

# 'Egg on Our Face'

## Councilors Express

# Confusion Over Contracts

BEL. COUR. 1/26/77

### By TERESA GILLES

Belmont City Councilors Pam Ketcham and Walter Worthge said they have "egg on their faces" after discovering that the resurfacing of 15 Belmont streets went \$19,970 over the original bid.

Mrs. Ketcham and Mr. Worthge admitted at the Jan. 24 meeting that they did not fully understand the terms of the contract signed with contractor Fisk, Firenze and McLean.

### 'MISUNDERSTANDING'

"I did have a misunderstanding of the contract," Mr. Worthge said.

"If we have a staff that we can trust, we wouldn't have to do this," Mrs. Ketcham asserted apparently feeling

councilors should have been warned the contract could go over the original bid price.

"The procedures we are using in the City of Belmont are incorrect," Councilor Bob Jones said at the meeting.

When the contract was accepted in late summer, Mayor William Hardwick and Mr. Jones were not at the meeting.

### ON TONNAGE BASIS

Mrs. Ketcham and Mr. Worthge said they thought the contract agreed that Fisk, Firenze and McLean would resurface the 15 streets for \$92,580.

Actually the contract was established on a tonnage basis, City Engineer James Doerksen said.

It would take an estimated 2,450 tons of asphalt to resurface the streets, City Manager James DeChaine

said. But it was discovered Monday, Jan. 17 that more asphalt would be required to complete the project, at an approximate cost of \$20,000.

### 'UNCONTROLLED SPENDING'

Donald L. Oswald, chairman of the finance committee submitted a letter to the city council objecting to "uncontrolled spending."

"...the contract and specifications are written in a manner which does not provide adequate protection to the city for added costs," the letter stated. "The contract provides for the city engineer to expend up to 30 per cent over and above the original contract amount without any other approvals."

Mr. Dickerson pointed out that Mr. Doerksen could also

spend 30 per cent less on the contract if the estimated tonnage was less.

### TOOK PHONE 'POLL'

Although Mr. Doerksen could spend the extra \$20,000 without city councilors approval, City Manager James DeChaine decided to take a telephone "poll" to see if councilors had any objections, he said.

### DELAY COST MONEY

Mr. DeChaine claimed that any time delay would cost the city more money, as Fisk, Firenze and McLean would have to pull men and equipment off the last three streets if they did not get approval.

Then, he said, it would cost more to have the equipment set up again.

Therefore, approval to spend the additional \$20,000 was granted by Mr. DeChaine and Mr. Doerksen and Hillman Avenue, Ruth Avenue and North Road were overlaid on Tuesday, Jan. 18.

Mr. DeChaine said the city council had budgeted \$150,000 for the project.

The additional \$20,000 represents 21.57 per cent of what the contract authorizes Mr. Doerksen to spend above the original bid price.

### CONTRACT REVIEWS

The city finance director Allan Beck, should review each contract, Mr. Oswald told the councilors. City Attorney Kenneth Dickerson told the council that was not required.

"The city attorney doesn't judge on what is a good or bad contract," Mr. Jones said, "he tells you whether its legal or illegal."

Mr. Dickerson said, at the meeting, that the contract was not illegal.

### 'WIDE OPEN'

But "it's wide open," Mr. Oswald said, adding that the nine-member finance committee voted unanimously that "the contract doesn't provide the citizens with any safeguard."

In the letter, Mr. Oswald submitted seven questions, including "Why not utilize total fixed price contracts?"

"The committee voted that this procedure should be revised," Mr. Oswald added.

The streets which were resurfaced included Cipriani Boulevard, Carlmont Drive, Hillcrest, Coronet Boulevard, Avon Street, Monroe, Mirimar Terrace, Palome Avenue and Bel Monte Avenue. Monserrat, Courtland Road, Rith Avenue, North Road, Hillman Avenue and Mezes were also resurfaced.

According to Mr. DeChaine, he and Allan Beck will meet with the finance committee at 8:30 a. m., Saturday, Feb. 29, and plan to discuss policy.

No representative from Fisk, Firenze and McLean was available for comment.

# Council Permits Spending For Lodge Building Repair

*BEL. COUR. 3/20/77*

A total of \$19,811 was borrowed from the dwindling Belameda Pool Project fund to pay for additional work required on the lodge building in Twin Pines Park at the March 28 Belmont City

Council meeting.

Councilor Pam Ketcham cast the single no vote against appropriating the money.

Councilor Bob Jones was not present.

According to Ken Wilkins, president of W.A. Moroney, Inc. in San Mateo, the contractor in charge of the project, the additions were necessary.

The council had approved spending approximately \$4,000 to repair extensive dry rot damage in the building at the March 14 meeting.

