



The VOICE

Your independent news source

Greater Shasta County, CA

Volume XIV, Issue VIII

www.shastavoices.com

February 2021

Did you know...

- There were **12 new** single family home permits issued in the City of Redding in January 2021, for a total of **12** in 2021. There were **3** Carr Fire single family rebuild permits issued in January 2021, for a total of **3** in 2021. There were no permits issued for new commercial buildings in January 2021.
- On February 24th, 1972, the last car drove a stretch of Market Street before it was closed for the construction of the Downtown Mall. On **February 24th, 2021**, the same day but 49 years later, there will be a **virtual grand re-opening celebration** and ribbon cutting ceremony, followed by a unique vehicle procession down Market Street as it is open back up again for vehicle travel through downtown Redding. Downtown is in the midst of an exciting revitalization, including the addition of 200 new residential units, new commercial properties, renovation of existing buildings, and the infrastructure of downtown Redding, which includes opening Market Street to vehicle travel.

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2nd Neighborhood Policing Unit Approved In Redding

At the February 16th, Council meeting, the majority of the Redding City Council approved the hiring of **four new** Neighborhood Police Unit (NPU) officer positions, who will focus on **downtown** and the City's trail and park system. These officers will patrol primarily on foot and/or bicycle.

Councilors have put public safety at the top of their priority list for many years, responding to the pleas of the members of our local community. The community has benefitted from the already existing four-member NPU, which proactively addresses quality of life crimes including illegal camping, gang activity, property crimes, and drug related crime enforcement.

Many public comments were received prior to the approval of the additional NPU, with some asking to **expand homeless assistance and mental health programs**, rather than using financial resources to add more police officers. Those issues will be brought back to Council in the near future for further discussion, as both the City and Shasta County are working together on a "crisis intervention" program, and adding a health practitioner to accompany police on certain calls.

City Manager Barry Tippin cautioned that the approval of this NPU may not result in a new NPU anytime soon. The police force already has five vacancies and "recruitment of new officers has proven very difficult, and the Police Department has been unable to fill five or more positions routinely." Mayor Erin Resner said it could take six months before the new unit begins.

The general public, over the past several years, has been led to believe that additional sales tax dollars are needed in order for the City (and County) to add any public safety staff and related programs to what exists today. But Council didn't hesitate to approve the expenditure of \$200,000 from the General Fund this fiscal year (through June 30, 2021) to fund the four new officer positions. The ongoing costs for these positions will be **\$600,000 per year**.

Mr. Tippin also cautioned the Council members that, "notwithstanding the benefits of a new NPU, **it may be premature to make this decision** in the midst of creating the next biennial budget." The next two-year budget cycle begins July 1, 2021. At this time the Council has not approved new revenue estimates for the future, nor has it considered the demands on the General Fund outside of the NPU. He recommended that the Council provide "firm direction to staff" to consider every option to include the four NPU positions in the **next** biennial budget and present options to **reduce other ongoing expenses** to accomplish the same. He further stated in his staff report that "The pandemic has created significant uncertainty, especially related to future General Fund revenues, and as such, it is recommended that budgeting for new positions which rely solely on the General Fund, should be done as part of a completed budget process."

Nonetheless, the Council voted 4-1, with Mark Mezzano dissenting, to approve the hiring now. Mezzano said although he agrees the City is moving in the right direction, he prefers to support the actual hiring when Mr. Tippin tells him the money is there.

Civic Auditorium Lease Expiration Date Near Committee To Work On New Long-Term Lease Agreement

The Civic Auditorium (Civic) in Redding opened in 1970 to host concerts, trade shows, business expos and serve as a rental venue for large private and corporate events. In 1982, a Transient Occupancy tax (TOT) was approved and was used to fund the Convention Center and Tourism Bureau. By 2011, the subsidy for the Civic's operational costs totaled \$1.4 million per year after operating revenues. The City of Redding then explored its options for keeping the Civic viable.

In October 2011, the City of Redding entered into a lease agreement with Advance Redding for the operation and management of the Civic. The City was confronted with the risk of closing the facility, due to years of deficit and disrepair. At the same time, Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry (BSSM) needed a learning facility for its students. Bethel Church brought a proposal to the City to have a non-profit manage the facility in a way that would revitalize the building for the community while providing a place for the students to gather. Out of that proposal, Advance Redding (a 501c3 public benefit non-profit) was formed. The term of the lease began in January 2012, for a minimum of 4.5 years, with an option to extend to 9.75 years. In September 2015, the lease was amended to extend through **September 30, 2021**. The current lease rate is \$22,094 per month.

