

# THE MORNING AFTER

*Highlights from the  
Ross Town Council Meeting  
of August 11, 2011*

Volume 5, No. 8

August 12, 2011

## **Council Approves FY 2011-2012 Budget**

The Council unanimously approved the fiscal year 2011-2012 budget with projected general fund revenues of \$5,121,613 and operating and capital improvement expenditures of \$5,117,504. Town Manager Gary Broad said that staff and the Finance Committee had worked hard to produce a balanced budget, a task that will grow increasingly difficult in future years as revenues are projected to remain flat over the long term while expenses continue to increase.

General fund revenues are expected to decline by 3.4%, or about \$183,000, even though property tax revenue, which comprises more than 50% of general fund revenue, will be unchanged. Most of the decrease in revenue is attributed to expected reductions in grant funding, reimbursements for Town costs, construction penalties, and film permits.

The General Service Tax, the Town's second largest revenue source, will contribute just over \$642,000. The tax is currently \$775 per parcel. The tax must be renewed by voters every four years, and it will be back on the ballot in 2012.



*Culvert repair work on Laurel Grove Avenue, one of the public works projects funded in the 2011-2012 budget.*

Building permit fees are expected to increase by 19%, but will still be less than half the fee revenue collected in fiscal year 2008-2009, when fee revenue hit an all-time high of nearly \$525,000. Overall, revenue has steadily declined since fiscal year 2009-2010, when revenue peaked at just under \$5.5 million.

General government expenditures, which include administration, finance, planning, public works, and building operating expenses, were cut 6% from last fiscal year's estimated expenditures. Town Hall staff, except the Town Manager and Public Works Director, were increased 3%.

The police department budget saw a 1% cutback, while the fire department budget increased by 0.8%. The public safety budget comprises approximately 68% of this year's general fund budget.

Town fund reserves are projected to total \$5,647,090 at year's end, down approximately \$400,000 from the previous year due primarily to roadway improvement, equipment replacement, and facilities expenditures. Money is earmarked for Ross Common trees and arbor, the Town Hall office remodel, and repairs to the Natalie Coffin Greene Park hut. The budget also includes capital outlays for the Bolinas Avenue traffic calming project, Laurel Grove Avenue culvert repair and creek bank stabilization, and Corte Madera Creek bank stabilization.

Facilities funds expenditures include \$70,000 for the ball field initial study and legal costs, of which \$35,000 will be reimbursed by Ross School. Mayor Pro Tempore and Finance Committee Chair Rupert

Russell stressed that the budget does not include costs for an environmental impact report for the ball field. "We are trying our best to stay in the black," he said, "but that will be impossible if members of the community force the Town to complete a full environmental impact report."

The fiscal year 2011-2012 budget is available [here](#).



*Mayor Carla Small*

### **Mayor Carla Small's Report**

Several months ago, I participated in a program where we simulated a day in the life of a firefighter. Rick Rosecrans, one of our local engineers was my mentor throughout the day and Jake Peterson was one of the captains who assisted in running the program. It was an enlightening experience.

I realized when dealing with a medical emergency how important it is to have all your medical information readily available for paramedics. All Marin fire stations have available a complimentary product called the Vial of Life. It contains an information sheet where you can record all your medical information. If interested stop by and pick one up from our Public Safety office.

In order to keep our meetings from running into the early morning hours, there may be times that I suggest we break out one or two significant agenda items that can benefit from their own special meeting. Hopefully, this will allow residents, speakers, applicants, staff and council members to depart our chambers at a reasonable hour. Next month, in addition to the regular Council meeting on September 8<sup>th</sup>, we will have a special Council meeting on September 15<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. to discuss joining the Marin Energy Authority and a possible Ross Fire Department merger.

### **Town Representatives and Committee Members Selected**

The Council selected members for Town Council standing committees, regional committees, and Town liaisons. Council member Scot Hunter will continue to chair the Community Protection Committee, Council member Rick Strauss will chair the Public Works Committee, Council member Chris Martin will chair the General Government Committee, and Mayor Pro Tempore Rupert Russell will continue to chair the Finance Committee. A full list of committee assignments can be found on the Town's website [here](#).

At the request of the Ross Valley Sanitary District (RVSD), Council member Chris Martin agreed to be the Town's liaison to the Sanitary District. RVSD Board Member Peter Sullivan explained that the Sanitary District had some tough decisions ahead and wanted to ensure all town and city councils were fully informed and engaged in the process. The District has 200 miles of public pipe and 200 miles of private pipe, of which 70-80% is now obsolete. Dr. Sullivan said it costs approximately \$1 million per mile to replace the pipe.



*The Ross Valley Sanitary District must plan for the repair and replacement of hundreds of miles of obsolete pipe.*

The Council also appointed community members to represent the Town on various commissions. Tom Gaffney will continue to serve on the Marin Emergency Radio Agency Board; Bruce Hart will serve on the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority Board of Directors; and, Iris Winey will continue to serve on the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Control District Board of Trustees. Roseanna Lourdeaux will continue as Chief of Protocol.

