

REGULAR MEETING of the ROSS TOWN COUNCIL  
THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2026  
*Held In-Person and Teleconference via Zoom*

**1. 6:00 p.m. Commencement.**

Mayor Julie McMillan; Mayor Pro Tem Elizabeth Robbins; Council Members Teri Dowling; Bill Kircher, Jr., Mathew Salter (absent); Town Manager Christa Johnson; Town Attorney Ben Stock.

**2. Posting of agenda/changes to agenda.**

Town Manager Johnson confirmed the agenda was posted according to government requirements, and that there were no changes to the agenda.

**3. Disclosure of Ex Parte Communications on Items Where the Town Council Acts in an Adjudicatory or Quasi-Judicial Capacity**

None.

**4. Open Time for Public Expression.**

None.

**5. Proclamation celebrating National Fair Housing Month, April 2026.**

Mayor McMillan read the Proclamation recognizing April 2026 as National Fair Housing Month into the record.

**6. Mayor's Report.**

Chief Pata's Retirement and Celebration Coffee - April 30: The Town of Ross has been so fortunate that Raffaello Pata joined us as Police Chief in March 2021. Chief Pata has demonstrated a deep commitment to serve and interact with the Ross community.

Chief Pata began his career as a city fire dispatcher at age 17, becoming a police officer in 1985 at age 20. After 34 years, he retired from San Rafael in 2018 and then worked for the Northern California Computer Crimes Task Force, assisting and training investigators.

In Ross, Chief Pata has been known for his open-door policy, broad smile and warm laugh. He has seamlessly led his department of eight Police Officers. Chief Pata engages with residents and genuinely cares about our community. He has been an excellent partner with students and staff at Ross School and Branson. He was instrumental in educating Ross E-Bike riders and leading the county's efforts to regulate E-Bikes to enhance safety for the riders and community. He has attended nearly every Ross Town Council meeting, providing a voice of reason and collaboration.

After five years of dedicated service, Chief Pata will retire on April 30. While we are sad to see him go, we are deeply grateful for his exceptional work with the Ross community, and excited for him to begin his next chapter. The Town will host a morning coffee for Chief Pata Thursday, April 30. Please look for more details which will be emailed soon and join us to thank Chief Pata and wish him well!

Please Support Downtown Ross Businesses: Many of you are already aware that beloved Crown & Crummet has closed. We are very sorry to see them go. Each month, the *Ross Review* has been featuring a Ross business. Please patronize the fine businesses in our charming downtown – they need our continued support to thrive. At the March RPOA meeting, Ross resident Kevin Erdman

shared ideas about how to enhance the downtown Ross business environment. Working with RPOA, Kevin will be implementing some of these steps soon. We thank Kevin and RPOA for their efforts!

Citizens Advisory Committee Recommendations - Wednesday, April 29: The Citizens Advisory Committee has been hard at work since mid-February and will give its recommendations about the Town facilities and fire station at the April 29 Council meeting. (Please note that the May Council meeting has been moved up to April 29 due to scheduling conflicts.) This meeting, like all Council meetings, will also be available on Zoom.

**7. Council Committee & Liaison Report:**

Council Member Dowling said she had opposed the Measure AA amendment, arguing it would reduce Ross’s road funding while shifting resources to a “Reimagine Roadways” program unlikely to benefit the town. Although the amendment passed at the TAM level, Ross officials plan to seek alternative infrastructure funding, especially for smaller communities.

Council Member Kircher reported that MCE has faced governance and operational scrutiny, prompting a study of its 34-member board. Some progress has been made, including a formal service agreement and a more active Finance Committee. However, budget tensions persist over staffing costs and electricity pricing, with a proposed staff expense cap failing amid layoff concerns. There is also disagreement about forming a committee to review contract approvals, though efforts to address these issues are ongoing.

**8. Staff & Community Reports**

**a. Ross Property Owners Association**

None.

**b. Town Manager**

Town Manager Johnson gave the following report:

- The Town Clerk recently retired, and longtime part-time Office Assistant Donna Redstone is serving as interim clerk while a recruitment is underway. The Town expects to fill the role soon and asks for patience due to temporary staffing shortages.
- The Council’s annual Budget Workshop is scheduled for April 23 at 9 a.m., with a proposal to move the May meeting to April 29.
- Infrastructure updates include completion of the first phase of the Bolinas Storm Drain project, with final work expected in July. The Sir Francis Drake paving project will begin after the school year ends, requiring two weeks of one-lane traffic control, and residents are advised to plan ahead.

**9. Consent Agenda**

The following items will be considered in a single motion, unless removed from the Consent Agenda. There were no Council Members or public members wishing to remove any item.

