



STAFF REPORT

Resolution Endorsing Measure “I” on the November 4, 2003 Ballot

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Summary

The South County Fire Protection Authority has placed a parcel tax, known as Measure “I” on the November ballot. At the October 14 meeting, Council Member Warden had an Item 9 asking Council to consider endorsing Measure “I.” This report summarizes the issues involved and gives the City Council the opportunity to go on record in support of, or in opposition to, Measure “I.”

Background and Discussion

Despite three years of internal belt-tightening, the South County Fire Protection Authority-the fire-rescue agency that provides emergency fire suppression, medical (paramedic), rescue, and hazardous materials response services in Belmont, San Carlos and the unincorporated Harbor Industrial Area, can no longer afford to maintain its current minimum level of emergency paramedic and fire-rescue response services.

The South County Fire Protection Authority’s basic economic problem continues to be a widening gap between available revenue-primarily service fees received from the Belmont Fire Protection District and the City of San Carlos-and regular and recurring expenditures associated with the delivery of minimum levels of emergency and non-emergency services, such as labor, vendor, maintenance and repair, utility, workers compensation and liability insurance costs, among others.

Due to this basic economic problem, the Board of Commissioners of the South County Fire Protection Authority took formal action at their August 4, 2003 meeting to place a limited-term parcel tax on the November 4, 2003 district election ballot. Vice Mayor Metropulos and Council Member Warden represent Belmont on the Board of Commissioners. The item has been designated Measure “I” on the ballot.

The six key elements of Measure “I” include:

1. The term of the measure is limited to seven years: FY 2004-2005 through FY 2010-2011;
2. Funds raised by the measure will only be spent for paramedic and firefighting services within the South County Fire Protection Authority’s jurisdiction;
3. There will be no incurrence of any bonded indebtedness associated with this measure;
4. For residential occupancies, the annual rate per dwelling unit will be \$88.00;
5. For commercial occupancies, the annual rate per square foot will be \$.11; and
6. No escalator factor will be added to either of the two annual rates, above.

If Measure “I” is successful, it will ensure that the South County Fire Protection Authority will be able to continue to provide the current minimum level of emergency paramedic and fire-rescue response services in Belmont, San Carlos, and the unincorporated Harbor Industrial Area.

If Measure "I" is not successful, force reductions will be implemented by the South County Fire Protection Authority as soon as December 16, 2003 that will result in the following local and regional emergency paramedic and fire-rescue response service level reduction consequences:

1. Daily, on-duty strength would be reduced from five to four fire-rescue companies (Engine 13/Laurel Street Fire Station/Downtown San Carlos would be the three-person fire-rescue company eliminated, with Truck 13/Laurel Street Fire Station/Downtown San Carlos subsequently being reconfigured as a two-piece, paramedic-staffed combination company);
2. Daily, on-duty advanced life support (paramedic) capability would be eliminated at one of the four fire stations (Fire Station 16/Alameda de las Pulgas Fire Station/San Carlos Hills would be the effected fire station);
3. Daily, on-duty hazardous materials specialist capability would be reduced by 25% (reduced from a daily maximum strength of eight to a daily maximum strength of six);
4. The response time for an entire first-alarm assignment to arrive at a structure fire or vegetation fire incident may be longer than it currently is, and
5. The response time for a paramedic-staffed fire-rescue company to arrive at an emergency medical incident may be longer than it currently is.

The Fire Authority Board of Commissioners and the San Carlos City Council have both taken formal positions in support of the measure, as has the Belmont and San Carlos Chambers of Commerce. While no public funds can be spent promoting or opposing a ballot measure, it is appropriate for the City Council to take a policy position on any such measure and public funds can be used to provide factual information on the measure. Attachment A is a resolution endorsing Measure "I" and Attachment B is a fact sheet on the measure.

Fiscal Impact

There is no direct fiscal impact to taking a position on Measure "I".

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Council approve the attached resolution in support of Measure "I".

Alternatives

1. Take a position against Measure "I"
2. Take no action

Attachments

- A. Resolution supporting Measure "I"
- B. Fact sheet on Measure "I"

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Rich
Assistant City Manager

Jere A. Kersnar
City Manager

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELMONT ENDORSING MEASURE "I" ON THE NOVEMBER 4, 2003 BALLOT

WHEREAS, the South County Fire Protection Authority is currently in the worst financial condition of its 24-plus year existence, and future years could be even bleaker; and

WHEREAS, despite three-plus years of internal belt tightening, the South County Fire Protection Authority can no longer afford to maintain its current minimum level of emergency paramedic and fire-fighting services within Belmont, San Carlos, and the unincorporated Harbor Industrial Area; and

WHEREAS, the provision of fire suppression, medical (paramedic), rescue, and hazardous materials response services is of critical importance to the well being of Belmont residents, businesses, and visitors; and

WHEREAS, no public funds shall be used in the campaign for or against the measure.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Belmont officially endorses Measure "I" on the November 4, 2003 district election ballot.

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly and regularly passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Belmont at a meeting thereof held on October 28, 2003.

AYES, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

NOES, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

ABSTAIN, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

ABSENT, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

CLERK of the City of Belmont

APPROVED:

MAYOR of the City of Belmont

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