

City Manager's Weekly Report

This is the weekly report for the week ending November 13th, 2009.

1. **Meeting Notes**

The next City Council meeting is a special Closed Session on Monday, November 16th at 5:30 PM. The next regular City Council meeting is on Tuesday, November 17th, beginning with a 5:00 PM Closed Session in advance of the regular 6:30 PM City Council agenda.

As a reminder, the West Contra Costa Unified School District is having a special meeting tomorrow morning, Saturday, November 14th at 10:00 AM at Lovonya DeJean Middle School to discuss safety enhancement efforts at its schools and in the community. All West County City Councilmembers have been especially invited to attend this meeting.

2. **"One Block at a Time" is Back**

"One Block at a Time" (OBAT) is a program managed by the City's Code Enforcement division that identifies a small target area of the City for a multi-departmental/resident volunteer focused clean up effort. The next OBAT is tomorrow, Saturday, November 14th, with the target area being one of the two neighborhoods included in the City's pilot project for implementing the Health and Wellness Element of the General Plan. One of the goals of this implementation phase is to create physical improvements in the environment of two target neighborhoods that address health disparities or improve wellness. This particular target area is in the "Iron Triangle" and includes portions of Pennsylvania and Ripley Avenues and includes 2nd, 3rd & 4th Streets. The staging area will be at the end of Pennsylvania at the sound wall, with the official kickoff at 9:00 AM, wrapping up at 3:30 PM.

3. **Richmond Company Receives \$2,031,252 Grant**

This past week, the Department of Energy announced the awarding of major funding for 37 ambitious research projects. Some of these projects would allow intermittent energy sources like wind and solar to provide a steady flow of power, or the use of bacteria to produce automotive fuel from sunlight, water and carbon dioxide. The \$151 million in funding to different corporations is being awarded through the Department's recently-formed Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy ("ARPA-E"). ARPA-E's mission is to develop nimble, creative and inventive approaches to transform the global energy landscape while advancing America's technology leadership. This is the first round of projects funded under ARPA-E, which is receiving a total of \$400 million under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

NanOasis Technologies, Inc. of Richmond was a winner for research involving water carbon nanotubes for reverse osmosis membranes that require less energy and have many times higher flux than conventional processes. This could dramatically reduce the cost and energy required for desalination to supply fresh water for crops and communities.

4. **City Completes Civic Center Refunding**

In May 2007, the City issued \$101,420,000 in bonds to finance the revitalization and modernization of the Civic Center, as well as to refund three prior bond issues. The bonds were issued in variable rate mode, and were insured by Ambac. As a result of Ambac's credit downgrades and capital market dislocations beginning in early 2008, the City experienced higher than anticipated interest costs on the bonds. In May 2008, the City restructured the bonds into a fixed interest rate mode of 5.52% for 18 months, to abate the interest rate risk that the City was experiencing. This temporary conversion was due to terminate on November 25th, at which time the bonds would carry an interest rate of 12% if refinancing were not been completed.

To remedy this situation, the City's bond team has been working for the past several months on refinancing these Civic Center Bonds. This past week, the transaction was successfully completed through the issuance of fixed rate bonds, with annual debt service costs remaining at prior levels, and permanently removing the City's exposure to Ambac.

5. **State Sells Proposition 1A Bonds**

The City of Richmond participated in the California Communities Proposition 1A Securitization Program, whereby the City is repaid in full during this fiscal year for the State's borrowing of 8% of local agencies' property taxes. This past week, the State of California sold \$1.9 billion in bonds to fund this program, at a yield of 4%. A total of 1,270 local agencies throughout California participated in this program. The City will receive 50% of its receivable amount on January 15th, 2010 and the remaining 50% on May 3rd, 2010. The City's total receivable is \$3.6 million.

6. **National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Conference**

The National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) held its annual training conference in Austin, Texas from October 31st through November 3rd. The City of Richmond was represented by Police Commission Chairperson Cora Ward, Vice-Chairperson Nemy Bautista, and Commissioner Glenn Stephenson. Richmond Confidential Investigative Appeals Officer Don Casimere, a founding member of NACOLE, also attended the conference. The conference theme was "Focusing on the Future." Nearly 200 delegates from across the country were in attendance. Delegates attended numerous sessions addressing ways to enhance police oversight and accountability.

One conference session involved Model Specific workshops. These workshops focused on police auditors, monitors and police commissions/ citizen review boards. Commission Chairperson Cora Ward spoke on a panel about issues related to police commissions/review boards, and effectively shared her experiences as a member of the Richmond Police Commission. She made an excellent presentation and participated in an informative and lively discussion about the duties and responsibilities of police review board members.

7. **Public Works**

Construction of the Hilltop Mall Richmond Police Department started last week and is progressing very well with 20% completion.

8. **Richmond Fire Department Assists in the City of Albany**

The Richmond Fire Department assisted in suppression of a structure fire Thursday night at 500 Cleveland Avenue in Albany. Today Richmond Fire Chief Michael Banks received the following e-mail from Albany Fire Chief Mark McGinn:

Other than getting back to normal, our crews have not stopped talking about the involvement and effort the Richmond Fire Dept. gave us at the 500 Cleveland Ave. fire last night. In fact, to be more descriptive regarding our high esteem for your department; concerning all of our in-county/out-of-county mutual aid responses over the years, our department has always held firm that the Richmond Fire Department is unequivocally the best department to work with side-by-side. To me this says much as the fire service can be very critical of one another.

Please send my gratitude to those who responded and assisted at last night's fire, and in general to your whole department for their assistance over the years.

Nice work to all of those involved in this effort – both in Albany and in Richmond!