



CITY NOTES

May 1, 2014

- 1. City Clerk Cindy VanWormer Receives Statewide Award.** Last week, the City Clerks Association of California (CCAC) presented the 2014 City Clerk of Distinction Award for Records Management to Fort Bragg City Clerk Cindy VanWormer. This award is a high honor acknowledging that a City Clerk's essential duty of protecting and preserving public records "provides fundamental integrity to the structure of our democracy." (excerpted from CCAC website). In this past year, Cindy valiantly responded to the biggest record production process of her career. In response to the Georgia Pacific v. OfficeMax litigation, Cindy produced nearly 9 terabytes (i.e., 9,000 gigabytes) of documentation. She spent days poring through hand-written minute books, going back more than 100 years to find documentation to assist the City's legal team. Over the course of several months, she worked with an "insurance archaeologist" and managed to conjure up documentation of insurance policies from more than 30 years ago that are covering the City's defense costs in the litigation. Cindy is now preparing to be deposed regarding the process by which she produced this phenomenal volume of records. Clearly, Cindy earned her statewide City Clerk of Distinction award. Congratulations, Cindy!
- 2. Extension of Fire Equipment Parcel Tax.** On Monday, the City's Finance & Administration Committee met to discuss the need for a ballot measure to extend the life of the Fire Equipment parcel tax within the City of Fort Bragg. The tax has been in place for 30 years. It was initially approved by Fort Bragg voters in 1983 and then extended in 1994 and 2004. The tax was initially established at \$15 per parcel. In 2004, it was increased to \$18 per parcel. The Finance & Administration Committee recommended that the ballot measure to extend the tax for another ten years also increase it to \$22 per parcel to account for inflation. The tax generates about \$44,000 per year of revenue, the use of which is restricted solely for the purchase of new fire equipment for the Fort Bragg Fire Department. This past year, the Fire Department purchased a new fire engine with funds from the City's Fire Equipment Fund and the Rural Fire District's equipment fund. A new engine costs more than \$400,000, so the parcel tax is an ideal way of making sure the money is there when it is needed. Fire Chief Steve Orsi pointed out that the Department's investment in quality equipment helps to keep property insurance rates low in the City. In order to keep the Fire Equipment parcel tax from expiring in 2015, a measure will need to be placed on the November 2014 ballot.
- 3. Purchase Agreement for Newman Watershed Property Terminated.** The purchase agreement between the City of Fort Bragg and the MCRPD for the "Regional Park" property on Highway 20 has been terminated as the MCRPD was unable to negotiate an agreement with WestAmerica Bank to extinguish the lease/sublease agreement by which the MCRPD received financing from the bank. The City's offer to purchase the property for its fair market value was predicated on termination of the lease/sublease. The 583-acre property comprises nearly the entire watershed of the City's Newman Gulch water source. The City will continue to work with the MCRPD and future owners to ensure that the property is developed and/or managed in a manner that is protective of our municipal water source.

4. **Noyo Center for Marine Science Non-Profit Formed.** Articles of incorporation and bylaws for the Noyo Center for Marine Science non-profit corporation have been drafted by local business consultant David Alden. The City has helped to “incubate” the Noyo Center using funds from several grants to underwrite the initial feasibility analysis and conceptual planning phases. The new non-profit is tasked with finding funds to support development and operation of the Noyo Center campus and restoration of the Blue Whale skeleton.
5. **Concerns over Closure of Ukiah Homeless Shelter.** The Fort Bragg City Council has expressed its very serious concerns about the proposed closure of the Buddy Eller Emergency Shelter in Ukiah. The Buddy Eller Center is a critical piece of inland Mendocino County’s infrastructure to provide a “continuum of care” for the homeless. The 66-bed shelter is the only emergency shelter serving inland Mendocino County. The closest alternative shelter is the Hospitality Center in Fort Bragg which provides a maximum of 24 beds and generally operates at full capacity. According to the most recent homeless “point in time” counts conducted by the County of Mendocino, Fort Bragg already hosts nearly 40% of the County’s homeless population. Closure of the Buddy Eller Emergency Shelter is certain to compound issues relating to the County’s homeless residents.
6. **Budget Workshop Dates.** The City Council and the MCRPD will conduct a joint budget workshop for the FY 2014/15 C.V. Starr Center Budget on Wednesday, May 14 at 6:00 PM at the C.V. Starr Center. The City Council will conduct a workshop on the FY 2014/15 City of Fort Bragg Budget on Thursday, June 5 at 3:00 PM at the Fort Bragg Police Department Conference Room.

City Notes is published on the first and third Thursday of each month. If you have questions or suggestions regarding the column, feel free to contact City Manager Linda Ruffing at (707) 961-2823, ext. 118 or L.Ruffing@fortbragg.com.