The Council made a new appointment to serve on the Marin County Commission on Aging. Teri Dowling will replace Loraine Berry, who has served on the Commission for many years. Ms. Dowling is currently employed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health, has worked with the San Francisco Commission of Aging, and has previously served on numerous committees and commissions related to aging and health issues.



## **New Parking Restrictions on Woodside Way**

The Council introduced an ordinance to limit parking on the west side of Woodside Way at the intersection of Madrona Avenue. Residents were concerned that emergency vehicles did not have sufficient clearance to negotiate the corner. After investigating the matter, the Fire Department determined the necessary restricted parking area to safely make turns at that intersection. Parking will now be restricted on the west side of Woodside Way for 32 feet in each direction from the corner of Madrona Avenue.

## **Report from the Town Manager**

The new tennis courts are now completely finished. In recognition of the abbreviated playing season, Ross Recreation will be selling keys for the tennis courts at the reduced price of \$50 for court access from now through April 1, 2012. Residents who already have a key will have their access extended through April 1, 2012, at no additional cost.

The Ross Police Association has accepted the Council's most recent counter-offer for a new two-year contract. There will be no change in salary over the term of the contract. Sick leave benefits will be revised in the second year, but no other changes to benefits were made.

## **New Regulations for Converting Attics and Basements Adopted**

The Council adopted an ordinance that will allow homeowners to finish basements and attics and use the converted space for living area. Under the new ordinance, the Town Council will be able to grant exceptions from development regulations, such as floor area limits, in order to allow improvement of existing attics and basements.

In order to qualify for an exception, a proposed attic improvement may not include any exterior changes to the house, including new windows or dormers. Basements may be finished if the existing ceiling height is at least 5½ feet, and the floor area is above the base flood elevation (the height of the 100-year flood). Basement improvements may involve exterior modifications that do not materially increase the visible mass of the building and are compatible with the existing design.



Excavation, cutting and grading for any proposed improvement is limited to 35 cubic yards. If a basement improvement involves excavation, cutting or grading, the new floor area is limited to 20% of the existing floor area. The ordinance will go into effect in 30 days.



*Public Works  
Director  
Bob Hemati*

## **Public Works Report**

Public Works Department staff meet weekly with Ross School representatives to address tree protection, drainage and irrigation issues on the Ross Common restoration project. Staff is also working with PG&E to cut back Allen Avenue tree tops for safety reasons.

The Town is exploring various maintenance and repair alternatives to restore the historic building at Natalie Coffin Greene Park known as 3 Bear Hut. Any improvement will respect the historic nature of the building and maintain the integrity of the existing assembly.

The Town's architect for the Town Office remodel project is revising the plans to confine the scope of the project to the front area of the building. The project will then go out to bid for the construction work.

The Town held a kick off meeting with Coastland Engineering and their sub-consultants for the Lagunitas Road/Sir Francis Drake Boulevard intersection improvement project. Public outreach meetings and Marin Art & Garden Center meetings will be held after the preliminary design begins.



Senior Planner  
Elise Semonian

## Planning Application Scoreboard

The Town Council took the following action on planning applications considered at last night's Council meeting. For more information on each planning application, you can view staff reports [here](#). The minutes of this meeting will be available on the website at [www.townofross.org](http://www.townofross.org) after approval at the September Council meeting.

Address	Applicant	Approved	Denied	Continued
4 Skyland Way	Amy and Jeff Leon	X		
15 West Road	Jerene and Jim Donovan	X		
65 Wellington Avenue	David and Janet Mourning	X		
21 Woodside Way	James and Joanne Willcox	X		
84 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.	Neil and Christine Mason			X
20 Canyon Road	John and Annie Longley	X		
24 Woodside Way	Elizabeth McLaughlin-Burgis	X		
206 Lagunitas Road	Alan Grujic and Kailey Lewis	X		
36 Glenwood Road	John and Lisa Pritzker	X		

## Upcoming Meetings

The Public Works Committee will meet on Tuesday, September 6, at 8 a.m.

The next regular Town Council meeting will be held on Thursday, September 8, at 6:30 p.m. The Town Council will hold a special meeting on Thursday, September 15, at 7 p.m. to discuss joining the Marin Energy Authority and the possibility of a Ross Fire Department merger. The Council will hold its annual Council workshop on Wednesday, September 28, from 9-2 p.m. The workshop location is yet to be determined.

Agendas and staff reports for all meetings are posted in advance of the meetings on the Town's website at [www.townofross.org](http://www.townofross.org). All meetings are held at Town Hall unless indicated otherwise. You may email Town Council members by accessing the website [here](#).

*The Morning After is published following each regular Council meeting by the Town of Ross and is written by Project Planner Christine O'Rourke with support from Administrative Manager Linda Lopez, and reviewed by the Ross Mayor prior to publication. The newsletter is not an official record of the meeting's proceedings and does not cover all agenda items. No portion of this newsletter may be copied, reproduced or reprinted without advance written permission from the Town of Ross.*