At the meeting, the council approved spending \$2,216 for handicapped facilities in the bathrooms, including grab bars and lighting.

An additional \$1,801 was approved in the furnace room to prevent damage from possible flooding.

Councilors also decided to spend \$1,518 for repair to the dining room ceiling and \$1,559 to uncover and renovate a hitherto undiscovered hardwood floor. Another \$875 was allocated for staining beams in the dining room and \$188 will go into cutting an opening

between the kitchen and dining room.

The lodge building will be used by various city and private groups.

The council decided that the lodge building could do without carpeting in the multipurpose room and a gas fireplace, thereby cutting out \$1,134 from the proposed change order.

The money taken from the pool project will be repaid by the city.

As Councilor William Hardwick saw it, the council "is committed to" the lodge building.

"I am beginning to see this as a kind of 1/4 inch ester house," Councilor Ketcham countered.

# City Council Okays Plan For Phones

*BEL. COUR. 3/23/77*

The Belmont City Council decided that going direct was better and approved the purchase of a \$40,862 direct-dialing telephone system for city offices.

At the March 14 meeting, councilors were told the city would save \$46,000 in five years with the new system, which will allow persons to circumvent the present switchboard. The purchase will eliminate one clerk / typist from the city staff.

It is also expected the new system will speed up calls.

The present system has been in use for six years.

# Allocation Received

*BEL. COUR. 4/27/77*

The March apportionment of highway users tax, motor vehicle license fees and cigarette tax for Belmont totalled \$56,387 announced State Controller Kenneth Cory.

Belmont was allocated \$2,967 from the collection of cigarette tax, \$31,691 for license fees and \$21,729 for highway users tax.

A total of the money apportioned to San Mateo County in March came to \$1,029,511.

# Holly Road To Be Repaired

*BEL. COUR. 4/13/77*

Belmont city councilors decades ago. voted 5-0 April 11 to spend no more than \$1,500 on street improvements on Holly Road, after a brief discussion on whether the city was obliged to improve streets deeded to them

Approximately 26 Holly Road residents had presented a petition complaining alleging the street was unsafe and asking the council to maintain it.

City councilors learned that street was deeded to the city 40 years ago and the deed was accepted by a resolution at that time.

City Attorney Kenneth Dickerson explained that the city was not obliged to "improve" the road but "should there be a dangerous condition the city does have an obligation to maintain that street."

The minimum requirement is "to take such action to prevent injury that would result from dangerous conditions of the streets," the attorney summarized.

The money for the street repairs will come from State gas taxes.

## Job Awarded

*BEL. COUR. 11/21/77*  
The California Department of Transportation opened bids in Sacramento last week on six State Highway Construction projects including the construction of a median barrier on Route 92 between Ralston Avenue and West Hillsdale Boulevard.

Out of seven bids received, Raisch Construction Co. Mountain View, was the apparent low bidder at \$279,617.50. Work is expected to begin within 45 days.

## Arbitration Over, Kubit Wins Fight

*BEL. COURIER 11/21/77*  
The arbitrator in the battle over who should pay for extra costs on the lower Ralston Avenue improvements project decided the city should pay the contractor \$18,144.08.

In a decision made public Tuesday, Jan. 11, the arbitrator awarded the money to the San Carlos firm of Kubit, Bortolotto and Kelly, Inc.

Ed Kubit claimed the city owed his firm \$43,763 over the original bid of \$528,000 because "poor planning" delayed and extended the work.

When the two parties failed to reach an agreement, they approached the American Arbitration Association. Under the laws of binding arbitration, the decision is final and cannot be appealed.

The four days of hearings were concluded on Dec. 16, 1976.

The project was to improve lower Ralston Avenue's mile-long stretch between the Alameda de las Pulgas and South Road. It was started in July, 1975 and concluded on May 18, 1976.

"It was a fair decision," said Belmont City Engineer James Doerksen. He said the city now plans to start a claim against Pacific Telephone Co. for allegedly not removing telephone poles in time and delaying work.

"I think the city has got out very well in this whole thing," the engineer stated.

He added that Mr. Kubit's firm was awarded 42.85 percent of what it had asked for.

Mr. Kubit was awarded \$10,474 for right-of-way delay, \$4,661 for underground construction, \$1,365 for catch basins and \$955 for pavement markers. The remaining money came from a change order adjustment and paying for pipes, which the city had already agreed to finance.

Mr. Kubit was not awarded for header boards, construction of a pedestrian pass and excavation on the south side of the project.

Mr. Kubit was not overjoyed by the decision and said he is considering a lawsuit against the surveyor Ed Baca because Mr. Baca allegedly did not appear for the arbitration hearings.

"I am thinking of suing him," he told the Courier Bulletin.

