

REGULAR MEETING of the ROSS TOWN COUNCIL
THURSDAY, JULY 9, 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. (arrived at 6:05 p.m.), Mathew Salter; Town Manager Christa Johnson; Town Attorney Benjamin Stock.

2. Posting of agenda/changes to agenda.

Town Manager Christa Johnson announced that Item 11.h is continued to the August 13, 2026, Council meeting. She then confirmed the agenda was posted according to government requirements.

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

None.

4. Honoring Anthony Alcozer for 10 years of service to the Town of Ross.

Public Works Director Rich Simonitch presented Anthony Alcozar with a Certificate of Appreciation recognizing his 10 years of service to the Town. He highlighted Alcozer's leadership, expertise in vegetation management and tree permitting, extensive training, and valuable contributions to the Public Works Department, praising him as an indispensable team member.

Maintenance Supervisor Anthony Alcozer thanked Christa Johnson and Rich Simonitch for their support, expressed appreciation for the positive work environment, and said he has enjoyed working with his coworkers and residents over the past 10 years. He added that the time has gone by quickly and hopes to serve the Town for another 10 years.

5. Proclamation Honoring Public Works Director, Richard Simonitch, for his 10 years of service to the Town of Ross and wishing him well in his well-earned retirement.

Mayor McMillan presented a proclamation honoring Public Works Director/Town Engineer Richard Simonitch on his retirement, recognizing his nearly 10 years of service and distinguished career in civil engineering and public works.

Mayor McMillan then highlighted Director Simonitch's leadership in delivering major infrastructure projects, securing significant grant funding, advancing the Winship Bridge Replacement project, improving the Town's transportation and stormwater systems and other major projects. On behalf of the Town Council, staff, and residents, Mayor McMillan thanked Director Simonitch for his dedication and wished him a well-deserved retirement.

Noted as Present:

Council Member Kircher was noted as present at 6:05 p.m.

Following applause, Director Simonitch thanked the Town Council for its support, noting that the Town's capital improvement projects were made possible through the Council's commitment. He reflected on the satisfaction of returning to his hometown after a 30-year private-sector engineering career, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve the Ross community, and thanked residents and colleagues for their support and collaboration.

6. Proclamation Honoring and Expressing Gratitude to Mr. David Nasaw for his generosity and commitment to the Town of Ross, contributing to the Ross Police Department for 14 years

Police Chief Raul Aguilar presented a proclamation honoring David Nasaw for his 14 years of generous support of the Ross Police Department. He recognized Nasaw's charitable contributions, which funded protective equipment, technology upgrades, and essential operational tools that have enhanced officer safety and strengthened public safety in the community. Chief Aguilar thanked Nasaw for his longstanding generosity and civic commitment before presenting the proclamation.

Following applause, David Nasaw thanked the Mayor, Town Council, and staff for the recognition, saying he was grateful to live in Ross and humbled to support the Town through his contributions.

7. Open Time for Public Expression.

Mayor McMillan opened the public comment period.

Bob Archer, a Walnut Avenue resident, commented on the recent Marin County Civil Grand Jury report regarding Marin Clean Energy (MCE), expressing concerns about the agency's governance, reserve spending, and electricity rates. He urged the Town's MCE representative to advocate for lower rates and greater affordability.

Garril Page expressed support for the Town's efforts to improve the Council Chambers' acoustics, noting that better sound quality would benefit residents who regularly attend Council meetings.

8. Mayor's Report.

Moving forward with our facilities project: Last week the Town received five proposals from architecture firms (out of ten who earlier submitted their qualifications). Tonight, we will consider asking the Town Manager to negotiate a contract with one of the architects for Council approval as soon as possible.

Ross Fire Station addressed in recent Marin County Grand Jury Report: The June 11, 2026, Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report, "Better Service at Lower Cost – Optimizing Essential Services for the Future of Marin," recommends combining various Marin special districts to benefit residents to improve services at lower costs. It also addresses efforts to reopen the Ross fire station (and as noted in a recent *Marin IJ* article):

“The fight to restore the Town of Ross Fire Station is a clear example of misguided civic engagement at odds with effective service today, which relies on coordinating resources across jurisdictions, not maintaining standalone structures for symbolic reasons. Ross’ risk profile has also changed. Stronger building standards have reduced fire risk, while an aging population requires better medical response. Staffing a standalone station is easy to demand, but difficult to sustain, according to local firefighters. Rather than ‘building for yesterday,’ Ross’ elected officials should focus on a coordinated countywide system, emphasizing strong medical response capabilities.”

You can read the full report here:

<https://assets.marincounty.gov/marincounty-prod/public/2026-06/Better%20Service%20at%20Lower%20Cost.pdf?VersionId=xP88sGklmVnZdiNJyWtQac9BlOYqWRCd>

The Town must respond to the Grand Jury’s report by September 11, 2026.

New Sir Francis Drake Paving: Thanks to Public Works Director and Town Engineer Rich Simonitch, the paving last month on a portion of Sir Francis Drake went seamlessly and quickly. It’s wonderful to drive on the new smooth surface, and the striping has made the roadway safer.

Marin Wildfire Risk Evaluations: This week, Marin Wildfire announced it will begin conducting free Wildfire Risk Evaluations in the Wellington and Shady Lane neighborhoods during the August 3 timeframe. In the meantime, Marin Wildfire encourages you to review your 2024 inspection report and, if you haven’t already, complete some of the recommendations. When inspectors arrive, please join them and learn more about hardening your home and making your garden safer. And please take advantage of Marin Wildfire’s popular Chipper Day Program to remove yard debris; make a reservation for free pick up here: <https://reserve.chipperday.com/marin>

4th of July Parade and Festivities: We were delighted – but not surprised -- that former 3-time Ross Mayor and 12-year Councilmember Beach Kuhl was named Grand Marshall for the Town’s 4th of July Parade to celebrate America’s 250th Birthday. Beach and his wife Janey moved to Ross in 1974 and have been huge contributors to our Town ever since. Congratulations Beach and thank you (and Janey) for your many years of dedication and volunteer service! After the parade, residents enjoyed songs from the Shady Ladies, bluegrass from Windy Hill, and a beautiful solo by Hayden Haveland, Ross School graduate and rising Junior at Somona Academy. The day went off flawlessly, with enormous thanks to many, including:

- The Ross Police for serving delicious hamburgers, brisket and all the sides,
- The volunteers (many young bakers) who contributed to the delicious pie competition,
- Town Manager Christa Johnson (and her husband and daughter) for guiding the many riders on the popular mechanical bull,
- Ross Public Works members Anthony Alcozer and Zach Baker for their continuous help, and
- Ross Recreation staff Wyatt Mann (along with his wife and friends) and Mallory Beren (and her father) for organizing the day so everything ran perfectly and residents had a wonderful time!

9. Council Committee & Liaison Report:

Council Member Dowling shared an update from Dianne Rudden of Age Friendly, thanking Town staff, the Ross Police Department, and community volunteers for their support of the Fourth of July Parade. She also noted that many residents visited the Age Friendly information table during the event.

Council Member Salter reported that the Marin Clean Energy (MCE) Board has begun reviewing its governance structure and searching for a new CEO following the departure of its previous CEO. He emphasized the importance of the Town's representation on the Board during this transition and encouraged Council Members to monitor ongoing governance reforms.

Chris Martin, representing the Flood Zone 9 Advisory Board, provided an update on regional flood control efforts. He reported that the proposed Building Bridge 2 Removal Project was deemed infeasible, while plans are moving forward to replace the defective fish ladder with a hydrologically neutral design and pursue funding for fish resting ponds. He also highlighted the need for storm preparedness ahead of a potentially severe winter, encouraged the use of Flood Zone 9 funds for creek maintenance and debris removal, and stressed the importance of public outreach to property owners.