**Mayor Pro Tem Robbins moved, and Council Member Dowling seconded, to approve Consent Agenda Items a, b, c, d, e, f, g and h. Motion carried unanimously (4-0-1; Salter absent).**

**a. Minutes:**

**Special Meeting Closed Session, March 12, 2026  
Regular Meeting, March 12, 2026**

- b. Demands: February 2026**
- c. Town Council to consider rescinding Resolution No. 2528 and adopting Resolution No. 2616 approving moving the May 2026 Town Council regular meeting from May 14 to April 29, 2026.**
- d. Town Council to review project plans and consider authorizing the Public Works Director to advertise for public construction bids for the Townwide Drainage Improvements Project.**
- e. Town Council to consider authorizing the Town Manager to purchase a new multi-function utility vehicle for the Public Works Department, in an amount not to exceed \$110,000.**
- f. Town Council to consider authorizing the Town Manager to execute a Three-Year Revocable License Agreement with Jim Baum for an Organic Farm Stand to be held on Ross Common on Thursdays, 11:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. from April to November each year during the period 2026-2029.**
- g. Town Council to consider adopting Resolution No. 2619 approving a Paid Parental Leave Policy for Town of Ross employees.**
- h. Town Council to consider adopting Resolution No. 2613 confirming the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority tax for the 2026-2027 Fiscal Year.**

**End of Consent Agenda.**

**10. Public Hearing on Planning Projects – Part 1.**

- a. 5 Allen Lane, Design Review, Variance and Town Council consideration of adoption of Resolution No. 2615 approving the project, subject to conditions.**

**Dan Letter, 5 Allen Lane, A.P. No. 073-261-40, Zoning: R-1:B-10, General Plan: ML (Medium Low Density), Flood Zone: AE (Floodway)**

**Project Summary:** The applicant requests approval from the Town Council for Design Review and a Variance. The project proposes rehabilitation of the southern portion of the yard, including construction of a new 16-foot by 40-foot pool and spa. Additional site improvements include installation of permeable pavers adjacent to the main residence with a new arbor, turf and pavers surrounding the proposed pool area, and construction of a new outdoor kitchen. The pool equipment enclosure is proposed along the front side of the residence.

The project also includes a new front walkway with exterior lighting and replacement of the existing asphalt driveway on the west side of the lot with permeable pavers. A Variance is required to allow the pool, spa, outdoor kitchen, arbor, pool equipment enclosure, and patio improvements to encroach into the required setbacks.

Planner Alex Lopez-Vega presented a proposal for Design Review and a Variance at 5 Allen Lane, recommending adoption of Resolution No. 2615. The ADR Board voted to support the project, citing the site's unique topography, irregular shape, and existing privacy. The Construction Management Plan indicates all parking and materials will be accommodated on site. Staff recommends Council approval of the resolution.

Mayor McMillan confirmed there were no questions from Council Members, and she confirmed the applicant had no additional comments or presentation.

Mayor McMillan opened the public comment period, and there were no speakers.

**Mayor Pro Tem Robbins moved, and Council Member Dowling seconded, to adopt Resolution No. 2615 approving Design Review and Variance for 5 Allen Lane, subject to conditions. Motion carried unanimously (4-0-1; Salter absent).**

**b. 3 Allen Lane, Design Review, Variance, and Town Council consideration of adoption of Resolution No. 2614 approving the project, subject to conditions.**

**Andy Dodge and Alea Stein, 3 Allen Lane, A.P. No. 073-261-10, Zoning: R-1:B-10, General Plan: ML (Medium Low Density), Flood Zone: AE (Floodway)**

**Project Summary:** The applicant requests approval from the Town Council for Design Review, and a Variance. The project proposes constructing a new 14' x 30' in-ground pool and spa in the rear yard. The pool equipment will be located within an insulated mechanical closet. A variance is required to construct a pool, spa and a patio within the side and rear yard setback.

Planner Alex Lopez-Vega presented a request for Design Review and a Variance at 3 Allen Lane, recommending adoption of Resolution No. 2614. The ADR Board voted to support the project with modifications, primarily addressing concerns about the pool's proximity to property lines. The applicant revised the design by reducing the pool and patio size to increase setbacks. The Construction Management Plan provides for three on-site parking spaces with no street parking. Staff recommends Council approval.

Mayor McMillan confirmed there were no questions from Council Members, and that the applicant waived any presentation.

Mayor McMillan opened the public comment period, and there were no speakers.

**Mayor Pro Tem Robbins moved, and Council Member Dowling seconded, to adopt Resolution 2614 approving Design Review and a Variance for 3 Allen Lane, subject to conditions. Motion carried unanimously (4-0-1; Salter absent).**

**End of Public Hearing on Planning Project Part 1.**

**Administrative Agenda.**

**11. Town Council to consider adopting Resolution No. 2618 approving the Police Chief Employment Agreement between the Town of Ross and Raul Ernesto Aguilar for the period April 27, 2026 through June 30, 2029 and amending salary schedule.**

Town Manager Johnson announced the retirement of Police Chief Pata and the selection of Raul Ernesto Aguilar as the top candidate following a comprehensive recruitment process. Chief Aguilar brings extensive law enforcement and leadership experience, including roles with the San Rafael Police Department and most recently as Chief of Police and Director of Safety at the College of Marin.

