

TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO
Staff Report
May 19, 2014

For the Town Council meeting of May 27, 2014

TO: Town Council

FROM: Debra Stutsman, Town Manager

SUBJECT: **ROSS VALLEY PARAMEDIC AUTHORITY TAX RENEWAL**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Town Council approve the resolution calling for an election for the renewal of the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority (RVPA) four-year tax for 2015-2019.

BACKGROUND

The RVPA is an 8-member joint powers authority (JPA) that was established in 1982 for the purpose of delivering Fire Department paramedic services in the Ross Valley region. The primary funding mechanism for the RVPA is a property tax. Each taxable residential unit is taxed along with every 1,500 square feet of non-residential structure. This taxation funding source has been in place since the inception of the RVPA. It financially supports a significant portion of the approximately \$2.3 million dollar annual budget for RVPA.

Every four years, the citizens who reside within the member communities of the RVPA service area vote to fund the tax for a four-year period. The current tax expires on June 30, 2015. In order to maintain this revenue stream, each JPA member agency must place the matter on the November 2014 ballot.

DISCUSSION

The 8-member communities of the RVPA consist of:

- Corte Madera*
- Kentfield
- San Anselmo
- Fairfax
- Larkspur
- Ross
- Sleepy Hollow
- Unincorporated areas (CSA 27) in the Ross Valley area

**Corte Madera is a sub-contractor of the RVPA and sets tax rates that are separate from the other member agency areas.*

The RVPA JPA is one of the oldest and most successful regional partnerships in Marin County. The JPA was established 32 years ago as a way to share costs among the member agencies in

order to provide Fire Department-based paramedic first response and ambulance transport services to the communities in the Ross Valley. Since its launch, the JPA has evolved in order to continually provide exceptional levels of advanced life support care to our citizens.

The foremost objectives of Fire Department-based paramedic response are service to the communities and patient care. The seamless combination of Fire Department paramedic engine companies and ambulance units ensures for rapid, seamless, and highly professional levels of care.

ANALYSIS

In November 2010, the RVPA proposed and the voters in all member agencies (excluding Corte Madera) approved the current tax that began at \$42/year plus a 50-cent administrative fee paid to the County, and incrementally increased each year by \$3. In the fourth year (2014-15), the tax will top out at \$51 plus the 50-cent administrative fee that is paid to the County.

For the next four years, the RVPA Board of Directors has approved a tax rate containing \$6 annual increases as follows:

2015-16	\$57
2016-17	\$63
2017-18	\$69
2018-19	\$75

It should be noted that currently, the RVPA property tax is substantially lower than paramedic taxes in other areas of Marin. In fact in 2014, a \$75 tax is considered the norm. More significantly, current RVPA revenues are not keeping pace with expenses. In FY 2014-15, it is estimated that the RVPA will have to transfer approximately \$425,000 from reserves in order to balance the budget. Also, future anticipated expenses would continue to force the RVPA to draw from reserves unless it can generate additional revenues. These cost increases include:

- A 5% increase to the contract for ambulance staffing, that equates to approximately \$64,500.
- Increase in cost of disposable medical supplies.
- A potential future adjustment in ambulance boundaries that could result in a negative revenue shift for the RVPA.

Annually, each member agency confirms the tax for the County tax billing process. At this time, the RVPA and staff from member agencies assess the financial condition of the RVPA and then make a recommendation on the rate for the next one-year period. If the financial condition of the paramedic program is stable, the JPA and member agencies can maintain the tax at its present level and defer the annual increase approved by the voters. This has been done in the past. Thus, while voters approve annual incremental increases, the JPA and member agencies can hold the tax at a lower monetary level than allowed by the voters.

The RVPA Board has approved the following ballot language and the attached ballot argument for use by the member agencies:

Shall there be a continuation of the four year special tax for paramedic services in the amount of \$57 in the first year and raising the tax \$6 annually to a maximum of \$75 per taxable living unit, or per 1,500 square feet of structure on a developed parcel in non-residential use, with the appropriations limit increased by the amount of said tax for the next four years?

The draft resolution placing the matter on the November 4, 2014 ballot is attached, along with the Impartial Analysis prepared by the Town Attorney, a Fact Sheet about the Authority and the RVPA 2014-15 budget.

CONCLUSION

The Ross Valley Paramedic Authority has provided excellent paramedic services to the Ross Valley since 1982 and the action requested of the Town Council would place a measure on the ballot to continue those services for another four years.