In response to Council Member Salter, he added that the County's review of the SAFRR Bridge project is ongoing and includes evaluations of project management, engineering decisions, and communication, with a draft report currently under review.

10. Staff & Community Reports

a. Ross Property Owners Association

No report.

b. Town Manager

Town Manager Christa Johnson gave the following report:

- Staff was very short-staffed this year for the Fourth of July event and she is particularly grateful to Zach and Anthony in the Public Works Department for working overtime on a holiday, away from their families.
- She thanked members of the Ross Police Officers Association and their family and friends who put together a terrific booth serving hamburgers, chips, and watermelon drinks to event participants with no charge.
- Several other community volunteers did assist staff as well as staffing the Ross History area and their newest Firewise Neighborhood booth, handing out information.
- Work is again beginning on Shady Lane today and continuing until Wednesday, July 15th. The entire roadway will be slurry sealed and restriped with new centerlines, stop bars, and directional sharrows for bicyclists. Expect no parking and single-lane traffic control between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on the entire length of Shady Lane between Lagunitas and Bolinas.
- She thanked everyone for their patience during the installation of their three new pedestrian bridges in Natalie Coffin Greene Park. The contractor needs to spend a few more days finishing up the work and their Public Works Director Simonitch promised he will not retire until this project is completely done.

- Finally, she thanked Rich Simonitch for 10 years of exemplary service to the Town of Ross. He has been a key member of the Town's management team and the force behind most of the improvements seen around town and even more improvements people cannot see. In her 30 years of reviewing staff reports for Council meetings, Rich is the best public works writer she has had the pleasure of working with. She will miss him a lot for that and other reasons and, on behalf of the entire staff team, they congratulate Rich on his well-deserved retirement and wish him and his family the very best.

11. Consent Agenda

Mayor McMillan noted Item h was removed previously to be continued to the August 13th Council meeting. There were no other requests for removal of items or public comments.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins moved, and Council Member Dowling seconded, to approve Consent Agenda Items a, b, d, e, f, and g. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

a. Minutes:

- **Regular Meeting June 11, 2026.**

b. Town Council to approve Demands: May 2026

c. Town Council to receive and review the Ross Police Department 2025 Annual Military Equipment Report and consider adopting Resolution No. 2640 Renewing Ordinance No. 715 regarding Town of Ross Military Equipment Use Policy. (Aguilar)

c. Town Council consideration of authorizing the expenditure of \$209,997 from the Capital Projects Fund and authorize the Town Manager to execute a Work Performance Agreement with Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) for tariff schedule related work to be performed by PG&E for the Town Administration Center Undergrounding District project. (Simonitch)

e. Town Council to consider adopting Resolution No. 2639 authorizing the Mayor to execute a Third Amendment to the Marin County Community Development Block Grant (CBDG) Program and HOME Program Cooperation Agreement with the County of Marin, renewing participation for federal fiscal years 2027–2029 and incorporating required HUD language. (Koblick de León)

f. Town Council to consider adoption of Resolution No. 2641 reaffirming appointment of Town Manager as the Town's representative to the Zero Waste Marin (ZWM) Board and affirming the appointment of Town Clerk/Senior Management Analyst as the alternate. (Koblick de León)

g. Town Council to consider adoption of Resolution No. 2642 reaffirming appointment of Town Manager as the Town's representative to the Shared Agency Risk Pool (SHARP) Board and affirming the appointment of Town Clerk/Senior Management Analyst as the alternate. (Koblick de León)

- ~~h. Town Council to consider adoption of Resolution No. 2643 amending its delegation of authority to authorize Senior Accountant to request disbursements from the California Employers Benefit Trust Fund (CERBT) – Continued to next regular Town Council meeting on August 13, 2026.~~

End of Consent Agenda.

12. Public Hearing on Planning Projects – Part 1.

- a. 186 Prospect Drive, Design Review, Nonconformity Permit, and a Variance, and Town Council consideration of adoption of Resolution No. 2638 approving the project, subject to conditions.

Stacey and Michael Sherman, Imprints Landscape Architecture, 186 Prospect Drive, Parcel Number: 072-152-01, Zoning: R-1:B-10, General Plan: ML (Medium Low Density), Flood Zone: X

Project Summary: The applicant requests a recommendation to the Town Council for Design Review, Nonconformity Permit, and a Variance. The project proposes rehabilitation of the rear yard, including construction of a new in-ground swimming pool and spa. Additional site improvements include an outdoor kitchen, repairs to the existing front and rear decks, fireplace, fire pit, site walls, and vegetable garden. The project also includes construction of new walkways with exterior lighting and replacement and widening of the existing concrete driveway with permeable pavers.

Planner Alex Lopez-Vega gave the staff report and overview of the proposal for improvements at 186 Prospect Drive, including a new swimming pool and spa, outdoor living amenities, driveway replacement, landscaping enhancements, and related site improvements. He noted that the Architectural Design Review Board unanimously recommended approval after the applicant revised the plans to remove a proposed fireplace, and staff recommended approval of the Design Review, Nonconformity Permit, and Variance subject to conditions.

Council Member Salter raised concerns about construction traffic and roadway impacts, asking about traffic management and coordination with the Town of San Anselmo. Planning Director Roberta Feliciano explained that conditions of approval restrict truck weights on certain roadways.

Town Manager Johnson also confirmed staff had coordinated with San Anselmo officials and would continue monitoring the project and roadway impacts.

Mayor McMillan asked and confirmed the applicants have chosen to defer their presentation and confirmed there were no further Council questions.

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. 2638 approving the project for Design Review, Nonconformity Permit, and a Variance at 186 Prospect Drive, subject to conditions. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

End of Public Hearing on Planning Projects.

Administrative Agenda.

13. Town Council to receive a status update from the Public Works Director regarding the current and proposed overhead utility undergrounding projects in Ross.

Public Works Director Simonitch provided a PowerPoint presentation on the status of the Town's overhead utility undergrounding projects, including the Town Administration Center, Upper West Ross, and West Ross Underground Utility Districts.

Town Administration Center Underground Utility District (Rule 20A)

Director Simonitch reported that the project will underground four utility poles along Lagunitas Road and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. The project is approximately 35% through the bid document phase, with joint trench alignment complete and PG&E currently designing underground facilities, including transformers and street lighting. Comcast and AT&T will be incorporated into the design as joint trench occupants.

The estimated project cost is \$2.7 million, offset by approximately \$290,000 in accumulated Rule 20A credits. Construction is anticipated between Spring and Fall 2027, contingent upon continued design progress. Director Simonitch noted the project will improve the Town's primary entry corridor while providing greater flexibility for future redevelopment of the Administration Center site.

Upper West Ross Underground Utility District (Rule 20B)

Director Simonitch stated the proposed Upper West Ross project is in the petition phase. Preliminary engineering, district boundaries, and cost estimates have been completed to establish individual parcel assessments. Some property owners on the district's perimeter have requested to opt out because their utilities are already undergrounded or they do not wish to participate. Staff is evaluating these requests while maintaining a contiguous district boundary.

The neighborhood group is circulating petitions seeking the required 65% property owner support. If the district is initiated, participating property owners will advance engineering and legal costs, which will be administered through a Town account.

West Ross Underground Utility District (Rule 20B)

Director Simonitch reported that the West Ross project is approximately 90% complete in the design phase and nearing bid readiness. During design, PG&E determined additional properties on Thomas Court and Hillgirt Drive should be included in the district to avoid acquiring private utility easements. Staff will seek petitions from those property owners before revising the district boundary and Engineer's Report.