The Civic Auditorium accommodates up to 2,000 people, and can be scaled down as needed. When the facility is hosting trade shows and business expos, or hosting a nightclub-style event, the seats are removed on the main floor and the balcony sections are raised, allowing the entire area to be used for display space, exhibits, or entertaining. Perhaps the most well-known public event hosted at the Civic is the Kool April Nites car show, held each year in April (normally).

On January 31, 2020, the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services declared a public emergency due to the Covid-19 outbreak. On March 17, 2020 the Redding City Council declared a local public emergency. The Civic then closed the building for public events, causing a drop in revenue. Business is not expected to return to normal schedules and occupancy until at least September of this year. Advance Redding is pursuing some possible Covid-related funding for closed venues for financial relief, and they continue to carry limited staff and pay utilities and other maintenance expenses for the building.

With the upcoming expiration of the current lease on September 30, 2021, the eventual resuming of business, and the planned construction of a new campus for the Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry, the environment around the Civic is changing.

To study more closely the operations, markets and impacts, a committee has been assembled to work with Advance Redding to develop a new long-term lease agreement. The committee members are Josh Devine and Tony Lewis representing the City of Redding Community Service Advisory Commission (CSAC), Redding City Council Mayor Erin Resner and Vice-Mayor Kristen Schreder, and Julie Dyer from Advance Redding. This effort will involve three to four meetings over two to three months.

3 Supervisors Vote to Censure the Other 2

On February 2nd, during a five hour Shasta County Board of Supervisors meeting, the 5 member Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 (Baugh and Jones dissenting) to censure Supervisors Les Baugh and Patrick Jones.

This censure was prompted by *the opening of the Supervisors Chambers* to the general public on January 5th for the scheduled Board of Supervisors meeting by Supervisor Les Baugh and newly seated Supervisor Patrick Jones, despite the full Board's vote and Resolution in December 2020 to keep the Chambers **closed** to the general public due to the increased spread of the Covid pandemic in Shasta County.

At the Board of Supervisors meeting on January 21st, there was a very long discussion of options available to the full Board of Supervisors to somehow address this issue by the other three Supervisors, who felt this was irresponsible behavior, could cause "chaos" if the legally stated will of the Supervisors wasn't followed, that majority law rules, and that none of us is above the law.

Therefore, a Resolution was approved on February 2nd that is largely an expression of an opinion of the majority of disapproval of the conduct of Les Baugh and Patrick Jones. This does not prevent those censured from performing their duties or restricting their opportunities to speak or vote.

Supervisor Baugh responded by saying that he admits to opening the doors to the Chambers, and if it deserves a slap on the wrist by the Supervisors who disagree, then so be it. Supervisor Jones also said so be it.

City of Redding Receives Grants for Road Network Improvements

On February 5th, the City of Redding, partnering with the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency and the local District office of the California Department of Transportation, was notified that it had been selected to receive two California State Grants through the Active Transportation Program in the total amount of **\$14,344,000** for transportation network improvements.

The Victor Avenue and East Cypress Project and the Turtle Bay to Downtown Gap Completion Project scored high in terms of the community's desire for more safe and functional pathways for a variety of modes of transportation. The purpose of the Active Transportation Program grant funding is to increase "the proportion of trips accomplished by walking and biking, increasing the safety of mobility and non-motorized users, advancing efforts to achieve greenhouse gas reductions goals, ...and providing a broad spectrum of projects to benefit many types of users."

\$10,409,000 of the grant funding will be used to make transportation improvements on Victor Avenue, between Hartnell and Cypress Avenues and along East Cypress from Victor Avenue to Alfreda Way. The plans include the creation of protected and separate bike paths, and a **roundabout (and other improvements) at the intersection of Cypress and Victor Avenues.**

\$3,935,000 of the grant funding will be used to make improvements to the Sundial Bridge/Civic Auditorium area and around the Turtle Bay Exploration Park. These include new pedestrian and cycling facilities that will be separated from vehicular traffic and will connect the trails, a new raised pedestrian and bike-friendly intersection at the entrance to Turtle Bay Exploration Park, and improved trail connection between Butte Street and the Sundial Bridge.