Respectfully submitted,



Debra Stutsman
Town Manager

Copy:

Janice Pryzbylski, San Anselmo representative to the RVPA Board of Directors
Robert Sinnott, Executive Officer, Ross Valley Paramedic Authority
Mark Mills, Ross Valley Fire Chief

Attachments:

1. Draft Resolution
2. Ballot Argument
3. Impartial Analysis by the Town Attorney
4. Fact Sheet
5. RVPA Budget for FY 2014-15

RESOLUTION NO.

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO CALLING AND GIVING NOTICE OF THE HOLDING OF AN ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 4, 2014 AND REQUESTING THE MARIN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO CONSOLIDATE SAID ELECTION; AND AUTHORIZING THE TOWN CLERK OR HER DULY AUTHORIZED OFFICERS AND AGENCY TO CARRY OUT ALL THE NECESSARY PROCEDURES FOR SAID ELECTION SUBMITTING TO THE VOTERS THE QUESTION RELATING TO A SPECIAL TAX FOR PARAMEDIC SERVICES

Whereas, the Town of San Anselmo is considering continuing the special tax for paramedic services in the Town; and

Whereas, under the provisions of the laws relating to general law cities in the State of California, an election shall be held on November 4, 2014 at which the Town Council desires to submit to the voters a question relating to a special tax for paramedic services; and

Whereas, it is desirable that the election be consolidated with the statewide election to be held on the same date and that within the Town, the precincts, polling places, and election officers of the two elections to be the same; and

Whereas, it is desirable that the Marin County Elections Department canvass the returns of the General Election and that the election be handled in all respects as if there were only one election.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO, CALIFORNIA, DOES RESOLVE, DECLARE, DETERMINE, AND ORDER AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. That pursuant to the requirements of the laws of the State of California relating to General Law Cities, there is called and ordered to be held in the Town of San Anselmo, California, an election on Tuesday, November 4, 2014.

Section 2. That pursuant to the requirements of Section 10403 of the California Elections Code, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin is hereby requested to consent and agree to the consolidation of said election.

Section 3. That the Town Council hereby acknowledges that the consolidated election will be held and conducted in the manner prescribed in Section 10418.

Section 4. That the Town Council, pursuant to its rights and authority, does order submitted to the voters at the November 4, 2014 election the following question:

The people of the Town of San Anselmo do ordain as follows:

Shall there be a continuation of the four year special tax for paramedic services in the amount of \$57 in the first year and raising the tax \$6 annually to a maximum of \$75 per taxable living unit, or per 1,500 square feet of structure on a developed parcel in non-residential use, with the appropriations limit increased by the amount of said tax for the next four years?

Section 5. Pursuant to Elections Code section 9280, the Town Clerk shall transmit a copy of the measure to the Town Attorney who shall prepare an impartial analysis of the measure in accordance with said Section 9280. Arguments for and against said measure may be filed in accordance with applicable provisions of the law. Pursuant to Section 9285 of the Elections Code of the State of California, (the provisions of which are hereby adopted), when the clerk has selected the arguments for and against the measure which will be printed and distributed to the voters, the clerk shall send copies of the argument in favor of the measure to the authors of the argument against, and copies of the argument against to the authors of the argument in favor. The rebuttal arguments shall be filed with the Town Clerk not more than 10 days after the final date for filing direct arguments. Rebuttal arguments shall be printed in the same manner as the direct arguments. Each rebuttal argument shall immediately follow the direct argument which it seeks to rebut. The text of the measure shall be printed on the ballot in the voter information portion of the sample ballot.

Section 6. That the Marin County Elections Department is authorized to canvass the returns of said election. The election shall be held in all respects as if there were only one election, and only one form of ballot shall be used.

Section 7. That the Board of Supervisors is requested to issue instructions to the Marin County Elections Department to take any and all steps necessary for the holding of the consolidated election.

Section 8. That the Town Clerk is hereby directed to file a certified copy of this resolution with the Board of Supervisors and the Marin County Elections Department.

Section 9. That the polls for the election shall be open at 7:00 a.m. on November 4, 2014 and shall remain open continuously from that time until 8:00 p.m. of the same day, when the polls shall be closed, except as provided in Section 14401 of the Elections Code of the State of California.

Section 10. That in all particulars not recited in this resolution, the election shall be held and conducted as provided by law for holding municipal elections.

Section 11. That notice of the time and place of holding the election is given and Town Clerk is authorized, instructed, and directed to give further or additional notice of the election, in time, form, and manner as required by law.

Section 12. That the Town Clerk shall certify to the passage and adoption of this Resolution and enter it into the book of original resolutions.