The project estimate increased from approximately \$7.0 million in 2019 to \$23.8 million in 2025 due to significant cost escalation. To date, participating property owners have contributed approximately \$276,000 toward engineering, legal, and related project costs. The district includes 125 assessable parcels, with a median estimated assessment of approximately \$163,600 per parcel, to be financed over 30 to 39 years through assessment bonds.

Director Simonitch explained the project cost allocation, including the required 2.5% general benefit portion, which cannot be funded through assessments and must be paid separately, while the remaining costs are allocated among benefiting properties.

In closing, Director Simonitch emphasized that advancing the project will require significant staff and Town Council commitment over multiple meetings to revise district boundaries, authorize bidding, adopt revised assessments, conduct assessment balloting, approve bond financing, and award the construction contract. He noted timely action is important to minimize the effects of rising construction costs, changing bond market conditions, and property ownership changes. He then responded to Council questions.

Council Member Salter suggested establishing a formal utility undergrounding program that prioritizes projects and provides neighborhoods with a clear implementation schedule rather than considering requests individually.

Director Simonitch agreed that a phased approach would help manage staff resources and set expectations, noting that while larger undergrounding districts can improve cost efficiency, they also require significantly more coordination with property owners, traffic management, and utility providers.

Council Member Salter emphasized that the growing scope of undergrounding projects will require increased Town leadership and staff resources.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins asked how Town-owned and Ross Valley Open Space District properties would be treated during the petition and balloting process for the proposed Upper West Ross Underground Utility District. Director Simonitch explained that the current policy does not address publicly owned parcels and noted that Council action may be needed to determine participation. He recommended that the Town consider updating its policy or establishing a formal process for handling public properties in future undergrounding districts.

Mayor McMillan asked whether the project's 2.5% general benefit allocation would be funded through the assessment district or by the Town. Director Simonitch explained that the general benefit portion cannot be funded through the assessment district and must be covered by another funding source. Under the Town's policy, the Town contributes up to \$25,000 toward this cost.

Town Attorney Ben Stock clarified that Proposition 218 prohibits charging property owners for general benefit costs through the assessment district. Participating property owners must provide the remaining general benefit funding in addition to their individual assessments.

Mayor McMillan confirmed with Town Attorney Stock that participating property owners would need to contribute approximately \$610,000, less the Town's \$25,000 contribution, in addition to their assessments.

Council Member Kircher asked whether approximately \$270,000 previously advanced by participating property owners would be reimbursed if the project proceeds and whether those funds were separate from the general benefit contribution.

Director Simonitch confirmed that advance contributions are separate from the general benefit payment. Property owners have contributed approximately \$325,000, with about \$260,000 spent to date on engineering, legal, and project development costs. If the assessment district is approved, eligible advance contributions and Town staff costs would be reimbursed through bond financing and included in the assessment district costs.

Mayor McMillan asked why the estimated project cost increased from approximately \$7 million to \$24 million.

Director Simonitch explained that the increase is due to higher material, labor, and construction costs; increased logistical expenses; the addition of Thomas Court and Hillgirt Drive properties to the district; and finalized PG&E infrastructure requirements, including underground transformer locations and installation.

Town Manager Johnson asked if there were questions for their bond counsel, and Director Simonitch introduced Mr. Nick Yeager from Stradling Law to speak on his views of how this district is going.

Nick Yeager of Stradling Law, the Town's bond counsel for the West Ross Undergrounding District, provided an update and confirmed that the project is progressing as outlined by Director Simonitch, including discussions regarding general and special benefits. In response to a question from Public Works Director Simonitch, Mr. Yeager explained that after approval of the assessment ballot and finalization of assessments, the Town would issue bonds to fund remaining project costs. He noted that the bond issuance process would involve bond counsel, an underwriter to market the bonds, and a municipal advisor to provide independent financial guidance.

Council Member Salter asked and confirmed that bonds would be secured solely by the special assessments levied on benefiting properties and would not be backed by the Town's General Fund.

Council Member Salter asked how the creditworthiness of the assessment district would be determined. Mr. Yeager explained that bonds would be secured by assessment liens on properties, with repayment supported by the Town's ability to foreclose for nonpayment. He noted that property values compared to the bond amount are a key factor and that Ross's strong property values would likely support financing.

Council Member Dowling asked whether legislative changes could help reduce the cost and timeline of underground utility projects. Director Simonitch explained that the primary challenge has been limited staff and Council capacity.

Town Manager Johnson noted that neighborhood leaders had also requested a pause to reassess the undergrounding project. Director Simonitch explained that updated cost estimates prompted a review of community support, but scheduling constraints and project timing limited the ability to proceed within the desired construction window.

Council Member Dowling asked about statewide efforts to streamline utility undergrounding and reduce costs. Director Simonitch noted PG&E's increased focus on undergrounding in high fire hazard areas and suggested greater utility involvement and potential CPUC action could help future projects.

Town Attorney Stock added that while legislative efforts have sought to increase utility investment, PG&E has reduced Rule 20A funding and opposed some proposals expanding utility obligations.

Mayor McMillan opened the public comment period.

Gina Nellison, representing the West Ross Underground Group, thanked Town staff and identified two issues affecting the proposed district's feasibility. She requested clarification on how publicly owned and non-residential parcels should be counted in the petition and balloting process, noting that the outcome could significantly affect the level of community support. She also raised concerns about the financial burden of upfront project costs for residents, suggesting the Town explore alternative funding approaches, such as reimbursable advances, cost-sharing, feasibility funding, or agency partnerships to support future undergrounding efforts.

Council Member Salter emphasized the need for a coordinated, Town-led utility undergrounding strategy rather than handling individual neighborhood requests separately. He recommended developing a comprehensive implementation plan to address project prioritization, policy questions, resident requirements, and administrative efficiency.

Council Members Dowling and Kircher supported further discussion of a broader undergrounding approach, recognizing the complexity, cost, and benefits of these projects. Mayor McMillan agreed that future work should address policy implementation, district coordination, and potential consultant support, particularly during the upcoming Public Works leadership transition.

Town Manager Johnson noted that staff capacity will be limited during the transition and that managing consultants still requires significant staff involvement. Council Members discussed returning the matter in the future, including potential solutions for Town-owned parcels and combining undergrounding districts. Director Simonitch cautioned that merging districts could create delays, additional coordination challenges, and potential PG&E approval issues.

Mayor McMillan recommended adding undergrounding coordination and implementation planning to future Council agenda items once new Public Works leadership is in place.

14. Town Council to receive a presentation regarding alternative project delivery and procurement methods for implementation of the Ross Civic Center Project and discuss the Town's priorities regarding project delivery, procurement, schedule, cost certainty, and risk allocation.

Project Manager David Kelley introduced Dustin Alamo of Griffin Structures to present additional procurement methods for the Town's consideration related to the Civic Center project. He noted that staff has discussed project delivery options with the Council and consulted with the Town Attorney regarding the code amendments that would be needed to implement alternative procurement procedures. He explained that the purpose of the presentation was to provide the Council with information on these methods before determining whether to move forward. He added that Marin County has increasingly used these approaches to improve project delivery and provide additional benefits.

Dustin Alamo, Griffin Structures, said he will present a brief mini-series on project delivery and the goal is for education and discussion, a high level of project review, what it means, different options available to the Town, and how those decisions can ultimately affect cost, schedule, risk and implementation.

Regarding where the project stands today, the Council has identified the Citizens Advisory Committee's (CAC) Alternate Concept as the preferred concept for further evaluation and, at the same time, that concept and the Facilities Master Plan (FMP) are being refined. In simple terms, the Town is working through two related questions—what is exactly the project they want to implement here and once that is sufficiently defined, what is the best way to actually deliver that.

The Town has already completed a significant amount of facility planning and initial project visioning, completed the qualification process for firms capable of updating the FMP, and received proposals for that work on July 2nd. Griffin Structures has been retained as the owner's representative and the next phase is really about refining the project concept, budget, while also evaluating the appropriate delivery approach. The important point here is that the Town is not starting from scratch. There is substantial work already completed that can inform the next decisions.

