



The VOICE

Your independent news source

Greater Shasta County, CA

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Did you know...

- There were **17 new** single family home permits issued in the City of Redding in February 2021, for a total of **29** in 2021. There were **3** Carr Fire single family rebuild permits issued in February 2021, for a total of **6** in 2021. That is **19** fewer than for the same period in 2020. There were **2** permits issued for new commercial buildings in February 2021, for a total of **2** in 2021. Those 2 commercial permits are for the Block 7 new 78 unit multi-family building with commercial space in downtown Redding at 1575 California Street, and for the new building and remodel of the Bell rooms at 1501 Shasta Street. These two permits total **\$13,254,457** in valuations.
- **The City of Redding announced a new, direct flight to Seattle starting this June.** The Alaska Airlines 76-passenger flight will depart daily from the Redding Airport at 7:20 a.m., arriving in Seattle less than 2 hours later at 9:10 a.m. Return flights will leave Seattle at 5:40 p.m. and land in Redding at 7:25 p.m.

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More Local Public Safety Raises Approved Citing Need to Remain Competitive

On March 2nd, the Redding City Council approved large salary increases for **all 79 sworn full-time police recruits, officers, detectives, school resource officers and corporals**, totaling **20.5%**. By a vote of 4-1 (Dacquisto dissenting), Council approved a new contract with the Redding Peace Officers' Association for a two-and-a-half year term ending on September 30, 2023.

The Council's staff report on this subject clearly states that other "local agencies" that employ police officers pay more than the Redding police force. It goes on to say that "In order for the city to remain a competitive employer, retain staff and fill its vacancies, wage increases are necessary." The City and the union representing the affected employees have been in negotiations since October, occurring just after the County Supervisors approved the following large raises for their public safety personnel:

On August 18, 2020, the Shasta County Supervisors approved a new contract with the **Shasta County Deputy Sheriff's Association** covering the period of September 1, 2020 through August 31, 2023, totaling 10%. The annual cost of these raises is **\$1,477,000**, and Merit Pay was added, which also provides an **additional 5% of base pay** after one year of service and **additional 1% of base pay for additional years**, which will cost an additional **\$3,535,000** over the three contract years.

As a result of these increases, on **October 6th**, the **Sheriff's Administrative Association**, who had asked to re-open bargaining with the County in order to address "compaction" issues between these two bargaining units, also received approval of salary increases from the County Supervisors for their unit, which were approved and resulted in **increases totaling 27.5%** covering the period of October 2020 through July 2, 2023, at an annual cost of **\$198,474**.

The total ongoing costs for the City of Redding's two-and-a-half year agreement is **\$2.1 million**, which will come from the General Fund, and City Manager Barry Tippin said the General Fund reserve will still be maintained at 10%.

There are currently **ten open, unfilled positions** for police officers, and the City has 16 retirements coming up in the next year. And, just last month, the City approved a 2nd Neighborhood Policing Unit to add another 4 officers focused on patrolling the downtown Redding area.

Apparently, the adjustments make the new salary ranges competitive with comparable agencies, and **there are enough funds** to pay for current and future increases in the General Fund, as was the case with the raises given in Shasta County.

Just one year ago on March 3, 2020, the local citizens in Shasta County were asked to approve Measure A, a 1% countywide specific sales tax increase to fund "specific public safety programs" including law enforcement, criminal prosecution and probation (along with other related programs), with **41%** of such revenues earmarked for hiring those specific personnel. County and City leaders indicated then that more taxes were needed because of a **lack** of general fund money. That Measure required a 2/3 majority approval, but failed with only 48.5% of the voters saying yes. Apparently, the pandemic that occurred later, beginning in March of 2020, has also had **no negative affect on local government funds**. This looks like good news for the weary local taxpayers...or, at least it would appear.

Parking Issues Continue in Downtown Redding

Buried in the “Consent Calendar” items for the Redding City Council meeting on March 16th was item 4.11(f), entitled “Resolution Restricting Parking on Certain Designated Areas Pursuant to Redding Municipal Code.”

