



CITY OF NOVATO
CALIFORNIA

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**NOVATO CITIZENS FINANCE ADVISORY/
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING**

held at

**City Administrative Offices
Womack Conference Room
922 Machin Ave**

**September 19th, 2019
7:30 AM**

Chair

Regina Bianucci Rus

Vice Chair

Rafelina Maglio

Commissioners

Caitrin Devine

David Bentley

Cris MacKenzie

Mark Milberg

Tim O'Connor

MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 7:30 am. Committee members: Regina Bianucci Rus, Tim O'Connor, Cris McKenzie, David Bentley, Mark Milberg, Caitrin Devine (Arrived 7:40), Rafelina Maglio (Absent). Staff members: Acting City Manager Adam McGill, Accounting Supervisor Brooke Kerrigan, Accounting Technician Larcy McPeck. Council members: Pat Eklund, Pam Drew

B. APPROVAL OF FINAL AGENDA

Motion to approve agenda: Tim O'Connor, David Bentley seconded. Approved unanimously. Ayes: 6 (Regina Bianucci Rus, Tim O'Connor, Cris McKenzie, David Bentley, Mark Milberg, Caitrin Devine. Noes: 0, Absent 1 (Rafelina Maglio)

C. Public Comment

D. COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL ITEMS

D-1: APPROVAL OF JUNE 20TH, 2019 MINUTES

Motion to approve with changes modification: Committee Member O'Connor: Missed out 2 items in E1: Incentivize employees for grant funding; Create more robust downtown; Item F: misspelled "o" not "e" O'Connor not O'Conner.

Motion to approve: First – Committee Member McKenzie; Seconded – Committee Member Milberg. Ayes: 6, Abstain: 0, Absent: 1

D-2: APPROVAL OF AUGUST 15TH, 2019 MINUTES

Motion to approve with modification: Committee Member Bentley: Move E1: Update on Refunding 2005, 2005A & 2011 RDA Tax Allocation Bonds to E3 – Presentation of CAFR -14 months after close of the fiscal year is not acceptable. Move to next meeting: Motion to approve: First – Committee Member Devine; Seconded – Committee Member O'Connor. Ayes: 6, Abstain: 0 Absent: 1

E. GENERAL BUSINESS

E-1 ACTIONABLE ITEMS:

E-1.1: DISCUSS AND POSSIBLY TAKE ACTION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMITTEE GOALS FOR FY 19/20

Committee Members agreed to brainstorm and identify top two to four items as the goals of the committee. Need to revisit and discuss the committee's mission. Committee goals should be presented to Council to approve. Committee Chair Bianucci Rus shared the notecards she collected from the members.

E-1.2: DISCUSS AND POTENTIALLY TAKE ACTION REGARDING THE CREATION OF AN AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON THE CITY'S BUDGET AND COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Committee asked for clarification of difference between the proposed City Council Ad Hoc Committee and the existing Finance Advisory Oversight Committee.

Public Comment: Councilmember Pat Eklund:

The Ad Hoc/Sub Committee at the Council level was eliminated five years ago. Most of the other cities have an existing Ad Hoc/Sub Committee

Acting City Manager McGill explained the item was proposed by Council Member Eklund at the last Council meeting and advised the committee members to review City Council staff report and agenda for next Finance Committee Advisory meeting.

E-2 DISCUSSION ITEMS:

E-2.1: DISCUSS "BUDGET-IN-BRIEF" SAMPLES PROVIDED

Committee discussed creation of a "Budget in Brief" document that outlines and simplifies the City's annual budget. Examples from other cities included Oceanside, Milpitas, San Luis Obispo and Palo Alto. Committee Member Bentley mentioned that City staff Bryan Lopez has an existing draft. Committee member suggestions are listed below.

1. Present as a brief overview, eye catching snapshot, charts and fewer words to get people's attention. It should be a tool to engage people to get involved. Link to the website for more info.
2. Highlight budget priorities and positive activities
3. CIP overview – what the government is doing for you
4. Let citizens know how to get involved in the budget process
5. More graphics so it is easy to follow, charts and visuals
6. A publication that will answer what the committee does
7. Show sources and uses of funds
8. Include tax allocation information – property taxes, sales taxes, etc., and the portion received by the City versus other agencies
9. Create document geared towards intended audience (layman)
10. Consistent message (Ambassadors of the City)

11. Use as an on-going process updated quarterly or as semi- annual budget tool
12. Include the goals of the City
13. Include FTE – as compared to similar cities – Comments made about providing context for FTEs (i.e. assumptions could be made about various departments without knowing the details of operations)

Public comments:

Acting City Manager McGill explained that the City's website is robust and most of the information discussed is already available online. Capital project status and other information regarding City activities are available online. Acting City Manager McGill suggested an overview of the City's communications platforms be presented and discussed at the next Finance Advisory Committee meeting. Committee members were receptive and would like to see this item brought back at the next meeting.

Councilmember Drew commented about the gap between the information that has been presented in the past and how information is received by the public. Workshops haven't been helpful because most members of the public seem unable to connect the budget numbers to the positive activities the City undertakes. She commented that people were turned off and the current public impression needs to be corrected.

Councilmember Eklund commented it should an on-going process.

Committee Member Devine left at 8:20 am.

Accounting Supervisor Kerrigan made suggestions regarding a quarterly report showing budget variances which provides the information for Department Heads to capture departmental spending at quarterly intervals. This allows for better overall management of departmental budgets versus departmental spending. She suggested using pie charts as a way to show data that for some is easier to comprehend as opposed to raw data; Distributed information should be attractive and user friendly, and not overly complicated. The City Council can use the information as a guide on budget performance and as a communications tool for City-wide spending.

G. FUTURE MEETINGS

Possible dates for the next meeting for consideration: October 9, October 10 and October 15.

Acting City Manager McGill will gather information on the next meeting date and send the staff report on the City Council's proposed creation of Ad Hoc Committee for the Committee Members to review with the intent to agendaize for the next Finance Advisory Committee meeting.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 am