Before comparing the different options, project delivery is defined as the structure used to organize design, procure, and construct a project. It determines who contracts with whom, who is responsible for design, cost, and construction when the architect and contractor are integrated, how risk is allocated, and importantly, when the Town begins receiving meaningful costs and scheduled certainty. There is not really one universal correct delivery method. It really is about aligning the Town's priorities with the characteristics of the project.

Mr. Alamo then presented a basic diagram showing the traditional design process that most people are familiar with. You move from pre-design into schematic design, then design development, construction documents, and then you bid it out and build it. The contractor generally enters the process in this at the very end of the design phase. This is an important distinction because by the time the builder is involved, many of the major design and project decisions have already been made.

Mr. Alamo then presented a graphic showing primary differences between the three delivery methods he will discuss. The top is the design/bid/build, the grey is your owner advisor selection, the green is architect selection, then the orange is design, the other green at the top is the bidding process, and the blue is build or construction.

The top one is very linear. The architect is selected early, completes the design and then the contractor is selected later. The second one is design/build. The Town would develop bridging documents or criteria documents and then procure an integrated design/build team, architect and contractor together to complete design and build.

Progressive design moves that integrated team further or earlier in the process. The Town would establish a project program, objective, budget parameters, and would select a design/build team before the design is fully developed.

In moving down the chart, what really changes is the timing and level of integration between design and construction. Starting with the design/bid/build approach, the first public bid project in the U.S. dates back to 1796 and 230 years later, nearly everything about construction has changed or evolved. Basic design/bid/build structure largely remains the same. The owner hires an architect, architect completes design and once the design is complete, the contractor bids the work. A defining characteristic is that design and construction are contractually and sequentially separated. So, design/bid/build can be successful here. Virtually every public agency has successfully delivered projects this way. The challenge here is predictability because contractors are not involved in the design. The Town may not receive the true market pricing until the project is fully designed and publicly bid and there is a lot of risk, especially in renovation projects.

If bids come in over budget, options become difficult and limited. You can either add funding, redesign the project or reduce scope, and this separation can also contribute to constructability issues, change orders and disputes during construction; the most adversarial process of them all.

But, there are ways to mitigate it and this is what his firm does. If you do design/bid/build, you can mitigate those with engaging with the owner representative or construction manager early. You perform independent cost estimates through design, focus heavily on schedule constructability reviews, site logistics, contract terms, contingency management. These are all tools routinely used to improve outcomes. The point is design/bid/build does not work. It is just that the owner has to actively manage the gaps created by the separation between design and construction.

In going to design/build which creates a different contractual structure. Instead of separate architect and contractor contracts, the Town contracts with a single design/build entity responsible for both design and construction. It creates a single point of accountability and allows cost and schedule information to influence design decisions in real time. It also allows procurement of long lead items and, in some cases, construction activities like site grading, utilities, and demolition to occur earlier in the process than waiting until you are fully complete with design.

The trade-off is that traditional design/build requires the owner to more clearly define the project before procuring the design/build team. Otherwise, price padding, allowances, and contingencies are sure to be incorporated into pricing because they are ultimately a pricing risk. So, you typically need strong bridging documents, performance criteria, clearly established quality expectations and it also requires timely owner decision-making. Because design/build proposals can be expensive for teams to prepare, the procurement itself needs to be thoughtfully structured to maintain competition in the marketplace.

In getting to progressive design/build, this is a variation of design/build that has become increasingly common for public facilities in California. The biggest difference here from design build is just when the design/build team is selected. Rather than fully defining the design through bridging documents, the owner can establish the program, project objectives, performance requirements and budget parameters at a very early level, and the design/build team is selected through a competitive best value process.

From there, the owner and owner's representative and design/build team collaboratively develop the project together, and the design progresses alongside continuous cost estimating and scheduling by the contractor, constructability reviews and phasing analysis and ultimately are developing the project together to a point of a guaranteed maximum price which is generally about the design/development phase. Ultimately, that team would develop that GMP through an open-book process and then the Town has the option of proceeding with that price or, as a contingency plan you could bid it out as a traditional design/build project.

The biggest advantage is early integration. You would have the architect, contractor, key trade partners, the owner's representative, and the Town all working together collaboratively while the project is being developed. The Town remains actively involved in all major decisions, but instead of designing first and pricing later, design decisions are continuously evaluated against cost and schedule and constructability. This is especially helpful when due diligence for existing buildings can be integrated early in the process. It can open walls, see the realities of the existing building. For a complex or evolving projects, that can provide a lot of flexibility.

Mr. Alamo said they hear a few common questions about progressive design/build—does it take longer? The short answer is absolutely not. The way it is developed gives you the ability to overlap design and construction as shown in some of the diagrams.

Is it more expensive? It is not inherently more expensive. It is certainly not low bid, but the opportunity is you get best value selection with earlier cost transparency and fewer surprises later.

Does the owner lose control? The owner remains actively involved throughout the progressive phase, ultimately determining whether to accept the guaranteed maximum price or proceed in a different route.

In demonstrating how it could look for Ross's project, the Town would complete the Facilities Master Plan Amendment, establish the updated program, project objectives, and budget parameters. Those documents would then be the basis for the progressive design/build procurement and the Town would competitively select a design/build team. The team would work with the Town through Phase I to advance design and evaluating cost, schedule, and develop that guaranteed maximum price at the end of design development, which is roughly 60% of the design. Then the Town would have a clear decision point, return back with the GMP price, and could choose to proceed into Phase 2, complete the design which is construction documents, and then build the project. This is why it is called progressive—the project, design, and price are progressively developed together.

Mr. Alamo then displayed a table showing the trade-off's:

1. Design/bid/build provides a high degree of direct design control and it is familiar but cost certainty and contractor involvement generally arrive later.
2. Design/build creates greater integration and can improve schedule efficiencies, but requires the project to be more clearly defined before a design/build team can be selected.
3. Progressive design/build maintains an integrated structure while allowing the project to continually evolve collaboratively.

He noted there is no universal approach best for all projects. It just depends on what the Town values most and how defined the project is at the time of procurement.

He stated as Mr. Kelley mentioned, there are a number of nearby examples. They are seeing more public agencies evaluate integrated delivery methods for civic and public safety facilities. San Rafael has used design/build for its public safety campus and is now using progressive design/build for its library and community center. The County of Marin is using progressive design/build for its fire facilities and other facilities on the docket. They are currently assisting a number of cities and counties in Southern California on a number of progressive efforts, but the common themes are bringing construction expertise early, improving cost certainty, maintaining operations, and preserving flexibility for phased implementation.

In bringing this back to Ross, they see three potential implementation paths as options and ideas:

Path A: Traditional approach—the Town completes a FMP architect selection, retains that architect and/or release another design procurement again for full design. Once that project is designed, then you go out for construction, bid it, and you build it.

Path B: This path preserves the FMP architect, but then adds a bridging design phase, so it would go more to that design/build option. The architect would complete the FMP amendment and develop additional documents, including design intent, performance standards, and quality criteria. The Town would then procure a design/build team on the basis of those bridging documents. You would have to add a bridging scope to the FMP architect or procure a bridging architect.

Path C: Progressive design/build. The Town would complete the FMP Amendment using the updated program and planning documents as the foundation for progressive design/build procurement. The design/build team would enter early and help develop the design, budget phasing, implementation strategy, together towards a GMP (Guaranteed Maximum Price), and then you lock in pricing early in the design process.