City Council consent items are those which are not considered controversial by the Council members, and normally not discussed at the meetings unless a Council member or member of the general public specifically requests that it be pulled from consent and put on the regular calendar for discussion. So it was *not* discussed during the meeting, but, nonetheless, it is an interesting twist as various redevelopment projects in the downtown area have had a diminishing affect on the available parking.

The City completed the Downtown Streets Circulation Project *reopening* Market, Butte and Yuba Streets in the downtown core. A grand opening ceremony was held on February 24th, and vehicles are once again able to drive through and park on these streets after having been closed to through traffic for the past 50 years.

The intent of the City’s parking strategy is to keep on-street spaces available for business turnover and move long term parking to the various surface lots owned and/or leased by the City.

Parking spaces in front of businesses that would ordinarily be used by potential clients and customers are currently being used by the *residents* of the newly opened and fully leased Market Center (81 apartments) and *other employees* who work in the area and park in these spaces for extended periods of time.

The California Vehicle Code Section 22507 authorizes a local government to restrict or prohibit parking by resolution for the benefit of merchants on adjacent streets. Additionally, Redding Municipal Code Section 11.24.180 allows for the establishment of two-hour parking zones by resolution of the City Council. Therefore, the City is *implementing two-hour on-street parking restrictions* on both sides of Market Street between Yuba Street and Tehama Street and on Butte and Yuba Streets between Market Street and Pine Street in order to promote turnover for the benefits of local businesses.

The new 2-hour restriction went into effect on *March 17, 2021*, and signs are now posted indicating the restrictions on those affected parking spots. There is a “grace period” (although we don’t know for how long) before the Redding Police Department begins enforcement so that people can get used to the new restrictions.

Compliance Enforcement To Increase for Redding Short-Term Rentals

The City of Redding adopted a Short-term Rental Ordinance on February 16, 2016. The ordinance was amended three times since then, with the most recent amendment occurring on September 17, 2019. In essence, it permits owners of qualified residences to rent rooms upon receipt of a permit. All such rentals are subject to the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) established in Redding in the amount of ten percent (10%) of the rent. An update regarding short-term rentals in the City was provided at the March 16, 2021 City Council meeting.

For calendar year 2020, a total of **\$264,629** in TOT was paid by short-term rental operators. This is in addition to the fees received for permits to offer short-term rentals. The TOT revenue is (by law) devoted to *regulation* of the short-term rental market.

At the inception of the short-term rental program, the City deployed monitoring software called “Host Compliance.” Planning Department staff use Host Compliance in order to detect and communicate with persons who are operating short-term rentals but have not received a permit to do so. The software is capable of locating such persons, establishing the number of times people have rented rooms, and the rental rate for the rooms. The software will copy all documentary and photographic evidence of the transactions, providing an excellent tool for City staff.

For enforcement, the software will generate a courtesy notice which is sent to all persons suspected of renting a room without a permit, advises of the need for a permit and provides contact information for communication with the Planning staff to commence the process of gaining a permit. A second “Notice of Violation” is sent if there is no response, and if no response to that, the documented evidence is sent to the City’s Code Enforcement department for issuance of a citation.

During calendar year 2020, there were 106 courtesy notices sent out, with only 13 responding, and 93 required a second notice. Of those 93, there were 60 who either terminated offering short-term rentals or gained the required permit, and 33 remain in non-compliance.

The City is committed to increasing enforcement efforts. City Attorney Barry Dewalt stated that “There is now a clear delineation between the functions of Planning and Code Enforcement staff with regard to regulation, and an increased commitment to staffing the regulatory program.” As a result, the City may expect increased enforcement over the present calendar year.

CARES Act Budget Amendments Approved After Failed First Attempt More COVID Funding To Come

On March 16th, the Shasta County Supervisors discussed a request from their Public Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) to approve mid-year budget amendments, due to the “timing” of when COVID-19 started to impact the County.