Town Manager Johnson said she negotiated a three-year employment agreement through June 30, 2029, aligning with the current chief's terms, covering salary and benefits. The Council is asked to adopt Resolution No. 2618 to approve the agreement and update the Town's salary schedule accordingly.

Mayor McMillan opened the public comment period, and there were no speakers.

**Council Member Dowling moved, and Mayor Pro Tem Robbins seconded, to adopt Resolution No. 2618 approving the Police Chief Employment Agreement between the Town of Ross and Raul Ernesto Aguilar for the period April 27, 2026 through June 30, 2029 and amending salary schedule. Motion carried unanimously (4-0-1; Salter absent).**

Town Manager Johnson then introduced Police Chief Aguilar, who she said starts on April 27<sup>th</sup>. The next Council meeting will be April 29<sup>th</sup> and a ceremonial swearing in and badge pinning will be held. Staff is planning a reception on April 30<sup>th</sup> to celebrate retiring Chief Pata.

Police Chief Aguilar thanked the Council and staff for the opportunity to serve as the Town's Police Chief, stating he is committed to leading the department with integrity, accountability and transparency, and with a deep commitment to their shared goals.

**12. Town Council to consider adopting Resolution No. 2611 amending the Town Fee Schedule and receive a presentation from staff and NBS of the Fee Study Report including evaluation of fees for services for Administration and Finance, Planning, Building, Public Works, Police and General Plan Updates.**

Planning Director Roberta Feliciano presented an update to the Town Fee Schedule based on a recent fee study evaluating costs across key departments, including finance and administration, planning and building, police, and public works. The study found that existing fees need adjustment to better reflect the current cost of services, in line with state requirements and Proposition 26.

Staff also added a new false alarm fee that would apply after three occurrences per calendar year. The proposed updates account for changes in staffing costs, workload, and regulatory requirements since the last fee revision in 2016. She recommended that the Council adopt Resolution No. 2611 to approve the updated fee schedule, with an effective date of July 1, 2026.

Nicole Kissman, NBS, then provided a brief highlight and PowerPoint presentation of the key points of the study.

There were no Council questions. Mayor McMillan then opened the public comment period, and there were no speakers.

Council Member Dowling voiced appreciation of all of the work of both the consultant and staff that went into this report.

**Mayor Pro Tem Robbins moved, and Council Member Dowling seconded, to adopt Resolution No. 2611 amending the Town Fee Schedule and receive a presentation from staff and NBS of the Fee Study Report including evaluation of fees for services for Administration and Finance, Planning, Building, Public Works, Police and General Plan Updates. Motion carried unanimously (4-0-1; Salter absent).**

**13. Ross Recreation update. (Borthwick)**

Recreation Manager Maureen Borthwick presented an update on Ross Recreation, outlining its mission to provide programs that support physical, mental, and social development. She introduced staff, highlighted team strengths, and reviewed new initiatives planned through FY 2026.

Her presentation covered key accomplishments, including growth in Kids Club Afterschool and the Happy Hive program, increased enrollment, program revenues and expenses, and community event coordination. She concluded with next steps for continued program development and service expansion.

Mayor McMillan said she recalls several years ago, they were on the verge of canceling the Kids Club and she confirmed it is now surging and thriving.

Mayor McMillan opened the public comment period, and there were no speakers.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins referred to Kids Club, noting Ross was the only town that did not have afterschool care and she recognized Elizabeth Brekhus for pushing hard to keep it going, along with staff's hard work. Ms. Borthwick also recognized her staff team.

Council Members thanked Ms. Borthwick for her presentation and update.

**14. Town Council to receive a presentation from Fieldman Rolapp, the Town's Municipal Advisor, regarding the Town's financial condition, budget outlook, and capacity to support debt service associated with implementation of the Facilities Master Plan and potential capital and operating costs related to the Friends of the Ross Firehouse (FORF) initiative.**

Town Manager Johnson introduced the matter, stating she worked with Project Manager David Kelly to bring this item forward to the Council. The Facilities Master Plan could very well require some sort of financing plan and it is important to learn about all of the kinds of financing plans available and have some professionals look at the Town's budget and 5-year financial forecast to confirm the status of the Town's financial well-being. The Town entered into an agreement with Fieldman Rolapp after an RFP was prepared and a contract approved.