Mr. Alamo said for Ross, the delivery decision should not happen in a vacuum. There are several project-specific considerations here-community outreach, public process, the civic center as a unique historical character, civic identity aspects, consideration of Town and public safety operational continuity, the scope and financial feasibility are still being refined as well as bond timing, ballot readiness, and the Town may ultimately need flexibility to phase improvements over time depending on financials, so the Town should be taking all of these into account when deciding what delivery decision you want to proceed with.

There is also a procedural consideration specific to these options. Alternative delivery methods are permitted under California law; however, as he understands it, the Town's current Municipal Code is structured around a more traditional procurement. If the Council ultimately decides that an alternative method is appropriate, amendments to the Municipal Code may be required so he would return to the Council separately for future consideration in concert with the Town Attorney and all of his feedback.

From here, this is a policy discussion as he and staff are receiving Council feedback tonight. The Town would then complete the FMP amendment consultant selection process. As that work progresses, they can continue evaluating delivery strategy in parallel. If an alternative method is appropriate, staff and Town Council can evaluate necessary Municipal Code amendments and ultimately they would return to the Council with a specific procurement strategy and key is about preserving flexibility today as key decisions are made on this project.

Lastly, moving quickly today on aspects of this project does not always mean delivering the project faster. There is more to this and he asked to keep this in mind when deliberating on these different aspects of the project. He was available to answer questions.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins asked about the timeline and process for amending the Municipal Code and whether the Town should make the amendment now to preserve flexibility or wait until a preferred procurement method is identified.

Town Attorney Stock explained that the process would require two Council readings, with the ordinance taking effect 30 days after adoption. He noted there would be no disadvantage to updating the Ross Municipal Code to allow alternative procurement methods, even if the Town ultimately chooses not to use them.

Mayor McMillan asked when the Council would need to make a decision regarding the project delivery approach.

Mr. Alamo explained that a decision is not required immediately but recommended beginning the evaluation process before completion of the Facilities Master Plan update. He noted that, once the update is complete, the Council should determine whether to use it as the foundation for progressive design-build or another delivery method, while considering the lead time required for procurement.

Mayor McMillan asked whether Mr. Alamo's role as the Town's owner's representative, along with the future Facilities Master Plan architect, would include advising on procurement options.

Mr. Alamo confirmed that Griffin Structures can provide as much or as little support as the Town requires.

Mayor McMillan asked whether Mr. Alamo would return with a future recommendation outlining the advantages, disadvantages, and timing considerations of different procurement approaches.

Mr. Alamo confirmed that he could provide such a recommendation if requested by the Council.

Council Member Kircher asked for clarification on the current project phase and whether the Facilities Master Plan (FMP) work represented the schematic design stage.

Mr. Alamo explained that the current effort is closer to an advanced conceptual design phase, which precedes schematic design. He noted that if the Town pursued design-build, the project would need to advance further through a bridging document process, while progressive design-build could allow the Town to develop the project collaboratively with the selected team.

Council Member Kircher emphasized the importance of understanding how the current architectural contract could affect future procurement options.

Mr. Alamo said the Town could proceed with the current process but recommended that the Council begin determining its preferred delivery approach soon. He explained that the decision would influence how the architect's scope is structured and whether the Town should prepare for progressive design-build, design-build, or a traditional delivery method. He recommended keeping progressive design-build as a potential option because it would allow the Town to define project requirements, develop costs, and establish a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) collaboratively with the design-build team. He cautioned that a traditional design-build approach without sufficient project definition could result in higher costs due to added contingencies and pricing risks.

Council Member Kircher thanked Mr. Alamo and emphasized the importance of ensuring future contracts align with the Town's desired project delivery strategy.

Mr. Alamo confirmed that the current contract process could proceed, with key delivery decisions to be made at a later stage.

Council Member Dowling said one of the things the Council do right now is just work with staff to change the RMC. Then, they have a few more meetings to go before making the decision about design/build or progressive design/build. Mr. Alamo confirmed and said likely two meetings.

Council Member Salter expressed confusion regarding the project timeline and whether the Town had decided to proceed with an updated Facilities Master Plan (FMP) first or move directly into schematic design with an architect. He recalled prior discussions about updating the FMP based on the Citizens Advisory Committee concept before selecting an architect, followed by a later discussion about moving more quickly by including schematic design in the architect's scope.

Project Manager David Kelley clarified that the upcoming agenda item would address the architect RFP process. He explained that the current proposal is to amend the FMP to incorporate the CAC concept and refine project elements. Once completed, the updated FMP would serve as the foundation for selecting a project delivery approach.

Mr. Kelley outlined three potential paths after the FMP update:

- **Traditional design-bid-build:** Use the updated FMP as the basis for hiring an architect to complete full construction documents before bidding the project.
- **Design-build:** Further advance the design through schematic-level documents before selecting a combined design-build team.
- **Progressive design-build:** Use the updated FMP to procure a design-build team that would collaboratively advance the project, develop costs, and establish a Guaranteed Maximum Price, with the option to change course if the Council is not satisfied with the proposed price.

Mr. Alamo further explained the progressive design-build approach, emphasizing that the FMP update would be the starting point for evaluating the delivery options.

Council Member Salter confirmed that the current architect RFP is limited to updating the FMP and does not include schematic design work.

Mr. Alamo confirmed this was correct. Council Member Salter noted that the updated FMP would then serve as the decision point for selecting among the three delivery approaches.

Town Manager Johnson clarified that at the June 24 special meeting, the Council voted to maintain the existing approach of proceeding with the RFP to amend the FMP.

Council Member Kircher asked how architect and contractor selection would work under a design-build approach, including whether the combined design and construction team would be selected through a low-bid process.

Mr. Alamo explained that the process would follow the Town's procurement requirements and involve selecting the best-qualified team with pricing as a factor. He noted that design-build provides a more defined project price when supported by bridging documents, while progressive design-build allows the Town and team to collaboratively develop pricing, negotiate fees, and establish costs throughout the process.

Council Member Kircher asked whether a traditional design-bid-build approach would require separate contracts for different design phases.

Mr. Alamo explained that the structure would depend on the initial architect contract but could involve separate agreements for the FMP amendment, architectural design, and construction. He noted that separating design and construction responsibilities can create coordination challenges.

Town Attorney Stock added that the Town could potentially retain the same architect through multiple phases, but early decisions about architect involvement could affect eligibility for future design-build work. He explained that bridging documents may need to be prepared by a separate party if the existing architect intends to compete on the design-build team.

Town Manager Johnson clarified that Mr. Alamo was referring to separate contracts, not necessarily separate architects.

Mr. Alamo confirmed that the Town could have one contract for the FMP amendment, another for full design services, and a separate construction contract.

Council Member Kircher asked what the current five architect proposals represent.

Town Manager Johnson explained that the proposals are solely for amending the Facilities Master Plan at the planning concept level.

Mayor McMillan said the Council's decision tonight about that will not in any way jeopardize these other options. The other options will come in a few months based on what is going on with amendment of the FMP and Mr. Alamo's judgement.

Town Manager Johnson said similar to how the Council had a consultant team here to talk about debt financing, it is educating the Council, staff and the community on this and get the Council to start thinking about it so they have opportunities to ask questions, follow-up from staff on a particular topic.

Mayor McMillan said she would agree with Mayor Pro Tem Robbins' recommendation to go ahead and do the ministerial work of amending the RMC so they have these options. The timing is the most critical thing so they want to be nimble and have as much done as they possibly can and have as many options available as they can.

Town Manager Johnson said she and Mr. Kelley had an initial meeting with two of Town Attorney Stock's colleagues two Fridays ago and they are experts in their field. It sounded like it is very doable with the Town Attorney's help to work on the RMC which will take two Council meetings for introduction and second reading and adoption, then 30 days to go into effect.

Council Member Salter asked how the CEQA environmental review process would align with the project timeline.