Mr. Kubit's attorney, Robert Blatt, would not confirm this.

## Council Approves Second Inspector

*BEL. COUR. 8/31/77*  
The Belmont City Council decided, in a preliminary budget plan, to employ two full-time building inspectors in the Building and Planning Department.

Mayor Frank Gonsalves had recommended that the number of inspectors remain at one and one-half for a few months, to be increased if necessary, but Acting City Engineer/Public Works Director Adel Nepomuceno pointed out that in the past one and one-half inspectors had not been enough to assure that sub-standard work was being done in various areas.

Nepomuceno cited instances in the past where problems had occurred because of sub-standard workmanship done without adequate inspection.

The movement to accept the new organization chart, including two full-time inspectors, was carried 2-1. Councilmen Walter Worthge and William Hardwick voted in favor of the motion; Mayor Gonsalves voted in opposition;

and Councilwoman Pam Ketchum was absent.

In other actions, the council voted 3-0 to consolidate the Building Department by moving it to the existing Engineering Building.

This decision was reached after Assistant City Manager Allen Beck reported that it would cost about \$10,000 to move the Engineering Dept. to City Hall, compared to about \$1,500 to relocate at the Engineering Department location.

Sidewalk problems in the Sterling Down area prompted Brian G. McGrath of 506 Sterling View Avenue, and Kenneth Taylor, who lives on Hiller Street, to complain about their difficulties in getting their sidewalks repaired.

It was suggested that these sidewalks would be repaired, if the funds became available, but Finance Committeeman Chuck Paetzke explained that the City had a number of old problems to solve before it can embark on new projects.

## City Unlikely to Cushion Blow

# Residents Still Recoiling from Tax Boost

BEL. COURIER/20/77

By CHARLIE HALL

If you expect last week's property tax reassessment to hit Belmont taxpayers like a sledgehammer, you're probably right.

There was speculation last week when the news of the reassessment, which raised assessed values throughout San Mateo by an estimated 30 percent, might be cushioned by lower tax rates from the different taxing bodies, but several officials have cautioned that such reductions may be less feasible than they are attractive.

Although the new assessments, which were estimated by the county Assessor's office to be an average of 17.2 percent higher than the previous assessment for Belmont residents, will bring in an estimated \$150,000 beyond the \$853,000 in property tax revenue being spent in the current fiscal year, he warns that cutting the tax rate from its present level to cushion the burden on taxpayers isn't as simple as it would first seem.

The reason, he says, is that costs are rising in areas where local officials have little, if any, control.

"The cities take a lot of the heat because they're the most accessible," notes Beck, but there are fewer and fewer things they can control. If salaries are fixed, and you exclude existing capital improvements programs, then maybe 40 percent of 25 percent of the budget is subject to reduction," he says.

A case in point of rising costs that can't be cut even if Belmont city officials should wish to do so is in the area of worker's compensation and liability, insurance, both mandated by state regulations.

### UNTOUCHABLE

Out of the roughly \$10.30 which Belmont residents are taxed per \$100 of assessed valuation, the city currently charges \$.80 per \$100, of which Beck estimates \$.10 goes to worker's and liability insurance and thus can't be touched.

Moreover, such costs have skyrocketed in recent years, putting inflationary pressures that will reduce the latitude city officials have in lowering the tax rate. Liability insurance on the city's cars alone has risen from \$36,000 to

\$120,000 in the last two years. The trend, he fears, will continue.

Ken Weston, Business Manager of the Belmont Elementary School District, which accounts for \$1.86 of the Belmont property tax rate, is more optimistic about his district's ability to cut the tax rate, but he is by no means convinced that any fall in the rate will fully compensate for the recent rise in assessed values.

"The property tax rate will probably go down," says Weston, "but there's no way of telling whether actual taxes will go down."

While costs have been rising in areas beyond local control, Beck doesn't foresee much wholesale slashing of programs that are under the city's effective scrutiny.

Though the city staff is currently preparing the preliminary budget for the coming fiscal year, he says that no major cuts are being considered.

Even when the city council, which unlike the city staff is able to set policy and thus in a better position to trim expenditures, considers the preliminary budget in late

May or early June significant cuts in existing programs are unlikely. Individual interest groups tend to rally around any threatened programs, says Beck, "and the question is whether you want to take the heat," by cutting them.

Should local tax districts in fact prove unable to cushion much of the recent reassessment blow by lowering their tax rates, then the reassessment, the second severe one to hit San Mateo County in two years, is going to cause belt back, the rise could be disastrous.

### SENIORS HURT

Of all the howls that arose last week, probably the cries of anguish were loudest among the elderly, who, living mainly on fixed incomes, are in the worst position to absorb any new taxes.