County and City Show Stable Financial Outlooks With Mid-Year Reports

On February 16th, a mid-year budget review for the City of Redding was presented at the Redding City Council meeting, which covers the period of July through December of 2020. It was all good news, despite the ongoing pandemic. Here are the highlights for the **General Fund**:

Total revenues: **\$35.3 million** (\$1.5 million **above** staff projections) including:

■ Sales Tax—\$15,034,020 ■ Property Tax—\$969,835 ■ Transient Occupancy Tax—\$3,225,767 ■ Internal Departments—\$6,204,585 ■ Revenue from other governments—\$1,645,246 ■ Building related fees—\$2,029,785 ■ Other taxes including cannabis—\$2,125,488 ■ All other General Fund revenues—\$4,076,065.

The City's Finance Department now projects that the General Fund will end fiscal year 2020-21 with a cash reserve of \$15.1 million, a 17.7% reserve, updated from a projected \$10.1 million, a 13.1% reserve.

On February 23rd, a Fiscal Year 2020-21 mid-year report for Shasta County was presented at the Shasta County Board of Supervisors meeting, covering the period of July through December of 2020. The report states that revenue from local property taxes have been rebounding as compared to the last five years. The County's discretionary revenue is derived primarily from various taxes. Here are the fiscal year 2020-21 estimated revenue figures:

Total Discretionary Revenues: **\$65,266,326** including:

■ Taxes—\$57,433,526 ■ Licenses, Permits, Franchises—\$750,000 ■ Fines, Forfeitures, Penalties—\$1,508,500
 ■ Money & Property—2,460,000 ■ Intergovernmental Revenue—\$2,959,800 ■ Charges for Services—\$120,000
 ■ Miscellaneous Revenues—\$34,500

The County also began receiving revenue from a State public safety half-cent sales tax (Proposition 172) in fiscal year 1993-94. The County factor fluctuates, and will continue at the rate of 0.004526 into fiscal year 2020-21. This revenue source can only be used for **public safety**. It is projected to bring in **\$15,288,648** for fiscal year 2020-21.

Shasta County also included a summary of the County workforce, which shows that in 2020-21, there were **2,127 total full-time equivalent workers**. That is an **increase of 85 positions** over fiscal year 2019-20. When asked where, exactly, these new positions were, the answer was that positions were added in public safety, probation and the District Attorney's office, in the health and public assistance offices, and in the mental health and social services departments. That is good news for our citizens who have pleaded for many years to make public safety (including mental health services) the County's top priority. There was one caveat, however. There are over 200 positions that remain unfilled due to "recruiting issues," including quite a few of those in the Public Safety departments.

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 To Appoint 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.

Anderson City Council Give Themselves and Planning Commissioners Raises—At the February 16th Anderson City Council meeting, the Anderson City Council approved an ordinance increasing the compensation for each City Council Member to \$300.00 per month, from \$50.00 per month. Back in 1966, the salaries were set at \$75.00 per month for the Mayor, and \$50.00 for the other Council members. That amount has remained the same since 1966.

Government code section 36516 sets a Council member salary for a city with a population of up to 35,000 at \$300.00 per month. The approved Anderson ordinance specifically references the "amount permitted under Government code section 36514," rather than the specific amount of \$300.00. This means that, whenever the state code section is amended to increase the amount, the City Council salaries will increase as well.

Also at this meeting, the Council adopted a resolution providing compensation to the Planning Commissioners at a rate of \$150.00 per month.

For purposes of comparison, the Redding City Council members receive \$600.00 per month and City of Shasta Lake Council members receive \$300.00 per month. Redding does not compensate their planning commissioners and Shasta Lake compensates its commissioners at a rate of \$25 per meeting.

Shasta Regional Transportation Agency Pursuing SR-273 Corridor Plan Improvements—Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) has submitted a grant application for the fiscal year 2021/22 Caltrans Strategic Partnership Grant Program, for the preparation of a comprehensive plan for future improvements to Star Route 273 (SR-273), which connects the cities of Redding and Anderson and serves numerous outlying communities through feeder streets and roads. It is arguably part of the oldest travel corridor in the region, and largely unchanged since it was renumbered from Star Route 99 following the completion of Interstate 5.

The corridor remains one of the most dangerous in the Shasta Region, accounting for 20% of all pedestrian collisions and 43% of all pedestrian collision fatalities in the five year period between 2013 and 2018. In addition to sorely needed bicycle and pedestrian improvements, the planning effort will "seek ways to promote the movement of people and goods, improve transit, and improve the resiliency of our transportation system." One emphasis area will be in Redding between Cypress Avenue and Breslauer Way.

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