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Residents question city's water, sewer rate hike plan

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

Calistoga residents worried about a plan to significantly raise water and sewer rates over the next five years told City Council members on Tuesday that they still have some explaining to do.

People have been talking, they said, since the Nov. 7 announcement by the council that water rates would climb 59 percent over five years while wastewater rates

would likely jump 36 percent in the same time period.

Since that meeting, the city mailed to every water customer a detailed report about why the increases are necessary as well as a notice that a public hearing on the matter is set for Jan. 2, 2018. In addition, posted on the city's website are several detailed documents prepared by the consultant hired more than a year ago to analyze the water and wastewater operations

and recommend ways to pay for them.

It's a lot of information and data to digest and there are conflicting interpretations among some of those trying to sort it out, said resident Karen Chang.

"I'm talking to people around town and they're saying one thing and I'm saying, 'No, that's not what I read,'" Chang told the council. "I

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School district refinances bonds, reports sound budget

By Granville Fox
Tribune Reporter

Calistoga Joint Unified School District trustees voted this week to refinance \$8.5 million worth of general obligation bonds in order to take advantage of low rates and a program that would be eliminated under the Republican tax overhaul.

The move will save taxpayers an estimated \$2.2 million in coming years, district officials said.

"The sole intent is to benefit taxpayers," Paula Kleczkowski, executive assistant to superintendent Erin Smith-Hagberg, wrote in an email to the Tribune.

Refinancing the bonds, approved by voters in 2010 for new school facilities and upgrades, will not increase the term of the bonds nor will the district receive any cash as a result.

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PHOTOS BY CLARK JAMES MISHLER

Even the Grinch loves Calistoga's annual Lighted Tractor Parade!

Bigger and better than ever is how most people are describing the Calistoga Chamber of Commerce's 22nd annual Lighted Tractor Parade, which took place last Saturday night. Organizers estimate that roughly 12,000 people lined Lincoln Avenue and Washington Street to watch some 60 entries – vintage and modern tractors, antique trucks, and construction equipment bedecked with dazzling lights – pa-

rade down Calistoga's main street to kick off the holiday season. Above, Whoville's Grinch drives the Laura Espinoza family's entry along the parade route, where kids of all ages, including (right) Napa cousins Liam, Whitney and Isabella, enjoyed watching 22nd Annual Calistoga Lighted Tractor Parade on Washington Street. To see more photos of the event, please go to Pages 6 and 7.



Tim Wilkes



Alissa McNair

Council reseats Planning Commissioners, other representatives

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

Calistoga Planning Commissioners Tim Wilkes, Alissa McNair and Walter Abernathy were reappointed Tuesday night to their positions and will each serve another two-year term.

In addition, the Calistoga City Council also reappointed incumbents Dieter Deiss and Sophie Gullung to the Napa County Active Transportation Advisory Committee while naming newcomer John Gleazer to a third seat on the panel. All three will serve two year terms.

Shelby Valentine will remain the city's representative on the Napa County

Mosquito Abatement Board of Trustees. Valentine, who this year is serving as board president, will serve another two year term.

McNair and Wilkes are both architects. McNair was first appointed to the Planning Commission for a two-year term in 2015. She is actively involved with the Calistoga Rotary Club and Wine Country Animal Lovers pet rescue. She has lived in Calistoga for 36 years, according to the application she submitted for reappointment to the Planning Commission.

Wilkes, also an architect, has served on the Planning Commission since 2015

as well. He has lived in Calistoga for 27 years.

Abernathy, a resident of Calistoga for eight years, is a retired executive director having worked at the Port of Oakland and Port of San Francisco. He has served on the planning commission since first being appointed in 2013.

A fourth applicant for one of three Planning Commission terms, general contractor Bob Branstad was thanked for his interest and asked to apply in the future.

The Active Transportation Advisory Committee, or ATAC, is an advisory committee of the Napa Valley

Transportation Authority established by the NVT Board of Directors to promote and encourage safe bicycling and walking. The committee works to further the Napa Valley goal of becoming more bicycle and pedestrian friendly along with promoting sustainable transportation alternatives. The ATAC focuses on countywide interests to reduce congestion and improve air quality by promoting non-motorized (biking and walking) transportation modes as a significant, safe and beneficial transportation options.

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