Mr. Kelley recommended beginning the process as the Facilities Master Plan (FMP) nears completion, since the updated FMP will provide the project description needed to evaluate potential environmental impacts.

Council Member Salter asked about timing if the FMP amendment is completed in the fall.

Town Attorney Stock explained that environmental review would begin after the project description is finalized, and the required level of review would depend on the project details. He noted that a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) could take approximately one to one and a half years, though a less extensive review may be appropriate depending on the project. It was noted that construction timing will depend on the CEQA process, selected project delivery method, and other factors that remain to be determined.

Council Member Salter requested that staff prepare a Gantt chart to help the Council better understand the overall timeline and potential construction start date.

Mayor McMillan suggested developing the project timeline by working backward from January 29, identified as the critical date for completion of the paramedic facility. She noted that while other project elements are important, the paramedic facility should remain the top priority.

Town Manager Johnson said staff has been discussing the need for an updated timeline and noted that Mr. Kelley's previous updates have included Gantt charts that will continue to be refined. She committed to providing the Council with an updated schedule that incorporates the environmental review considerations and reflects staff's best estimates.

Council Member Dowling emphasized the importance of showing not only contractor activities but also the substantial staff work required to support the project, noting that these internal efforts are not always visible to the Council.

Mayor McMillan opened the public comment period.

Dan Winey commended Mr. Alamo's presentation and highlighted several considerations for the Council. He noted that if the Town proceeds with selecting an architect to update the FMP and develop schematic designs, those documents could potentially serve as bridging documents without creating delays. He emphasized the importance of ensuring the Town retains ownership of all project documents, as some architects may place restrictions on their use.

Mr. Winey cautioned against selecting a general contractor and architect together without careful consideration, noting that a contractor's affiliated architect may be technically capable but may not provide the same level of design expertise. He added that advancing the project through schematic design could provide a preliminary cost estimate within several months, which would help inform future decisions regarding financing, bonding, and project planning.

Council Member Salter voiced the need to be clear and understand the process and sequencing.

Council Member Dowling said the one thing the Council did agree on and need to do right now is to change the Ross Municipal Code (RMC) which will be worked on by the Town Attorney, and Council Members concurred.

Mayor McMillan concluded the item and thanked Mr. Alamo and staff for their presentations.

15. Town Council to receive a report regarding the status of the Request for Proposals (RFP) process for professional planning, technical evaluation, and facilities master plan amendment services for the Ross Civic Center project and consider directing the Town Manager to negotiate a professional services agreement with one of the firms responding to the RFP process.

Project Manager David Kelley provided an update on the RFP process for professional planning, technical evaluation, and Facilities Master Plan (FMP) Amendment services for the Ross Civic Center project. He explained that staff was not seeking consultant approval at this meeting but was providing an overview of the procurement status, proposals received, evaluation process, and next steps.

Mr. Kelley reported that the Town received five proposals and developed evaluation worksheets and a detailed scoring matrix to assess the submissions. Following review by the Council subcommittee and staff, the next steps include interviewing the highest-ranked firms, conducting reference checks, and negotiating with the preferred consultant. Staff anticipates returning to the Council on August 4 for consideration of consultant selection and approval of a professional services agreement. He noted that three of the five proposals emerged as the leading candidates.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins questioned whether the Council could direct the Town Manager to begin negotiations with a preferred consultant that evening, noting that the staff recommendation differed from the Council subcommittee's views.

Mr. Kelley deferred to the Town Attorney but explained that staff believed interviews with the top-ranked firms were an important best practice and would help clarify scope and support successful negotiations.

Town Attorney Stock confirmed that interviews are not legally required and that the Council could direct staff to proceed with negotiations if desired.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins suggested moving forward with the majority subcommittee recommendation rather than conducting additional interviews.

Council Member Dowling asked whether interviews with the top candidates would occur before the August special Council meeting.

Town Manager Johnson explained that staff planned to complete interviews, reference checks, and further evaluation before returning with a recommendation on August 4. She noted that staff had outstanding questions about the proposals and believed the additional process would not delay the project.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins questioned whether selecting a consultant sooner could allow a contract to be prepared before August 4.

Town Manager Johnson responded that Council action would still be required and that there would not be sufficient Council members available to approve a contract before then.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins noted that an earlier selection could potentially allow the Council to act sooner if a meeting could be scheduled. She questioned the anticipated timeline for completing a consultant contract.

Town Manager Johnson explained that the Town uses a standard professional services agreement and already has the RFP scope of work as a foundation, but negotiations are still needed. She noted that staff wants to incorporate milestones and schedule requirements, with input from Mr. Alamo, to help keep the project moving efficiently. She added that staff will continue coordinating with the Town Attorney and is focused on bringing a recommendation forward as soon as possible, with August 4 identified as the earliest available Council meeting date.

Council Member Salter asked about the top-ranked firms and whether they were scored.

Mayor McMillan reported that Gensler was identified as the top choice by three of the five evaluators, with Nolan Tam and HED/BRW also among the top firms.

Town Manager Johnson explained that staff and Council evaluators used scoring worksheets, and while scores varied slightly, there was general consensus on the top candidates. She noted that KPA was not identified among the top three by any evaluator and Group 4 appeared on only one evaluator's top-three list.

Council Member Salter confirmed that the top firms had received the Town's professional services agreement as part of the RFP process.

Town Manager Johnson noted that the current timeline has been accelerated and staff has not yet completed reference checks or fully addressed questions regarding the proposals.

Mr. Kelley emphasized that staff believes interviews are an important part of the due diligence and negotiation process. He explained that the selected consultant will work closely with the Town for an extended period and that interviews would help evaluate the proposed project team, communication approach, and ability to address critical project issues.

He recommended including the subcommittee members in the interviews and returning to the Council on August 4 with a negotiated agreement and recommended consultant. He added that negotiations may also refine the scope of work and pricing to ensure the best value for the Town.

Council Member Kircher emphasized the value of the interview and negotiation process, noting that selecting a consultant before negotiations could reduce the Town's leverage. He shared that in his professional experience, direct conversations and site visits often provide valuable insight that cannot be gained solely through proposals. He supported conducting interviews with the finalists before making a selection.

Town Manager Johnson agreed, explaining that directing negotiations with a single firm before interviews would weaken the Town's negotiating position. She emphasized the importance of holding consultants accountable to their proposed schedules and scope of work.

Mr. Alamo added that negotiations are a critical best practice and involve not only contract terms but also refining scope and fees while maintaining the Town's leverage.

Council Member Dowling asked whether the RFP included a required project completion date or timeline. Mr. Kelley explained that the RFP did not specify a fixed schedule but requested consultants provide their recommended approach. He noted that proposed timelines varied based on assumptions regarding public outreach, meetings, design review, and the resources each firm could dedicate to the project. He added that these differences would be important factors in evaluating the proposals.

Mayor McMillan opened the public comment period.

Bob Herbst commented that the RFQ process had already identified highly qualified firms and expressed the view that additional interviews were unnecessary. He suggested that the Council select its preferred consultant and authorize staff to negotiate the final agreement, including project deadlines and contractual terms. He noted that if the preferred firm could not meet the Town's requirements, staff could move to the next-ranked firm. He encouraged the Council to proceed with a selection and allow staff to finalize the agreement.

Council Member Salter noted that August 4 was relatively soon and asked whether the top-ranked firm could be directed to begin schematic design work immediately.

Town Attorney Stock advised that the Town should remain within the scope of the RFP and explained that additional discussions with consultants would help clarify terminology, deliverables, and the scope needed to meet the Town's objectives.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins supported selecting a consultant that evening, noting that the preferred firm could potentially complete the work within 12 weeks and that a special meeting could allow the Council to approve a contract sooner.