Section 13. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

I, the undersigned hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and complete copy of a resolution duly passed and adopted by the Council of the Town of San Anselmo at a regular meeting thereof held on the 27th day of May 2014, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

Approved: _____
Tom McInerney, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Joanne Kessel for
Barbara Chambers, Town Clerk

Special Tax for Paramedic Services November 4, 2014 Ballot

Ballot Argument

Since 1982 the voters of the Ross Valley have continued to approve a special tax to help fund the fire department based paramedic service. You are being asked to again support the tax with modest annual \$6 incremental increases for four years to a maximum rate of \$75. The Ross Valley Paramedic Authority is a partnership of 8 Ross Valley communities that have combined efforts to deliver this exceptional level of care.

The initial Ross Valley Paramedic Authority tax provided for a single ambulance. The expectation for paramedic care from our citizens has dictated that service levels continue to expand and evolve. Paramedic care is now provided through a system that includes state of the art fire department paramedic ambulance units and with trained paramedics aboard fire engines so that advanced emergency care can arrive as quickly as possible.

The Ross Valley Paramedic Authority will continue the responsible, transparent approach to managing the costs of our emergency medical response service and adequately provide for the long-term safety of our community.

A Yes Vote Will:

- Ensure the existing high level paramedic emergency medical response services
- Continue local control over these tax revenues
- Maintain rapid emergency response times

Your tax pays for a significant portion of the paramedic program. Additional funds are collected from insurance companies through third party billing and from billing of non-resident customers. In addition, your tax covers continuing paramedic training, the cost of supplies and equipment and the replacement of ambulance units when needed.

Our goal is to continue to provide state of the art paramedic care in the Ross Valley. We need your vote to continue this vital service. Vote YES on Measure _____.

Impartial Analysis
Special Tax for Paramedic Services

If this measure is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, the special tax for paramedic services administered by the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority, will be continued for four more years. The tax for residential units will be \$57.00 per taxable living unit in the first year and increasing thereafter by \$6.00 per year with a maximum of \$75.00 per taxable living unit. The tax for non-residential parcels will be \$57.00 per 1,500 square feet of structure for each developed parcel in non-residential use in the first year, increasing thereafter by \$6.00 per year.

The proposed special tax for paramedic services will be collected in addition to fees for transportation to the hospital charged to insurance providers. The applicable appropriations limit pursuant to Article XIII B of the California Constitution will be increased in an amount equal to the proceeds of the special tax.

If the measure is not approved, the tax will expire on June 30, 2015.

Robert Epstein
Town Attorney

OVERVIEW OF THE ROSS VALLEY PARAMEDIC AUTHORITY JPA

Governance and Administration

- The RVPA is an eight member JPA that was formed in 1982 for the express purpose of providing fire department based paramedic service to the Ross Valley. The JPA service area includes:

Town of Corte Madera	Board Members:
City of Larkspur	Michael Lappert Board Chair
Kentfield Fire District	Dan Hillmer, Board Member
Town of Ross	Bruce Corbet, Board Member
Town of San Anselmo	Bruce Hart, Board Member
Sleepy Hollow Fire District	Janice Przybylski, Board Member
Town of Fairfax	Tom Finn, Board Member
County of Marin CSA 19 areas	Larry Bragman, Board Member
	Dennis Gilardi, Board Member
- Each member agency provides one representative to serve on the RVPA board of directors. The board meets monthly on the first Thursday at 6:30 pm at the City of Larkspur council chambers.
- The RVPA executive officer is a volunteer role, historically handled by one of the member agency fire chiefs.
- Currently, the Larkspur finance director serves as the RVPA finance officer.
- The RVPA pays the City of Larkspur \$46,000 annually for financial services, accounting and auditing.
- The Town of Corte Madera is a full voting and partnering member, providing regional first-due paramedic engine company and ambulance transport services to Corte Madera, CSA 27 areas and portions of the City of Larkspur.

Staffing and Service Deployment

- Upon launch of the program, paramedics were initially employed by the RVPA. Eventually, the Marin County Fire Department took over staffing the ambulance on contract and hired the JPA's medics. The RVPA ambulance has been successfully staffed with Marin County medics under this contractual arrangement since the late 1980's.
- The RVPA owns one transport vehicle. The ambulance has been housed at the Ross Fire Station. This site was selected due it being a central response location.