One year ago, in March of 2020, there were ***no related COVID-19 appropriations*** for the expenditures or revenues that would eventually arrive in the fiscal year 2020-2021 budget. There was, however, an approved spending plan approved on September 15, 2020 by the Supervisors for the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding to pay for those unexpected pandemic expenses. HHSA staff are now trying to explain and reconcile the more than ***\$19 million*** received thus far from the CARES funding with that spending plan. The total amount of CARES Act funding to be provided to the County is ***\$31,812,751*** for costs incurred through 12-30-2020.

Unfortunately, due to the impact of the pandemic to public health, many public health staff members were moved from their regular jobs in other departments at the County. Once COVID-19 was declared a state of emergency, public health staff have been acting as first responders, and “the primary focus has been to ensure the health and safety of Shasta County residents.” The money to pay for all this has come from the approved Public Health (HHSA) budget thus far, using normal revenues coming from sales tax (and realignment sales tax) revenues, and was ***not intended to be used for other activities***.

But now, because of all the staff movement and subsequent receipt of the CARES funding, the County must accurately ***reallocate*** their spending through December 30, 2020 to show that the \$19 million received was, in fact, spent on COVID-19 activities. This requires multiple debits and credits from one spending source to another.

Although this seems as though it should be logical and simple, it is really anything but that. There was a lack of transparency and clarity in the information presented by staff, and many questions remained unclear and/or unanswered. Additionally, the total amount of funding scheduled to be received from the 2020 CARES Act in Shasta County is ***\$31,812,751***. It seems reasonable to ask how and where these funds are being and will be spent.

Supervisor Jones ***did not*** vote to approve the budget amendments. Jones stated concerns that the County not only spent all the CARES money, but overspent and did not give enough to local businesses. Supervisor Baugh asked many questions to try and find out the total of all COVID income received, the total of COVID costs, the total of FEMA monies that were also sent to the County, and whether or not the County spent more than the \$19 million they had already received. He was dissatisfied with the lack of complete answers from staff, and ***would not support*** the requested amendments without more detailed and complete information. He indicated that ***his no vote could be changed*** if he were given more precise answers.

Because the requested budget amendments ***require a 4/5 vote*** of the Supervisors, if this request did not pass, other public health services including Medi-Cal and public health programs would be negatively impacted because the ***budget for those services would be gone***. Seeing the potential of two “no” votes, Chair of the Board Joe Chimenti ***tabled*** the item to the March 23rd Board of Supervisors meeting, which deferred the vote until Supervisor Baugh could get his questions answered to his satisfaction. On March 23rd, with Baugh’s concerns about the actual accounting answered to his satisfaction, even though he still doesn’t agree with the way the money was spent, the budget amendments ***passed 4-1***, with Jones dissenting.

The American Rescue Plan recently passed by the Biden Administration will send another ***\$35 million*** to Shasta County in 2021. This is in addition to the \$31,812,751 in CARES Act funding that the County has already and/or will receive for 2020. That will bring the total amount of funding for COVID related expenses to ***\$66.8 million*** in Shasta County. We have yet to see the Board of Supervisors “spending plan” for the newest round of funding...and there are sure to be plenty of suggestions and questions about how and where that money will be spent. ***Stay tuned!***

Effort To Defy Governor’s COVID Tier System Fails

On March 23rd, the Shasta County Board of Supervisors ***did not approve*** a proposed Resolution terminating their March 24, 2020 proclamation and declaration of a local health emergency, which would have “expressed” that Shasta County would no longer support directives set by the California’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy and other State directives establishing a tier system which restricts various activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. This “expression” is considered an opinion.

The proposed Resolution stated in part that “...the original intent of the State of Emergency and subsequent Stay at Home Order (State Actions) was to prevent the catastrophic failure of the hospital system due to an anticipated surge of COVID-19 cases.” It also went on to say that “California’s Blueprint monitoring system establishes an arbitrary regulation of local economies to the significant financial detriment of its citizens. The State’s Blueprint currently has no “green tier” and therefore no end of State regulation.” The 4-page Resolution included a total of 19 “whereas’s” and 7 “be it resolved’s.”