Mrs. Mary Butler, a Belmont senior, is seriously worried that the reassessment will ultimately drive her from her home. "I don't know how I'm going to pay it," says Mrs. Butler, who lives strictly on social security.

# To Settle City, Contractor Argument

## Arbitrator To Decide on Ralston Project

BEL. COUR. 1/5/77

By TERESA GILLES

A \$42,000 bill for the lower Ralston Avenue road improvements caused an argument between contractor Ed Kubit and City Engineer James Doerksen that forced the

### Bulletin

It was reported on Tuesday, Jan. 4, shortly before press time that arbitrator Dr. Laurence Wise had reached a decision concerning the lower Ralston Avenue project.

However, Dr. Wise and representatives of the American Arbitration Association informed the Belmont Courier Bulletin, the decision could not be released to the press until both parties had been informed.

The decision of the arbitrator will be reported in our next issue, on Jan. 12.

City of Belmont to go into binding arbitration.

Now it will be up to arbitrator Dr. Laurence Wise of the Stanford University Department of Engineering to decide how much of the bill, if any, should be paid.

#### MILE-LONG STRETCH

The project to improve lower Ralston Avenue's mile-long stretch between the Alameda de las Pulgas and South Road, was started in July 1975 and certified complete on May 18, 1976.

According to Mr. Kubit of Kubit, Bortolotto and Kelly, Inc. in San Carlos, his firm spent more than the original bid of \$528,000 because, "the plans did not fit when we went to build it. It was poor planning."

"I think he messed up on his estimates," said Mr. Kubit of Mr. Doerksen.

A "personality conflict" between Mr. Kubit and Mr. Doerksen sent the city running to the American Arbitration Association for assistance.

Four days of hearings with interested parties were

concluded on Dec. 16.

Under binding arbitration, all parties must accept the decision of the appointed arbitrator.

#### 'WOULD HAVE BEEN OKAY'

"If the plans would have been right and the survey right, it would have been okay," Mr. Kubit told the Belmont Courier-Bulletin.

He said the city presented his company with plans for an 18-foot bridge to span a 28-foot creek, did not move utility poles in time, had to make adjustments for bike paths and trees, as well as problems with curbing and gutters.

Because of these delays, and the need for more equipment and personnel, the bill was increased \$42,000, Mr. Kubit claimed.

#### NO CHANGE ORDERS

"The engineering department seemed to feel that because Kubit did not present change orders within 15 days that he was not doing it," explained Belmont City

Councilor Pam Ketcham, who took an active interest in the argument.

#### UNRESOLVABLE PROBLEMS

"There certainly seemed to be some unresolvable problems," she said.

Mr. Kubit claimed he presented bid changes to the city engineering department but "the change orders never came back."

Ed Baca, the surveyor, told a different story.

"I wouldn't say anything against the city," Mr. Baca stated. "The only problem was that the city, in order to try and expedite the project, has to develop rush plans. We had to make adjustments."

#### 'WORKED DILIGENTLY'

"We worked very diligently trying to accommodate all of the numerous complaints that came from Mr. Kubit's company.

"There weren't any substantial delays. In order for the

city to acquire the funding for this job, a rush set of plans had to be submitted for the state. A set of detailed plans takes almost a year to get out. They had to get their plans out in one month."

"The city went out of their way to provide him (Mr. Kubit) service that was above normal."

Mr. Baca said Ralston Avenue residents complaints about tree removal and other adjustments also delayed his work so that, "we were there almost 100 per cent of the time."

# Belameda Pool Money May Go for New Uses

*Bel. Cour. 4/13/77*  
The Belameda Pool fund may be depleted and the majority of the money set aside for the aquatics program may be spent on lighting for the Carlmont High School tennis courts and meadow area in Twin Pines Park.

Belmont City Councilors learned that money from S.B. 174, the state bond act, will provide matching funds on a 25-75 basis. Therefore, it was recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission that the money could be better

spent on a more immediate project.

As City Manager James DeChaine explained, it could cost up to half a million dollars to develop a complete aquatics program in Belmont. At present, the fund is \$37,500.

"That's not really going to do that much good as far as an aquatics program...better to put that money to active use," Mr. DeChaine said, paraphrasing the commission recommendation.

The city is eligible for two phases of money. It was recommended that the city put up \$6,000 and receive approximately \$16,000, to be used to buy land in the western hills owned by Edward Cunningham.

The city has a five year option to buy that property, Mr. DeChaine explained.

Under Phase II, the city would put up approximately \$10,000 and receive \$30,000 to put in lights for evening tennis players.

The Carlmont tennis court light project has been discussed often at city council meetings.

Then, the city should put up \$15,000 to purchase a portable band shell and make other improvements to the meadow area at the local park, the commission voted.