Un Chu Reardon, Senior Vice President, Fieldman Rolapp and Associates, introduced Dan Shaw with the firm, provided an overview of their firm, said they are licensed by the SCC and they act as a fiduciary to their clients, and provided matters to be reviewed tonight: Discussing the Town's capital plans and needs, its financial capacity in terms of the General Fund, discussion of budget trends, and discussing funding gaps of capital facilities the Town is currently reviewing along with potential revenue options.

She referred to the Town's revenue profile which is largely based on property tax base revenues, with 85% coming from property taxes, 13% coming from Measure E parcel tax, and 2% from other sources like sales tax, business license tax, and property transfer taxes. Property taxes are a stable revenue source and projections are largely fixed and dependent upon assessed valuation growth.

In identifying what the Town is trying to fund, there are three buckets of conceptual plans here. The first is the Town's Facilities Master Plan ranging in costs of \$26 to \$30 million, the Friends of Ross Firehouse (FORF) initiative which include capital costs of \$22 million to \$28 million as well as on-going operation needs of \$3.4 million to \$5 million a year, and the third bucket covers the Town's on-going Capital Improvement funding needs supported by the Town's General Fund, ranging from \$3 million a year, which includes \$1 million for a potential Ross Common project, funds for facilities and equipment projects, as well as the Town's underground project.

Ms. Reardon provided a slide showing the Town's financial capacity or what it can realistically afford based on current revenues, which is approximately \$11.2 million based on the Town's adopted budget. They applied S&P, a leading credit rating agency and their general rule of thumb is that for a well-managed municipality, the General Fund should not carry more than 6% to 8% of their general revenues. For Ross, this means a maximum of \$670,000 to \$890,000 which are the outer limits of debt service that can be carried each year. They ran certain hypothetical bonding scenarios and have shown that the estimated debt service needed to produce a \$10 million bond issuance is roughly \$650,000 a year in annual debt service. While this is slightly below the S&P guidelines of 6%, there is not a lot of room there. When looking at the \$20 million bond issue, it jumps to an annual debt service of \$1.3 million. This far exceeds what the Town can afford at this time. In looking at a bond issuance of \$30 million, it is approximately \$9 million in annual debt service.

Mayor McMillan asked if this is assuming that the Town is using its facilities to mortgage the debt or assuming there is some kind of election and homeowners are being assessed.

Ms. Reardon said this is just looking at the current picture. If the Town were to move forward, they would need to approve some sort of new tax revenue to do that. Mr. Shaw will present the different types of debt options available to the Town who will talk about a lease revenue option the Town would have to encumber to move forward with that type of financing and a GO bond financing that does not require that.

Town Manager Johnson emphasized that if the Town wanted to take out a loan, this will determine whether the Town has the capacity to do this and pay for it without going to the voters.

Mayor McMillan confirmed that the slide assumes the Town would be funding the debt based on the Town's revenues, budget, and facilities that could be secured for the debt. Town Manager Johnson added that the Town can afford a very small amount each year to pay towards debt so it needs to go to the voters for approval of additional taxes or bond repayment.

Ms. Reardon continued with the presentation and spoke about property tax revenues growing 4% each year, expenses growing by a higher number each year from 6% to 10% per year, so there is a gap which will grow given the Town has been reducing transfers to the Capital Fund to help balance the budget.

Mayor McMillan asked and confirmed that the 6% to 10% is based on a 5-year projections going out. Town Manager Johnson added that the budget workshop is in a few weeks, and staff brings an update of the 5-year financial forecast and this analysis was based on the current budget.

Ms. Reardon continued and said the next slides identify the different buckets of the CIP plans the Town is reviewing: the Facilities Master Plan cost, annual debt service, existing annual costs of the Town's CIP needs, and the total annual burden of \$2.7 million to \$3.4 million which represents 24% to 30% of the Town's General Fund revenues each year, which is significant.

She then presented FORF's financial burden which is larger because of the annual operating costs required to run the FORF initiative projects. They reviewed FORF's bond debt service related to its cost which is \$17.6 million. The annual debt service is about \$1.1 million. When adding the estimated annual operations cost of \$3.4 million and \$5 million as well as the Town's on-going capital needs of \$1 to \$1.5 million, the total annual burden is \$5.5 million to \$7.6 million. The ratio to the Town's annual revenues is much greater—between 49% to 68% which is not financially feasible. She also noted that FORF's preliminary cost estimates does not include all of the needed Facilities Master Plan elements, such as Public Works as well as a storage yard for the Police vehicles.

Ms. Reardon said in combining both plans; the Facilities Master Plan and the FORF initiative, the total annual costs of those plans including the Town's existing capital needs ranges between \$7.2 million to \$9.5 million. This represents approximately 64% to 85% of the Town's revenues, so in all of these scenarios, taking on these obligations without raising new revenues is not financially feasible for the Town.



