldfleet.com

For more information on Friday Nights on Main, contact the Chamber of Commerce at 435-5633, or click on the Chamber's link in our sidebar section above.

Artist Laureate Launches New "Art Talk" Event

Tuesday, September 21, 7 - 8:30 p.m.
Town Hall Lobby

You are invited to join an informal exchange of ideas about art, starting this fall. It is for artists and people who just love art. The topic for the first evening will be: "What Does Art Mean to You?"

We will explore our thoughts in a lively discussion. All are welcome to come and participate in this conversation. So mark your calendars and invite your friends and we will embark on a new journey into the creative process.

Mary Musalo, Tiburon Artist Laureate, will moderate the evening. E-mail her at marymusalo@aol.com for more information.

Bel-Tib Library Community Calendar

For the scoop on events and meetings sponsored by local not-for-profit community and government organizations on the Tiburon Peninsula, visit the Belvedere-Tiburon Library's excellent [community calendar](#).



Council and Commission Meetings



Town Council: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, at 7:30 p.m. (July 7 and 21).

Design Review Board: 1st and 3rd Thursdays, at 7 p.m. (July 1 and 15).

Planning Commission: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, at 7:30 p.m. (July 14 and 28)

Heritage & Arts Commission: 4th Tuesday at 7 p.m. (July 27) in the Town Hall Conference room

Parks, Open Space and Trails Commission: 3rd Tuesday every other month, at 6 p.m. in the Town Hall Conference room (the next meeting is July 20)

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings listed above are in the Council Chambers at Tiburon Town Hall, 1505 Tiburon Boulevard.

Sincerely,

Town Staff
Town of Tiburon
435-7373

Editor: Diane Crane Iacopi

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