The meadow is on the eastern side of the Twin Pines Park buildings.

The state would supply another \$40,000.

According to Mr. DeChaine all of these recommendations qualify for matching funds under the recreation and open space requirements of S.B. 174.

If the councilors decided to take the recommended course of action, that would leave \$12,500 in the Belameda Pool fund.

According to Mr. DeChaine, the council will deal with the matter at the April 25 meeting.

## Letter to the Editor

Editor: *BEL. COUR. 8/31/77*

I would like to clarify any possible idea a casual reader might get in reading the Courier-Bulletin's Aug. 24 article on Belmont Revenue-Sharing proposals that subscribes to the frittering away of any of the approximately \$140,000 revenue-sharing funds the city is scheduled to receive from the federal government next year.

True, out of pure frustration with many proposed spending items on the master list and one councilman's additional proposals that the Belmont Arts Council and Belmont Jaycees be added to the list of recipients, I did, with "tongue in cheek," suggest that the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, Little League, and Bobby Sox organizations be added to the list and they were. Under no circumstances, however, could I seriously agree to subsidize the programs of such private groups out of public monies, worthy though these organizations are.

There are, in my opinion, two justifiable and responsible reasons for expending revenue-sharing monies, and they are: 1) funding capital improvement projects the city needs but cannot budget out of available regular revenue, and 2) the funding of needed services and governmental operations that would otherwise have to be funded by local taxes. I tend strongly to prefer the former because only by such means have developments and improvements been accomplished in recent years. I am

no "Scrooge," but I feel prudence is needed.

Considering the fact that the city has just completed the frustrating annual chore of developing a city budget and tax rate for 1977-78 in which we couldn't provide adequate funds to provide for the all too many community needs, some of the revenue-sharing proposals are asinine. For example, when we are struggling to fund needed monies for repairs of streets and sewers, when we are as a community woefully short of even spartan sports playing fields for children and adults, and when we cannot even renovate or replace Belameda pool, how can we possibly justify frittering away revenue-sharing funds for such items as the Park Boosters Concerts in Twin Pines Park (surely those attending could scrape up the cost of a modest ticket)?

As for the Belmont Jaycees and Belmont Arts Council, Little League, Bobby Sox, etc., the subsidizing of such programs from public funds is undesirable. The governmental role should be limited and restricted to providing use of needed facilities and the provision of needed services such groups are unable to provide themselves.

If your readers agree, I would like to urge their attendance and the expression of their views on spending priorities when the City Council makes its spending determination on Sept. 12.

Floyd E. Sampson, President  
Plateau-Skymont Homeowners Association

# Belmont Council Action

## Keys Heated Debate

By DAN COOK

A squabble over payment of two contracts previously approved by the Belmont City Council turned into a rancorous debate Monday night, with a councilwoman being urged repeatedly by the mayor to deal with the subject matter at hand.

The ordinarily routine matter of payment of the warrants and approval of the minutes of the previous council meeting went on for an hour and a half at the insistence of Councilwoman Pamela S. Ketcham.

Mrs. Ketcham had taken issue with the retention of consulting engineer Richard M. Trainer for work on improvements to the San Juan sewage pumping station.

For the second time in as many meetings, Mrs. Ketcham objected to the manner in which Trainer had been selected, which was done at the last council meeting.

Mrs. Ketcham reiterated charges shown in the minutes of the Jan. 10 meeting, at which time she had alleged that the retention of Trainer and the awarding of the contract followed "secret" telephone conversations among councilmen.

Calling such approval "legislation by telephone" for the second time, Mrs. Ketcham criticized the practice of awarding the contract without going through a competitive bidding process.

What apparently triggered Mrs. Ketcham's remarks was a reference to the council's Jan. 10 action which appeared in the minutes submitted for approval.

Councilman Walter Worthge defended the council's action in awarding Trainer the contract, citing the urgency of repairing the dilapidated San Juan station.

"The action on Jan. 10 was a reconfirmation on the part of the majority of the council to hire Trainer," Worthge explained.

"I find this an inappropriate discussion," declared Councilman Robert A. Jones. "If the councilwoman wants to put the item on the agenda for discussion, fine."

"I want to reaffirm what Councilman Worthge has said. I voted to take emergency action and temporarily suspended constitutional property rights (in the San Juan area). I voted for it until we could handle the problem, and it would be

bad faith for me to slow this project down.

"I resent the attack on the integrity of my telephone call with the city manager," Jones said, glaring at Mrs. Ketcham.

Jones' reference was to his vote to place a moratorium on further development in the San Juan area because of a lack of sewage pumping capacity. It brought an angry reaction from Mrs. Ketcham.

"I hope we have a study session devoted to this question of council policy," Mrs. Ketcham retorted. "It's important. You know it, and I know it."