Council Member Dowling said FORF's annual operations would include staffing, and she confirmed that if the cost of staffing goes up annually between 6% and 10% per year, that number will get higher and higher over time.

Mayor McMillan asked if any other towns or cities have this kind of burden of 64% to 85%, and Ms. Reardon stated "no." The Town would not be able to go out to the market with that type of burden, and Town Manager Johnson recited the S&P guidelines of not spending more than 6% to 8% of their annual revenue on debt service.

Council Member Kircher said the first line item of the slide which states "FMP Bond Debt Service," this is the existing Facilities Master Plan Concept B. The next line is "FORF Bond Debt Service" and that would be their competing proposal. They would not do both of these and he asked if they were double counting. Mr. Shaw said this is for illustrative comparison purposes. The difficulty is that the FORF initiative does not cover all of the Facilities Master Plan elements so there is definitely some overlap which would ultimately need additional scenario planning to pull out what items are in the plan which are not in the FORF initiative. As the Town Manager said, some of those items include Public Works, the new Administration facility, the Police storage yard, the Public Works yard, and if the Council desired to fund all of those elements this is what the burden would look like to the General Fund. There is a fire facility and potential opportunity to house the paramedics in that fire facility, and the cost of the paramedics is also included in the Facilities Master Plan. Other than that, there is not a lot of overlap currently.

Council Member Kircher said he thinks they could take the FORF projection and add something to it such as the Public Works Yard or secured parking, or anything they have not covered. They had a fairly specific proposal for rehabilitating the existing public safety building and came up with a figure. Then they had a catch all of perhaps another \$7 million for the Administration buildings. During their discussion, it turned out they had not taken into account things like Public Works Yard, etc. Obviously, the numbers would have to be fleshed out, but he is concerned about these bottom-line numbers of \$7 million to \$9.5 million. He thinks there is enough of an overlap that it would not be \$7.5 million.

Town Manager Johnson reminded the Council that staff prepared a memo at the end of February where they evaluated the FORF proposal and compared it to the Facilities Master Plan. It is not that it just does not include elements of the Facilities Master Plan, but staff and the consultant team also had concerns and findings that were identified in the memo that also talked about FORF's proposal and how it does not take care of any flooding issues as much as it needs to. So, there are other deficiencies in that plan that make it difficult. So, the takeaway of this initial part of the presentation is just that the Town does not have funding in the budget to be able to take on very much debt itself. They would need to go to voters, and she wanted to make sure their professional consultants reviewed that and confirmed what staff has been reporting out to the Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins asked if the Town was doing this a month or two early because they are talking about the FORF plan but they have a committee trying to reconcile Plan B and the FORF plan. She asked why they are not looking at this after April 29<sup>th</sup> when they hear what that plan is. She understands the debt burden, but comparing FORF to Plan B seems premature because there may be changes at the end of this month and that is what they want to be focusing on.

Town Manager Johnson said she was charged with implementing Concept B and moving this forward. The item before the Council tonight is not an action item. It is a presentation to ensure the Council has a foundation on financing options and they have not gotten to the primer part of this presentation, but it is to start this conversation.

One of the reasons she wanted to bring forward this initial step is so the Council could receive some education, would have an opportunity to ask questions, would have the opportunity to ask for more information so that staff is prepared to return to the Council and provide the information the Council is looking for. She does not know what is happening with the committee and what recommendations they will give; however, if this has anything to do with putting something on the ballot this November, the Council will be under an extremely tight timeline. So, she wanted them all to have an opportunity to start asking questions, receiving the information before the committee comes forward, and already be informed.

Council Member Dowling agreed and said this might also be useful information for the citizens' committee as they are working to understand these costs.

Ms. Reardon continued and said they ran some stress tests on the Town's property tax revenue which is 85% of the Town's annual revenues. They ran three scenarios; the first they call "The Best-Case Scenario" which assumes a revenue growth of 4% in each year. The second scenario assumed a revenue growth of 3% in each year, and the third scenario was called "The Downside Case" where they assumed property growth of 1% in each year. The total expenditures growing 6% to 10% over the next 5 years and the gap slowly declines over time between the three stress test scenarios. Under the "Downside Case Scenario" the Council will see that there are no surplus revenues in that final year. The 1% swings in assessed valuation growth are not big swings but they do have a very big impact on the Town's budget over the next 5 years. It is market-dependent and under the Town's control, but they wanted to illustrate that assumptions over time will eat into revenues. If the Town takes on debt without approving new tax revenues, the Town's ability to repay debt diminishes, as well. She then turned over the presentation to Mr. Shaw.

Dan Shaw said with their analysis showing that to issue new debt would likely need new revenue streams, he wanted to go over what those are. There are four main options for Ross to generate additional sources of revenue:

1. An Ad Valorem General Obligation bond measure: This taxes property based on assessed value. This requires 2/3 voter approval and can only fund capital and not operations.
2. A Parcel Tax: This is a flat fee per parcel. It also requires a 2/3 approval. It can fund operations, capital or debt service.