Council Member Dowling supported maintaining a fair process and conducting interviews, stating that conversations with the project teams would provide valuable insight and would not significantly delay the schedule. She emphasized the importance of preserving the Town Manager's negotiating leverage.

Town Manager Johnson explained that contracts over \$50,000 are typically brought to the Council for authorization and execution. She recommended conducting interviews with the top firms the following week, including subcommittee members, and returning with a recommendation for Council consideration on August 4. She noted that scheduling a special meeting with a quorum could be challenging and that the established process would allow staff to complete due diligence while continuing to move the project forward.

Council Member Kircher supported interviews, explaining that this is a significant public project with many complexities and that discussions with the teams could reveal important information about staffing, expertise, and project approach that may not be evident in written proposals.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins reiterated her preference for the full Council to make the selection decision rather than relying on subcommittee input.

Mayor McMillan expressed support for moving forward with Gensler, stating that all five firms were highly qualified but that Gensler's proposed schedule best aligned with the Town's priorities, particularly the goal of completing the paramedic facility by January 2029. She expressed concern that additional interviews and negotiations could delay progress and said she trusted Gensler to be a strong partner for the Town. She recommended authorizing the Town Manager to negotiate an agreement with Gensler based on the information already provided, while acknowledging that she appeared to be in the minority.

Council Member Salter acknowledged the difficulty of the decision since he was not part of the subcommittee but noted that both subcommittee members supported Gensler. He asked Town Manager Johnson to clarify her concerns and whether they were primarily related to negotiating price.

Town Manager Johnson explained that her concern was the lack of time for staff to complete standard due diligence. She noted that staff had only begun reviewing proposals recently and had not yet completed reference checks or fully evaluated the firms' qualifications.

She emphasized that she wanted to provide the full Council with a thorough staff recommendation supported by complete information and suggested conducting interviews to ask all finalists about their ability to meet Gensler's accelerated timeline and negotiate scope and cost, noting that Gensler's proposal was significantly more expensive than some alternatives.

Mr. Kelley agreed that timeline and due diligence were key considerations. He noted that the RFP did not require a specific completion schedule, but Gensler demonstrated an understanding of the Town's urgency by proposing a shorter timeline. He also recommended asking other top firms whether they could meet a similar schedule and emphasized that interviews would provide an opportunity to discuss scope, staffing, and approach. He stated that interviewing finalists would be a best practice and would allow all decision-makers to hear the same information before making a selection.

Mr. Alamo emphasized the importance of interviews and due diligence based on his experience both submitting proposals and participating in selections. He explained that proposals often present a polished version of a firm's capabilities, but direct conversations help evaluate the people who will actually work on the project, team chemistry, and alignment with the Town's expectations. He noted that regardless of the top-ranked firm, it is important to thoroughly evaluate scope, cost, timeline, and working relationships before making a final selection.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins reiterated her support for selecting Gensler immediately, noting that the firm met the Council's stated criteria, including the ability to complete the work quickly. She expressed confidence in Gensler's reputation and questioned what additional information an interview process would provide.

Mayor McMillan proposed taking a poll to determine whether the Council preferred to authorize negotiations with Gensler immediately or proceed with interviews of the top firms and return with a recommendation as soon as possible, potentially at the August 4 meeting.

Council Members Salter, Dowling, and Kircher supported conducting interviews with the finalist firms through the subcommittee the following week via Zoom. Mayor Pro Tem Robbins supported moving forward with Gensler immediately and directing the Town Manager to negotiate an agreement. Mayor McMillan confirmed there was majority support to proceed with the interview process and concluded the matter.

BREAK

Mayor McMillan called for a break at 9:25 p.m., and thereafter reconvened the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

16. Town Council to consider adopting Resolution No. 2637 Calling for an Election for the Passage of the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority Four-Year Special Parcel Tax for the Tax Cycle 2027-2031 and Requesting Consolidation with the November 3, 2026, State-Wide General Election from the Marin County Board of Supervisors.

Town Manager Johnson presented the proposed Ross Valley Paramedic Authority (RVPA) special parcel tax ballot measure, which was continued from the June 11 Council meeting to allow revisions to the ballot language. She explained that RVPA paramedic services are primarily funded through a special parcel tax that expires June 30, 2027, and that continuation of funding requires approval by two-thirds of voters through a local ballot measure.

The proposed tax would apply to residential and non-residential properties, with an initial rate of up to \$107.50 per residential unit and adjustments of up to \$4 annually. She noted that the revised ballot language was reviewed by RVPA member agencies, the Town Attorney, and County Elections staff. Staff recommended adoption of Resolution No. 2637 calling for the election and requesting consolidation with the November 3, 2026 Statewide General Election.

Council Member Salter confirmed that the revised language had been reviewed by RVPA member agencies, Chief Mahoney, the Town Attorney, and County Elections staff to ensure compliance with requirements, including the word limit.

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

Council Member Dowling moved, and Council Member Salter seconded, to adopting Resolution No. 2637 Calling for an Election for the Passage of the Ross Valley Paramedic Authority Four-Year Special Parcel Tax for the Tax Cycle 2027-2031 and Requesting Consolidation with the November 3, 2026, State-Wide General Election from the Marin County Board of Supervisors. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

17. Town Council to receive a status update from the Public Works Director regarding the Winship Avenue Bridge Replacement Project.

Recusal: Council Member Salter recused himself from participating in the matter due to the proximity of his residence and left the meeting chambers.

Public Works Director Rich Simonitch provided an update on the Winship Avenue Bridge Replacement Project, reviewing the bridge's structural deficiencies, including safety concerns, limited lane and sidewalk widths, insufficient storm capacity, and potential failure risks. He outlined the project's environmental review history, including CEQA and NEPA processes, the 2020 Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration, mitigation measures, proposed bridge alignments, right-of-way impacts, construction easements, and negotiations with affected property owners.

He also reviewed the 2026 NEPA approval, hydraulic analyses, FEMA requirements, and the no-rise certification process. He emphasized that the presentation was informational and no action was being requested from the Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins asked how the Town is addressing concerns that the bridge replacement could increase downstream flooding.

Director Simonitch explained that the hydraulic analysis demonstrates the project will not raise flood elevations and that the design meets FEMA floodplain requirements through a no-rise certification. He noted that the project differs significantly from the San Anselmo Building Bridge 2 project because the Town's analysis shows no increase in downstream impacts and maintains existing creek flow conditions.

Mayor McMillan opened the public comment period.

Matthew Salter noted that some community concerns focus on whether modifying the channel beneath the bridge could affect future flooding if material shifts or changes over time. He referenced public comments and County materials showing potential flood elevation increases associated with other projects and asked for additional public education regarding the hydraulic analysis.

Director Simonitch clarified that the project does not involve excavating the creek channel. He explained that an earlier design proposed lowering the channel beneath the bridge, but hydraulic analysis showed that approach could create flow issues. The revised design will maintain the existing channel grade and modify the previous design to avoid those impacts.

Director Simonitch also addressed flood-rise images referenced by community members, explaining that they depicted potential impacts from removal of Building Bridge 2 as part of the SAFRR project analysis, not impacts caused by the Winship Bridge replacement. He stated that the SAFRR project was identified as a cumulative impact in the Town's environmental review but is no longer moving forward, and the Winship project must continue independently.

Town Attorney Stock explained that before construction begins, the Town will need to update the existing CEQA documentation and determine whether additional studies or findings are required, based on current conditions and consultant recommendations.

Director Simonitch further noted that some photographs cited as evidence of bridge-related flooding were taken out of context and actually illustrated increased flood protection associated with the SAFRR project rather than impacts from the Winship Bridge. He stated that those images were unrelated to the Town's project.