Another item, this one on the warrant list, also drew criticism from Mrs. Ketcham, who verbally attacked City Finance Director Allen Beck, City Engineer James Doerksen, City Manager James DeChaine and City Atty. Kenneth M. Dickerson.

At issue was payment of a warrant in the amount of \$27,258 to Fisk, Firenze & McLean, a contracting firm which had provided certain street resurfacing operations as approved by the council in budget sessions last summer.

The contract for the work had allowed an automatic cost overrun of 30 per cent, to be granted by City Engineer Doerksen, without further council approval.

Knowing the terms of the work, the contractor had apparently underbid the

cost of the contract by 30 per cent, knowing that the additional cost had automatically been provided for.

After work had begun on the project earlier this year, it became apparent that Doerksen would be forced to grant the 30 per cent contingency, and DeChaine hastily polled the council by telephone as to their feelings, despite the automatic provision in the contract.

DeChaine explained that the work was proceeding so rapidly that to call a halt to the work already performed, and not continue with the work already approved by the council,

would subject the city to higher costs.

Although Mrs. Ketcham's discontent was apparently directed at the lenient contract approved by the council, she attacked Doerksen for granting the override, criticized City Finance Director Beck for authorizing the payment, told of her distrust of city staff, and began to spar with Dickerson over the "legality" of the contract.

All staff members sat silently through Mrs. Ketcham's remarks, except Dickerson, who turned to her and said that "my job is to make certain that contracts are legal — period."

Mrs. Ketcham had an ally in the audience, Donald Oswald, chairman of the city's finance committee, who read a lengthy letter outlining his objections to the contract.

Oswald's concern, which was conveyed at the request of other members of the finance committee, was with the override provision without required further council approval.

Oswald also questioned construction supervision controls, estimate checking, the use of fixed-price contracts, and the mention of cost override procedures in the contract at all.

He also questioned whether Dickinson should

be checking city contracts for more than just form and procedure.

Mrs. Ketcham turned to Dickerson for an answer.

"Madam, all I can tell you is that that statement in just plain wrong," Dickerson said, shaking his head.

When Mrs. Ketcham attempted to pursue the matter, Dickerson cut her off, his voice rising.

"It's wrong — that's it," he said.

Following the angry outburst, the council voted 3-1 to approve payment of the warrant, with Councilwoman Ketcham dissenting, and Vice Mayor Frank Gonsalves absent.

S. M. TIMES  
5/25/77

## Belmont Can't Find Anyone to Take Job

# Building Inspections Lag Behind

The Belmont City Council says inspections of new building projects are falling hopelessly behind, with nobody applying for the inspection job when there is one. The council asked Monday night for a report from the city manager by its next meeting.

Councilmen voted two weeks ago to hire another building inspector to relieve a work load that is piling up, but nobody has applied for the job, according to city officials.

James DeChaine, city manager, indicated two are

needed right now. Councilmen wondered, however, how they could get two, if they couldn't even get one applicant.

Councilman Bob Jones urged proceeding "reasonably," and pointed out that "we are up against a peak load."

Councilman Walter Worthge said it was false economy not "to have an inspector out there."

Worthge said that if this situation continues, "it will haunt us tenfold."

Members of local homeowners associations

expressed concern, and one pointed out that without city inspections, it does little good to put conditions on building permits.

• In other action, a group of 21 tenants of a Continentals Way apartment house whose owners recently secured a council okay to change over to a condominium turned up to protest and to discuss conditions.

They were told by the council that they could not discuss their specific problem after an attorney for the owner reminded them that the matter was not on the agenda.

The tenants were informed that the matter of asking a reconsideration by the council would be put on a future agenda. Meanwhile, they should prepare facts and evidence for the council, they were told.

They also were asked by councilmen to give input to an upcoming session on a new condominium ordinance prepared by the Planning Commission.

The tenants presented a petition which one said 90 per cent had signed.

Councilwoman Pam Ketcham pointed out the silence of the board and said, "That silence tells you that they are not going to reconsider."

"I am sorry you all came down," said Councilman Worthge. "We do not have

all the material in front of us. I can't move to reconsider, as it would be unfair to property owners, who are not here."

• On another matter, the council put off a decision on a request by David McMichael to allow excavation and hauling of 1,050 cubic yards of earth so that he could build a residence and three-car garage on a substandard lot at 2614 Barclay Way.

McMichael said he needs

the large garage because he has two cars, a van, a camper and a motorcycle, and the lot has such slopes that excavation is necessary.

Mayor Frank Gonsalves suggested putting off the decision so that the council can go look at the site. McMichael said a decision should be made now, as it would take several months of building. He pointed to months of delays already.