3. A CFD or Mello Roos tax: Unlike a flat parcel tax, a CFD special tax can be structured by square footage or land use. It can fund both capital and on-going services. CFDs can be complex to administer and also require a 2/3 voter approval.
4. The Real Property Transfer Tax: It applies at the time of sale of a property. It only requires a simple majority and not 2/3 vote, but it is very volatile depending on how many homes are sold that year. Another caveat is that Ross would actually need to become a charter city temporarily in order to raise that tax rate above the default State rate.

Mayor McMillan referred to becoming a charter town and asked if there is something on the fall ballot that will preclude towns converting into charter towns, and Mr. Shaw said yes, potentially. He said the next slide will show that because that Real Property Transfer Tax is so volatile, it is very hard to bond against, and it is probably the least suitable option.

Mayor McMillan said Belvedere tried to do that a few years and was unsuccessful even though it only required a 50%+1 majority vote.

Town Manager Johnson said there is item for the upcoming state-wide ballot would preclude cities from becoming charter cities for that purpose—of increasing the real estate transfer tax.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins asked why would the Town want to be a charter city if not to add this tax.

Town Attorney Stock said there are many reasons why cities become charter cities, but this is beyond the breadth of what the Council is talking about tonight. The consultant is providing it as an option for this tax, and once you become a charter city, you always are a charter city and it is not for a limited time. Voters would have to remove the charter city.

Council Member Dowling referred to the CFD, which is a flexible tax and asked if it is based on square feet of the piece of property or the building on the property. Mr. Shaw said there is a lot of flexibility there but it is typically the square footage of the building, acreage and land use.

Mr. Shaw continued and presented a table that summarizes the differences between the four options. The GO Bonds are the only option that cannot fund operations or pay as you go capital. They are strictly for backing long-term debt. Every other option has a little bit more flexibility as to how revenues are used. Three out of the four options require 2/3 voter approval. The transfer tax is the only exception needing the simple majority, but as noted, it is extremely volatile and market dependent which makes it a worst choice for the primary funding source for a long-term bond.

Revenue stability matters a lot when a town is pledging it to debt service. Predictable cash flows are needed to make bond payments. That favors parcel taxes, CFD taxes, and the GO bond levy.

He then presented an overview of municipal bonds, which are how local governments borrow money to fund public projects. The Town issues the bonds and investors provide the cash up front and the town repays principle plus interest over the next 20-30 years. The interest earned from municipal bonds is typically exempt from federal and state income taxes which allows investors to accept a lower interest rate which means cheaper borrowing for the town. How bonds are repaid depends on the type.

GO Bonds are repaid through the ad valorem property tax levy they discussed. Lease revenue bonds or Certificates of Participation are repaid from the Town's General Fund. These are lease backed, COP or a lease revenue bond. CFD or special tax bonds are also known as Mello Roos bonds and are repaid through that special tax on properties within a specific district or CFD. Lastly, municipal bonds often require voter approval with most local bonds in California requiring 2/3. The key exception is lease back financings which do not require voter approval, but those require an obligation of the Town's General Fund.

The California Constitution, specifically Article XVI, Section 18, sets the framework for local government. The general rule is 2/3 voter approval for cities and towns before taking on the long-term debt, but there are the three recognized exceptions. The first one is the lease financings backed by the General Fund. The next two exceptions are not applicable to the Town—Enterprise Revenue Bonds which are repaid from utility revenues and not the General Fund. The third exception is court-ordered obligations. These are involuntary court-ordered obligations such as pension obligation bonds. He pointed out one nuance—special districts like CFDs operate under different rules and have more flexibility than cities and counties under Article XVI.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins asked about lease revenue bonds, and Mr. Shaw repeated his definition and said the debt service would be too high and too much of a burden on the General Fund without an additional revenue source. When he discusses lease revenue bonds for the town, this assumes a parcel tax gets approved to repay the lease revenue bond.

Mr. Shaw then provided descriptions, benefits, downfalls, and scenarios for the four options, as described earlier.

In summary, Mr. Shaw gave key take-aways. As discussed, the Town has limited financial capacity to fund their desired projects with \$11.2 million in General Fund revenue and expenditures already growing faster than revenues. There is no margin to take on meaningful new debt service from the existing budget. Issuing new debt would require a new revenue source. Whether a GO Bond measure, a parcel tax, a CFD, or some combination, the Town would need voter approval for a new, dedicated revenue source before debt financing becomes viable. A GO Bond would provide the lowest borrowing cost but would not be able to fund operations. A CFD special tax bond would give the most flexibility on how the tax is levied but can be complex to administer and comes with a higher borrowing cost. Lastly, a lease revenue bond would likely require a parcel tax be approved in order to provide revenue stream to repay that debt service.

