

From: [Heather Bell](#)
To: [Roxane Stone](#)
Subject: FW: Item #11a and #11b on 6/7/22 city council agenda
Date: Tuesday, June 7, 2022 3:41:36 PM
Attachments: [TimesEdit01.pdf](#)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 7, 2022 11:14 AM
To: Heather Bell <hbell@ci.pinoe.ca.us>
Subject: Item #11a and #11b on 6/7/22 city council agenda

Heather:

Attached to this email is a 11/01/20 "Bay Area News Group" editorial which I plan to read excerpts from tonight under item #11a (citizens comments). It is relevant to item #11b and I will state this when I make my comments under item 11#a.

Please distribute this editorial to:

1. each of the city council members,
2. the city manager,
3. the city finance director and
4. the city attorney

so they can have a complete hard copy of what I will be reading.

Please confirm receipt of this email and distribution of the editorial to the above mentioned persons.

Thank you.

Irma Ruport
[REDACTED]

Nov 1, 2020
Editorial
Bay Area
NEWS GROUP

Cities must level with voters and live within their financial means

The novel coronavirus not only exposed the nation's and state's lack of readiness for a pandemic, it also laid bare the failure of many local governments to financially prepare for emergencies.

As we interviewed candidates during this election, many wanted to expand one program or add another. Indeed, some proposals are righteous and appropriate in these difficult times. But, for all the campaign talk, governing at the local level should still include living within your means, paying down debts and, when times are good, setting aside savings for when things get tough.

What's stunning, as we learned reviewing the fiscal health of cities this election season, is how many local leaders fail to govern by those basic principles. How many didn't learn the lessons of the Great Recession. How many seem unconcerned about mounting debts — especially for public employee pensions — and don't see the connection to the costly interest payments undermining city budgets today.

And how many are willing to try to cover their tracks by asking voters to approve more taxes — often spending public money to do so — without considering and communicating the costs, the terms of ballot measures or the other levies residents already pay.

In this left-leaning region of the nation, it's a shame that so few recognize that progressive programs are not attainable without funding. Households can't give money to charity if they can't first pay their bills. The same fiscal fundamentals apply to municipalities.

We've listened to many candidates promise that they don't need to cut spending, they just need to find new revenues. If only it were that simple. Few seem to recognize how difficult that is, especially during a soft economy.

There's a growing contingent that's convinced large sums of money can be saved by trimming police budgets.

Often those cut-the-cops crusaders come from the cities with the largest problems of crime and gun violence.

Yes, the time has come to provide more oversight of police and demand more transparency. We've been a leader in that cause. And, yes, the time has come to change the way law enforcement responds to mental health calls and the homeless community. As we strive to reduce needless police shootings, there's clearly an important role for social workers and mental health professionals.

But it's naive to think that they will venture out on their own into sometimes-dangerous situations without police support. And it's not realistic to think that this new approach is going to come with cost savings that will enable struggling cities to balance their budgets. The reality is that it will probably just be a city reallocation of dollars, a financial break-even at best. Expecting bailouts from understaffed county mental-health departments is unrealistic.

As we reviewed candidates for city councils and tax measures on the ballot in the East Bay, we sought to distinguish between those cities that are well run and those that are struggling — and between those that are transparent with voters and those hiding the big picture.

Whether you have already voted or not, we hope you have time to read our endorsements. (We apologize that time didn't permit us to get to all the races and measures.) Go to www.eastbaytimes.com/endorsements. In those recommendations, we tried to provide fiscal context.

We found that too many city leaders still need to trim back annual spending so that they have funds to pay down debts and weather this economic downturn that could last for years. That means living within their means, not expecting residents, many of whom are themselves struggling through the pandemic, to be the financial saviors.