• A contract was

awarded to the Dalton Construction Co. of Foster City to build phase one of the San Juan Force Main at a cost of \$191,315.

• Two large excavation and hauling permits were okayed on the consent calendar. They went to Walter Deneke and Walter Dewers to move 1,000 cubic yards at 1700 and 1702 Valley View Ave., and to Antique Forest Homes to excavate 30,000 cubic yards and haul 15,000 cubic yards.



# Library and Pool Project

The line "let's put our money where our mouth is," was the most spoken at the Monday, March 28 Belmont City Council meeting.

And it was up to the four attending councilors, with Robert Jones absent, to decide where to spend \$83,080 in revenue sharing funds.

After closing the public hearing, the councilors allotted funds to the Belmont Library, the Belameda pool project, next year's data processing costs, a YMCA juvenile diversion program and to pay to print a history of Belmont.

The council did not allocate all the money available, and still have approximately \$13,000 to spend.

### FOR LIBRARY

Seven residents came forward in favor of spending

\$25,000 as a show of "good faith" towards expanding the Belmont Library facilities, considered by many to be the smallest, but better-used, library in the county.

Councilor William Hardwick cast the only no vote against the library funds.

Mary Martin, of the Friends of the Library, told the council the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors is considering allocating money to expand the Atherton and Portola Valley system, and said Belmont should also try for funds.

Earlier in the week, Councilors Pam Ketcham and Walt Worthge met with Supervisors John Ward and Edward Bacciocco and County Librarian James Buckley to find out what was needed to get consideration.

They were told allocating money would indicate in-

# Get Revenue Money

terest, as would a donation of land.

### \$25,000 FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Monday night, \$25,000 was granted for the project.

The council also voted \$27,968 for the Belameda pool project, to replace funds the city had borrowed to pay for other projects including lodge building improvements in Twin Pines Park.

There is now \$37,500 in the pool fund, councilors were informed.

The allocation of \$8,000 for data processing costs will drop the city tax rate one cent per \$100 assessed valuation, Alan Beck, City Finance Director said.

### FOR JUVENILES

The Whole Earth Juvenile Diversion program will receive \$5,000 to expand.

Operated by the Carlmont YMCA, the program will serve San Carlos youths as well.

"If we don't add additional staff to handle the current overload and projected overload...we will have to turn people away when they seek help," said Director Gene Steele.

### PRINTING BOOK

Councilors decided that \$2,530 should be spent to cover printing costs of an official history of Belmont.

But, they pointed out, money from the sale of 1,000 copies will go towards reimbursing the city.

An additional \$750 was allocated for an ultrasonic security system in the Twin Pines lodge building, which, even though it is next door to the police station, has been

(Continued to page 6)

# -Revenue Money-

(Continued from page 1)

broken into several times.

### IRRIGATION ASKED

Frank Billante, of the Parks and Recreation Department, has requested \$7,500 to improve the irrigation system in Twin Pines Park by installing timers and repairing leaks.

According to the council, money will not be allocated for the Hallmark Tennis Courts since it is believed the council can find another means for funding.

The Parks and Recreation Commission has requested \$22,000 to purchase land known as the Cunningham property.

## Hearing This Thursday

BEL. COURIER 8/10/77

The City Council will hold its final public budget hearing Thursday night at 8 o'clock at city hall.

The council is expected to approve a final budget for 1977-78 and set a tax rate.

Among the topics to be discussed will be whether to provide funds for a full-

time activities coordinator for the Lodge Building at Twin Pines Park, and how to pay for a cul-de-sac authorized by the council.

The council authorized \$5,000 Monday night to begin construction of a cul-de-sac separating Belmont from San Carlos, but a question remains as to the source of its funding.

## Belmont Also Will Hike Contribution

S.M. TIMES 9/14/77

The Belmont City Council has raised the amount of money the city will contribute to the San Mateo County Convention and Visitors Bureau to 15 per cent of the take of the hotel-motel tax.

The vote Monday was 3-2, with Councilman John McInerney and Councilwoman Pam Ketcham objecting.

It was explained that most of this money comes from the Holiday Inn, which has a tie-in to the Marine World amusement

development which could result in more business and that tax benefits would increase if more money were ploughed into promotion.

The council Monday night postponed action on compensation plan which would mean a salary hike for city management, to go along with increases scheduled for police and other employees. Department heads would get an average of 6.5 per cent, some said although City Manager Jim DeChaine said the inflation factor is 8.1 per cent.

## Council Fine-Tunes Budget at Meeting

BEL. COURIER 8/10/77

The Belmont City Council continued to work against the deadline last Thursday night, making several last minute adjustments in the 1977-78 budget and reversing an earlier decision to move the city's Building Dept. out of the City Hall.