Council Member Dowling asked if they could do a combination. They have a capital project that needs to be built, and could do the GO Bond. They have on-going cost for staffing and operations, equipment, and that might be a parcel tax. Mr. Shaw said yes, the Town could propose a mixture of the three revenue sources. Council Member Dowling confirmed, however, that the homeowner will end up paying for both.

Mayor McMillan opened the public comment period.

Michael Rosenbaum, 14 Madona, asked if the consultants have considered the age of the people and parcels because seniors opt out of parcel taxes depending on their income. The number of parcels in Ross will go down, so he may get “a free lunch” potentially. He asked if this was included in the report or considered—that there are not really 835 but maybe 800 voters to pay.

Ms. Reardon said the numbers Mr. Shaw presented were hypothetical scenarios. To the extent there are parcels that are exempt, that would increase the amount per parcel. Mayor McMillan said this would also be something the Council would decide if there would be a senior exemption which she confirmed could be carved out in the language.

There were no other public comments, and Mayor McMillan returned to Council discussion.

Council Member Dowling said she needs some time looking at the presentation, stating it was very helpful with the differences, options, and scenarios and voiced appreciation of the information which gives the Council more information in making a wise decision.

Council Members concurred and thanked Ms. Reardon and Mr. Shaw.

**15. Town Council to receive an update from staff regarding the status of the implementation of the Town of Ross Facilities Master Plan.**

Town Manager Johnson said staff has brought forward the third report regarding the status of the plan. They had presented one in September and in December. David Kelly, Project Manager, will provide a report.

Project Manager David Kelly gave a PowerPoint presentation on the third update of the Facilities Master Plan and progress made. He said he will provide an overview of the costs that were updated to reflect the costs to implement the plan, as well as the completed Section 9212-Fiscal Impact Study, provide an update on the two RFQs the Council approved for affordable housing and architectural and engineering services, discuss the selection of the Municipal Advisor which the Council heard tonight, as well as a minor update on CEQA, and the current Citizens Advisory Committee evaluation.

He said one of the key updates was updating the cost estimates that were included in the Facilities Master Plan for Concept B and also the paramedic facility. Both were completed in December. The cost estimates for the paramedic facility was updated to inform the lease agreement with RVPA and the cost estimates for Concept B were updated to reflect cost escalation through 2030. The facilities could include modifications which will be done over time and cost escalation factors are a cost-driving factor important to track.

In particular, the cost update will help inform the Town's budget and CIP which is in progress, and these will help inform next year's budgets and future budgets. In terms of the Election Code 9212 report, this is a fiscal impact study which was a response to the FORF initiative. Their report required contracting with a number of specialized firms, including RSG and also the Master Plan consultant, KPA, along with Mary McGrath Architects who did an evaluation of the costs for a new capital fire facilities, and Citygate Associates which prepared the staffing analysis for two scenarios—either contracting with RVFD or a stand-alone fire station.

The outcome of that is that it helps inform both the Town Council and voters, recognizing Council approve the FORF initiative for placement on the November ballot. Ultimately, it does help inform policy direction and financial feasibility relating to the FORF initiative. He noted that the Election Code 9212 report is included on the website and is available for review by the community.

At the Council's February meeting, the Council gave direction to staff to move forward with two RFQs; the first was for affordable housing. To prepare that RFQ, Town staff coordinated with planning staff and the Town Attorney's Office to ensure the RFQ reflected consistency with the Town's Housing Element and regional housing needs compliance objectives in addition to consistency with both zoning and development standards. The RFQ was authorized by the Council on February 12<sup>th</sup> and subsequently released and requires Statements of Qualifications (SOQ) to be submitted to the Town on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Thus far, the Council has received one SOQ in advance of the due date and they hope to receive additional SOQs.

Next steps include review of all received SOQs, interviews of the potential development partners, with the goal of bringing that forward to Council for consideration of an exclusive negotiating agreement with the preferred housing partner.

The Council also approved an RFQ for architectural and engineering services. The Council in their discussions and approval of that RFQ did recommend including language to support potential evaluation of alternatives, site configurations and development, particularly in response to the FORF initiative. If they can get an architect on board, this will help with critical evaluation of that proposal, assuming it comes forward.

Next steps in that process will be to diligently review the SOQs submitted, conduct interviews with the top two or three firms, and ultimately negotiate a scope of work that would be the basis of a professional services agreement with the selected firm which would require Council approval. Services would include design services, landscape, architecture, civil work, along with MEP for all of the Town's air conditioning and electrical equipment, etc.