Jennifer Mota, a downstream resident, raised concerns about the relationship between the Winship Bridge Replacement Project and the SAFRR project. She stated that Winship Bridge was included in the SAFRR FEIR approved in 2018 and expressed concern that removal of downstream obstructions could increase downstream flood elevations.

Ms. Mota questioned how lowering upstream water elevations by approximately 14 inches would not result in increased water levels elsewhere and asked for additional explanation of the hydraulic analysis supporting the no-rise certification. She noted that the project design has changed since the 2018 environmental review, including potential changes to the creek bed, and expressed concern that the public has not received a clear explanation of those changes or their impacts.

She also questioned differences between the hydraulic models used in prior environmental review and the no-rise analysis, and requested additional public documentation, including a comparison of the 2018 FEIR analysis and the 2022 no-rise certification, a detailed description of design changes and their purpose, an explanation of impacts on modeled flood elevations, and clarification regarding whether additional environmental review is required.

Director Simonitch responded that many of Ms. Mota's questions were addressed in the presentation, including the SAFRR EIR hydraulic analysis. He explained that Winship Bridge and downstream areas through Kentfield, including Sylvan Lane, were evaluated in that analysis, which identified locations with potential flood increases and reductions. He noted that the Town's environmental document was a 2020 Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (ISMND), not the SAFRR EIR.

He further explained that hydraulic conditions are influenced by pressure flow and that a reduction in upstream water levels does not necessarily translate into increased downstream flooding and that additional questions regarding model comparisons and design details would need further staff review. He clarified that the channel geometry changes discussed are not final design changes but recommendations to be incorporated into the final design, which will be publicly presented before bidding.

Town Attorney Stock clarified that the Town is not relying on the 2018 SAFRR EIR for its CEQA analysis. He explained that the SAFRR EIR was prepared by the Flood Control District as the lead agency for that project, while the Town's environmental review is governed by its own 2020 ISMND. The conclusions of the Town's ISMND guides the Winship Bridge Replacement Project.

Charlie Goodman asked whether public comments were received during the 2020 CEQA review, stating he did not recall the document.

Director Simonitch confirmed that comments were received, including from Mr. Goodman and Mr. Crane, while he was at the County assisting with certification.

Mr. Goodman referenced his prior correspondence and raised concerns about the accuracy of information relied upon for flood control projects. He questioned past County analyses, including hydraulic modeling and projects involving the fish ladder and SAFRR improvements, and expressed concerns that previous flood mitigation projects in Marin County have not performed as expected. He stated that the Town could face liability if the bridge replacement resulted in unforeseen failures or impacts.

Mr. Goodman also questioned the bridge construction approach and materials, citing other local bridge projects as examples of durable construction. He emphasized the need to address pedestrian safety concerns at the Winship Bridge and suggested that a separate walkway or similar improvement could provide a solution.

Garril Page stated that she and Charlie Goodman have worked on flood issues for decades and expressed concern that recent information presented by staff did not address issues they believe remain unresolved. She questioned the extent of public input and reassessment completed for the Winship Bridge project, referencing lessons learned from other flood control projects that were later paused due to feasibility concerns.

Ms. Page argued that changing conditions, updated technology, and prior project experiences warrant additional public review. She raised concerns about potential impacts from bank grading, overbank flow, and bedrock drilling, and requested further analysis before moving forward. She suggested that updated FEMA processes, including a CLOMR and updated hydraulic modeling, may be necessary to ensure the project is properly evaluated.

Director Simonitch clarified that the Town is not using the Stetson model for the no-rise certification and is instead relying on the FEMA effective hydraulic model, as required by FEMA regulations and the Town's floodplain ordinance. He noted that while the Stetson model was used for the ISMND analysis and showed no impacts, the Town is not required to use it for the FEMA no-rise analysis and does not agree with all aspects of that model.

Mayor McMillan closed the public comment period. She asked for any concluding comments, and there were none. She and Council Members thanked Director Simonitch for his report.

Returned to the Dais/Noted as Present:

Council Member Salter returned to the dais and was noted as present.

18. Town Council to consider authorizing staff to initiate the recruitment of one resident-at-large member to the Advisory Design Review (ADR) Group.

Planning Director Roberta Feliciano presented the need to recruit a new Architectural Design Review (ADR) Group at-large member because the current member's term expires August 13 and they are not seeking reappointment. She requested authorization to conduct a 30-day recruitment through the Ross Review and email outreach. She noted that applicants do not need architecture or design experience.

Director Feliciano explained that the Council must conduct interviews and appoint the member by majority vote. She noted the Council could modify the process or delay interviews if needed.

Council Member Dowling asked whether all Council Members must participate in interviews, and Director Feliciano clarified that appointment requires a majority Council vote.

Town Manager Johnson suggested having the ADR Group screen applicants before Council's review, and Director Feliciano confirmed the current process could be adjusted to accomplish this.

Upon suggestion from Council Member Salter, the Council supported having the General Government Subcommittee conduct initial interviews and thereafter recommend the at-large candidate(s) to the full Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins asked whether a design professional could serve as the at-large member, and Director Feliciano confirmed the Council has discretion to appoint a qualified resident, though the ADR structure generally includes four design professionals and one resident at-large member.

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

Mayor McMillan confirmed Director Feliciano's authorization from the Council to post the recruitment and work from there with proceeding having the General Government Subcommittee of the Mayor Pro Tem and Council Member Dowling interview applicants and thereafter make a recommendation to the Council.

19. Town Council to receive a report on options for Town Council pay and the accompanying survey of Councilmember compensation in Marin County, and provide direction to staff on whether to establish monthly compensation for members of the Town Council and, if so, the amount up to the applicable statutory maximum.

Mayor McMillan asked and confirmed with the Town Manager that this item would be continued to August 13, 2026 meeting.

Mayor McMillan opened the public comment period.

Charlie Goodman expressed concern about the possibility of compensating Council Members. He shared that during his 12 years on the Council he personally incurred expenses while serving because he viewed public service as a privilege and a way to give back to the community.

Mr. Goodman emphasized that Council Members volunteer significant personal time and effort and are not motivated by financial compensation. He acknowledged that some other communities provide stipends but stated that he believes Ross's tradition of volunteer service is unique and that compensation would diminish the nature of the role.

Mayor McMillan and Councilmembers continued the item to the August 13, 20206 Council meeting.

End of Administrative Agenda.

20. No Action Items: (Mayor)

a. Council correspondence – None.

b. Future Council items – Mayor McMillan stated the Council discussed and agreed earlier to amend the Ross Municipal Code to allow the Council to have options of building, bidding, etc.

Council Member Salter asked if another Council Member could join him in addressing concerns related to a local business's issue and recent letter. He expressed concern that the matter could negatively impact the business and felt the community may want an opportunity for discussion. Town Manager Johnson noted that she had sent Council Members an email regarding the code compliance letter issued due to identified code violations.

Town Attorney Stock explained that the matter is proceeding through the Town's code enforcement process and would come before the Council, if required. He noted that it is not an administrative or legislative agenda item at this stage and the Town should follow the established enforcement process.

21. Council Member participation at the communication table at the Ross Post Office, on the next Council meeting day on August 13th

Mayor Pro Tem Robbins and Council Member Salter volunteered.

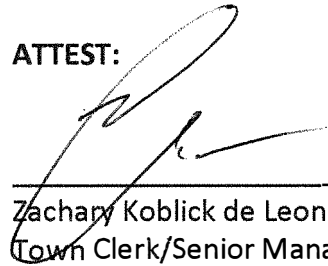
22. Meeting Evaluation.

Council Members concurred there was good discussions during the meeting.

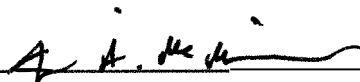
23. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

ATTEST:



Zachary Koblick de Leon
Town Clerk/Senior Management Analyst


Julie McMillan, Mayor