The RVPA pays \$26,200 annually to the Town of Ross for housing of the RVPA ambulance and personnel.
- In the mid 1990's, the Town of Corte Madera launched a medic transport ambulance to serve the Town and to back up the RVPA ambulance. The Town has been operating under a successful subcontract partnership.
- The Marin County Fire Department provides additional back up service to the Upper Ross Valley with a fire department paramedic ambulance stationed in Woodacre.
- ALS back up service fees are paid to our partnering agencies under several approved funding arrangements.

Budget / Property Tax / Revenue Streams

- The FY 2013-14 operating budget is \$2,229,950
- In FY 2013-14, a total of \$349,783 was transferred from reserves to balance the budget.
- Every four years, the RVPA property tax must be placed on the ballot separately in all member agency communities.
- It is the member agency's responsibility to hold the election.
- The RVPA board establishes the proposed tax rate for the next four-year period, based on future budget and cost projections, and forwards this information to the member agencies.
- The RVPA has two funding streams:
 1. The property tax. Currently set at \$51 per living unit or per 1,500 square feet of non-residential construction. The property tax has been on a regular cycle of \$3 annual increases.

The current tax amounts per member agency are as follows:

Fairfax	\$181,300
Kentfield	\$137,000
Larkspur	\$368,000
County CSA	\$ 36,000
Ross	\$ 45,867
Sleepy Hollow	\$ 44,000
San Anselmo	\$288,000

2. Third-Party Billing Program. The RVPA seeks reimbursement for ambulance transport from the patient's insurance provider and directly from non-Ross Valley area customers who are transported.
- Revenue from a failing tax measure could be addressed by the following options:
 1. The member agency would place it back on the ballot the following year. (The member agency could be liable for the equal amount of tax revenue in order to maintain adequate funding to support the program.)
 2. Expand the transport-billing program to invoice all customers transported. Currently no Ross Valley resident receives a bill for transport. The RVPA receives only what is collected from private insurance companies. If the patient has no insurance, the RVPA receives no compensation. If the insurance company only pays a portion of the transport bill, the remaining balance is forgiven.

Program Expansion

- In the late 1990's, the RVPA expanded its scope to include a supplement paid to member agencies for engine medic programs. The RVPA pays a stipend to supplement existing staff trained to the level of paramedic. Currently, two agencies receive stipends:

Ross Valley Fire Department	\$198,000
Larkspur Fire Department	\$137,500

- For approximately 10 years, the RVPA has paid a medical supply stipend to member agency departments:

Ross Valley Fire Department	\$43,562
Kentfield Fire District	\$11,507
Larkspur Fire Department	\$31,007

- *Amounts calculated on a percentage of member agency property tax contribution.*
- The RVPA sponsors an automatic defibrillation program for all member agencies. This included an initial purchase and replacement program of equipment for all member agency vehicles and an ongoing annual maintenance contract that presently costs \$18,000 annually.
- Both the RVPA and Town of Corte Madera medic staff are provided with medical direction and program quality (CQI) oversight by representatives of Marin General and Kaiser Hospitals.

November 4, 2014 Election

- All member agencies must place the tax on the ballot for this election.
- All member agencies have been furnished with tax rate information approved by the RVPA board of directors.
- The RVPA board is seeking a \$6 annual increase in the tax over the next four years. This is due to the following factors:
 1. Annual need to transfer funds from reserves to balance the budget.
 2. Anticipated 5% (\$64,800) increase in the County Contract beginning in FY 2014-15.
 3. Anticipated reductions in transport billing revenue.
- The proposed tax rate for the next four years is as follows:

2015-16	\$57
2016-17	\$63
2017-18	\$69
2018-19	\$75

- Even at the 4th year amount of \$75, the tax is well within the norm of property tax fees for the other fire department based paramedic programs in Marin County.
- The Board is currently working on proposed ballot and ballot argument language. This should be confirmed and ready for use by the member agencies after the April 3rd RVPA meeting.

It is imperative that all member agency administrative and elected representatives recognize the importance of the November 2014 election and thus actively support the RVPA tax measure.

It is incumbent upon each member agency to place this matter on the ballot for the November 4, 2014 election.

Your fire department based paramedic program could be compromised if the property tax does not pass.