The Resolution failed to garner the three votes needed for passage, with Supervisors Chimenti, Rickert and Moty dissenting. It should be noted that “municipal regulation of matters of statewide interest is subordinate to state legislation on the same subjects, and the ordinances/resolutions are void if they conflict with this legislation.”

Updated News and Notes

Shasta VOICES is continuing to monitor and follow many issues of interest to our supporters and the community. As part of our efforts to keep you updated and informed, here is a brief update of some of these issues.

Shasta Lake City Council Appoints Replacement for Larry Farr—On February 2nd, due to the passing of long-time Council member Larry Farr at the age of 84, the remaining Shasta Lake City Council members decided to take applications to fill the remainder of Farr’s term, instead of calling for a special election, and interview the candidates in open session at a future Council meeting. The remaining term will last one year and nine months until the next general election. Ten people applied to fill this vacancy: **Matthew Doyle**, general manager at Shasta Lake Caverns; **Tena Eisenbeisz**, branch office administrator for Edward Jones; **Justin Jones**, a Shasta Lake planning commissioner and project manager for S.T. Rhoades Construction Inc.; **Matthew Klutz**, a business consultant who owns Therapon in Shasta Lake; **Jesse Lane**, senior electrical contract field specialist for PG & E; **Patricia Lind**, therapist at Redding Rancheria Tribal Health Center; **Jim Mark**, who finished last in a 4-way race for three seats on this Council in November 2020; **Kristie Matthews**, a retired real estate broker; **Lawrence Russell**, fire technician at Shasta College; **Brenda Woods**, owner of Shreddy Betty’s House of Shears hair salon in Redding. At the March 2nd Council meeting, the Council voted unanimously to appoint **Matthew Doyle** to fill the open seat, who was officially sworn in at the March 16th Council meeting.

More Lots Sell in Stillwater Business Park—On March 16th, the City of Redding authorized the City Manager to negotiate Purchase and Sale Agreements with T and S DVBE, Inc., a sign manufacturing company currently based in Anderson, California, for two lots located at 4855 and 4950 Venture Parkway (Parcels 1 and 2) in the City-owned Stillwater Business Park. The net proceeds will be approximately \$750,000 (\$460,000 for Parcel 1 and \$250,000 for Parcel 2). T and S DVBE, Inc. recently sold its current building and seeks to now build a facility which would become the new company headquarters, with expansion opportunities for other business ventures. The intended construction will be for an office/industrial building.

Former Shopko Building on Lake Boulevard Has Sold—On March 5, 2021, the former Shopko retail store located at 55 Lake Boulevard (in the Raley’s Center) was purchased for \$3.8 million by D & S Family LLC. The 94,000 square foot building had been vacant since May of 2019, and didn’t sell at a foreclosure auction in November 2019. D & S Family owners are Doug and Sharon Graham. They plan to repurpose the building into a multi-tenant building that will include retail and a technology center. The first tenants in the building will be a next generation bookstore and adjoining café. The technology center will be operated by Continuant, who will be the anchor tenant, and will highlight cutting-edge business and consumer audio and video technology. Today, Continuant is headquartered in Fife, Washington and has more than 300 full-time employees, and was recently recognized as Microsoft’s Global Technology partner of the year.

County CIRT Pilot Project Introduced—At the March 23rd Shasta County Supervisors meeting, a presentation was received regarding a new Crisis Intervention & Response Team (CIRT) pilot project, for enhanced mobile crisis services. The CIRT project addresses behavioral health issues for those having “co-occurring mental health and substance-abuse disorders,” and may come into contact with law enforcement during moments of crisis. This project addresses the need in our community to provide special training to de-escalate situations with those in crisis, provide intervention, free up law enforcement and jail space, and reduce reliance on the criminal justice system.

CIRT is a collaboration between Shasta County, Redding and Anderson Police Departments, Mercy Medical Center Ambulance, and Hill Country Mobile Crisis. The goal of these partnerships is to ensure the safety of all, to respond effectively, and to improve access to services and supports for those experiencing a mental health crisis. ***Stay tuned*** for updates as this project has not yet been approved by the government bodies for funding.

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Mary B. Machado, Executive Director