Mr. Kelly said within the last month, they moved quickly to issue an RFP for municipal advisory services to three firms. The Town received the three proposals and decided to retain Fieldman Rolapp and Associates to serve as municipal advisor for this Phase I effort to do an evaluation of the Town's budget and also to look at financing options for the Council's consideration. As part of that, they will assess debt capacity and what tax impacts are for the residents associated with a potential revenue measure. The presentation tonight was somewhat general but with specific budget information, and it would ultimately need to be further clarified when they understand what costs the Council may want to cover as part of the FORF initiative or the Master Plan.

Regarding CEQA, Mr. Kelly stated that staff conducted a mini-environmental review to assess the environmental impacts of the Facility Master Plan. One key study area is land use planning and, more significantly, it includes transportation issues and safety around the Town's two major thoroughfares adjacent to Town Hall, along with biological issues and historic resource issues.

The earlier Gant chart identified they would be moving forward with environmental review. The Town Manager, the Town Attorney and himself have discussed bringing an RFQ forward but they did hold off and the process was delayed to allow for the Citizens Advisory Committee to provide a recommendation to the Town Council. A process has been delayed but think a key next step is to hire necessary subconsultants that would inform the environmental review process.

He concluded his update on the Facilities Master Plan and emphasized the goal of the Master Plan was modernization of the Town's facilities in alignment with community desires while protecting public safety and service.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins referred to the architectural and engineering services and the professional services agreement that would come to the Council. She asked when this would happen. Mr. Kelly said staff does not have a specific date scheduled yet. It will be based, in part, on conducting a thorough review of proposals and negotiating a scope of work with the top firm.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins said if there are changes to the plan coming later this month, this would have to be something that would be part of the scope and the Council does not have a May meeting, so it would be June at the earliest. She asked if this is okay.

Town Manager Johnson said staff will not be ready for the next Council meeting on April 29<sup>th</sup> and there is no meeting in May. The first opportunity would be June 11<sup>th</sup> but they need to talk more about the evaluation. She is also interested in hearing from the Citizens Committee as well. They wanted to get the word out to firms, have received some proposals, and they are not rushing this, and so June would be the earliest.

Mayor McMillan opened the public comment period, and there were no speakers.

Mayor McMillan thanked Mr. Kelly for his presentation and work towards getting the items and documents moving forward. If the Town wants to do something by the November election, it will be a huge scramble, so the more they can do in advance the better.

- 16. Town Council to consider adopting Resolution No. 2617, approving and authorizing the Mayor to execute a first amendment to the amended and restated employment agreement between the Town and Town Manager Christa L. Johnson to be effective April 2, 2026.**

Town Attorney Ben Stock provided the staff report and overview of the proposed First Amendment to the Amended and Restated Employment Agreement with the Town Manager to increase the Town Manager's vacation leave cap from 300 to 400 hours. During the last five months, a heavy workload has prevented the Town Manager from taking vacation leave, resulting in the consistent loss of vacation leave due to the cap on vacation leave balance stated in her current employment agreement. Most City Managers in Marin have the ability to sell back a certain amount of vacation leave hours each year and the Town Manager does not have that benefit in her existing contract.

To prevent the loss of vacation leave, the Town Manager has requested the Council consider a request to increase the cap from 300 to 400 hours and there is a proposed amendment in the packet with a resolution accompanying that.

There were no questions from Councilmembers. Mayor McMillan opened the public comment period, and there were no speakers.

Council Member Dowling noted she had worked for the City and County of San Francisco for many years and their ceiling is 400 hours, so this is consistent and she voiced support of the request.

Mayor McMillan recognized the hard work of the Town Manager and she voiced support of the request, as well.

**Council Member Dowling moved, and Council Member Kircher seconded, to adopt Resolution No. 2617, approving and authorizing the Mayor to execute a first amendment to the amended and restated employment agreement between the Town and Town Manager Christa L. Johnson, to be effective April 2, 2026. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).**

**End of Administrative Agenda.**

**There are no Public Hearings on Planning Projects – Part 2.**

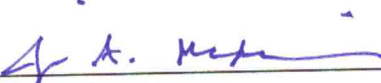
- 17. No Action Items: (Mayor)**
  - a. Council correspondence – None.**
  - b. Future Council items – None.**
  - c. Council Member participation at the communication table at the Ross Post Office on the next Council meeting day – Mayor McMillan and Mayor Pro Tem Robbins volunteered for April 29th.**
- 18. Meeting Evaluation.**



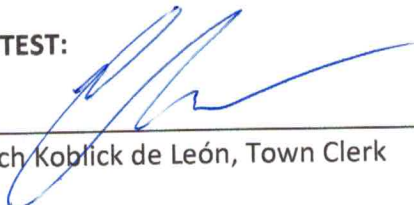
Council Members reflected positively on the meeting and commented on the number of public members in attendance.

**19. Adjournment.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

  
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Julie McMillan, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Zach Koblick de León, Town Clerk