Ross Valley Paramedic Authority - Budget 2014-15

ASSESSMENT REVENUE:	Actual 2011-2012	Budget 2012-2013	Current Budget 2013-14	PROPOSED 2014-15
Town of Fairfax	159,707	170,000	181,300	193,679
Kentfield FPD	120,070	128,500	137,000	145,714
City of Larkspur	322,361	345,000	368,000	391,000
County Service Area 27	31,468	33,750	36,000	38,250
Town of Ross	40,533	43,000	45,867	49,179
Sleepy Hollow F.P.D.	38,753	41,250	44,000	46,750
Town of San Anselmo	253,624	270,000	288,000	306,000
Disposition of Property				0
Interest Earnings:	4,735	5,000	5,000	4,100
Transport Billing Revenue:	740,102	750,000	775,000	615,000
Total:	1,711,353	1,786,500	1,880,167	1,789,671
Transfer From Reserves	66,098	201,200	349,783	425,505
Transfer From Reserves				
Total Revenue:	1,777,451	1,987,700	2,229,950	2,215,176

EXPENSES

Account Number	Description	Actual 2011-2012	Budget 2012-2013	Current Budget 2013-14	PROPOSED 2014-15
705-0046-000-003000	Part Time Salaries	7,070	7,500	10,000	10,000
705-0046-001-012012	Consultants	10,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
705-0046-001-012001	Accounting/Auditing	44,920	42,000	46,000	46,000
705-0046-001-012031	Engine Co. Defibrillators/Maint. Contract	15,350	16,000	18,000	26,380
705-0046-001-012003	ALS Backup Services	109,335	145,000	145,000	145,000
705-0046-001-012039	Parcel Tax to Corte Madera	4,914	5,000	5,650	5,932
705-0046-001-012004	Transport Billing Fee	45,256	45,000	45,000	45,000
705-0046-001-016000	Legal Counsel	2,208	2,000	2,000	2,000
705-0046-001-018000	Marin County Fire Contract	1,103,098	1,165,000	1,296,400	1,361,187
New	Training	0	0	0	0
705-0046-001	Account Total	1,342,151	1,432,500	1,573,050	1,646,499
705-0046-002-021000	Fuel	8,784	10,000	10,000	10,000
705-0046-002-002024	Printing/Stationary/labels/Newsletter	0	0	1,000	1,000
705-0046-002-026000	Office Supplies	0	200	200	200
705-0046-002-028010	Disp. Med. Supplies	54,462	75,000	75,000	75,000
705-0046-002-028004	EMS Training/Supply Reimb. Eng. Co.	93,078	90,000	90,000	90,000
705-0046-002-028002	Engine Medic Program- RVFD	172,834	198,000	198,000	198,000
705-0046-002-028003	Engine Medic Program- Larkspur	67,500	137,500	137,500	137,500

705-0046-002	Account Total	396,658	510,700	511,700	511,700
705-0046-004-04000	Postage	9	800	800	800
705-0046-004-042003	Miscellaneous	489	1,000	1,000	1,000
705-0046-004	Account Total	498	1,800	1,800	1,800
705-0046-005-053000	Vehicle Repairs	30	2,500	2,500	2,500
705-0046-005	Account Total	30	2,500	2,500	2,500
705-0046-006-064000	Insurance - Property and Liability	3,605	4,000	4,000	4,000
705-0046-006	Account Total	3,605	4,000	4,000	4,000
705-0046-007-07000	Dues/Memberships/Subscriptions	0	0	0	0
705-0046-007-073008	Tax Collection Service (County)	8,743	8,700	8,700	8,900
705-0046-007-074000	Rental (Town of Ross)	24,864	25,500	26,200	26,777
705-0046-007-075000	Taxes/Assessments/Elections	0	0	0	11,000
705-0046-007	Account Total	33,607	34,200	34,900	46,677
705-0046-008-087001	Building and Structure	902	2,000	2,000	2,000
705-0046-008-087002	Ambulance Replacement			100,000	0
705-0046-008-087003	Ipad/Tablets			0	4,400
705-0046-008-087008	Other Equipment/Transport Vehicle/Defibs	0	0	0	0
705-0046-008	Account Total	902	2,000	102,000	2,000
Total Expense	Total Operating Expense	1,777,451	1,987,700	2,229,950	2,215,176
	App. and Equip. Replac. Fund				
	Total Revenue	1,777,451	1,987,700	2,229,950	2,215,176
	Total Expense	1,777,451	1,987,700	2,229,950	2,215,176
	Over (under)	0	0	0	0
Reserved Fund Balances:	Apparatus and equip.	100,000	100,000		77,000
	Engine Company Medic Program	150,000	150,000	150,000	0
	Reserve Ambulance	43,000	43,000		0
	Dry Period Funding	759,012	533,812	377,029	24,524
	Tax Collection	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
	Community Grant Program	26,000	50,000		0
	TOTALS	1,093,012	891,812	542,029	116,524

61%

45%

24%

5%

349,783