In various cost-cutting actions, the Council deleted \$4,400 allocated in the Police Dept. budget for a new automobile for the City Manager. The council also voted to place several city vehicles, ranging from a 1975 Plymouth to a 1951 jeep, on auction.

The council also cut meeting and travel budgets in several departments. After listening to objections

from Councilwoman Pam Ketcham that City Manager Jim DeChaine shouldn't be compensated for expenses related to the Lions, Rotary, and Kiwanis clubs, the council reduced the City Manager's meeting and travel allocation from \$2,400 to \$2,000.

Meeting and travel budgets were also reduced for the City Clerk and the Police Department's

(Continued on page 2)

NOT IN PAPER

## Belmont Acts on Ordinances

S.M. TIMES 4/13/77

The Belmont City Council, during a five-hour session this week, adopted or amended three ordinances.

The city code regarding business licenses was amended to reduce the fee for gardeners from the present \$50 a year to \$30.

A minor amendment concerning permits for food establishments was enacted.

The standard ordinance establishing health standards for food vendors, restaurants, water sources, chemical toilets and rodent and insect control was enacted.

A proposal by Gilbert T. Armando to subdivide a 2.2-acre parcel at 1801 Ralston Avenue into six R-1A lots was again put over, this time to April 25.

The council authorized acceptance of an application by Bruce A. Tuttle for excavation of 1,340 cubic yards and hauling of 1,150

cubic yards from lots at 1254 and 1258 Chula Vista Avenue, to create two home sites. Tuttle was authorized to move the earth to a location across the street or to the College of Notre Dame.

A majority of the council accepted part of a Planning Commission recommendation to allow general plan designation of property at 1815 and 1817 Ralston Avenue as low density planned development. Another part of the recommendation, which would allow this without prejudice to future planned development commercial use was defeated, 3-2, with Bob Jones and Bill Hardwick in the minority.

Nobody appeared for a hearing on requested rezoning of three lots at Lyall Way and Old Lake Road from R-3 to planned unit development. The council agreed to the change.

The council adopted a

resolution of intention to approve a change in the public employees retirement contract to provide for a retroactive cost of living adjustment for employees who retired prior to July 17, 1971.

# Bidding To Open For SJ Facility

*BELMONT COURIER 3/30/70*  
The Belmont City Engineer James

Council decided March 28 to open bidding on the San Juan pump station and force main, approved allowing bingo games for charitable business, okayed an assessment district on Emmet Avenue and formally closed the old Belameda pool.

The pump station in the San Juan Canyon will be open for bidding on May 4 and is expected to be completed in 168 days, or by Nov. 1, said City

Doerksen. However, the council is unsure whether a 20-year-old force main, which could last another five to 10 years, will have to be replaced. So, they decided to accept bids to replace the main, but only if it is economical.

At present, the pump station is so overloaded it cannot handle the present residents. The council put a moratorium on building in  
(Continued to page 6)

## —Canyon Facility—

(Continued from page 1) the area, then amended it to a moratorium on sewer hookups

The council authorized the engineer to conduct tests on the force main at an approximate cost of \$1,000, to see if it would need replacement in the near future.

In a 4-0 vote, they officially closed the Belameda pool, which was built in 1913. The pool was the site for a local aquatics programs and a number of citizens and councilors have said they are committed to building or finding another facility.

However, it is expected a new pool facility could cost \$450,000.

It would have cost \$500,000 to rebuild the Belameda facility, the council was informed.

The council approved 4-0 an assessment district on Emmet Avenue to pay for construction of improvements.

The firm of Warren, McVeigh, Griffin and Huntington was hired for

\$3,100 to take a risk management audit of the city insurance needs.

For a fee of \$25 per year, Belmont organizations can hold bingo games for charitable purposes, the council decided.

# Belmont OK's Revenue-Sharing Funds

S.M. TIMES 9/13/77

The Belmont City Council Monday night voted to appropriate all but \$39,792 of federal revenue-sharing funds for capital improvements and a few projects agreed upon previously.

The council put off dispensing funds to Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Bobby Soxers, Jaycees and a host of other community organizations who had been suggested for funding at a recent council meeting. Floyd Sampson, president of Plateau-Skymont Homeowners Association, who had introduced the idea of funding the other groups, admitted to the council that he had done so "to express my frustration." Monday he urged the council "to use these funds for long-term improvements and not for private groups, no matter how worthy."

Carole Dittman, president of the Belmont Bobby Soxers, said the money should go not to a group but "for a field for someone to play in." It was pointed out that 28 per cent of Belmont's population — about 5,500 — play ball.

When the council was through whittling, it voted \$20,000 for a second Twin Pines Park exit, \$1,000 for an audit, \$25,000 for data processing, \$1,400 for city hall water lines, \$10,000 to the Whole Earth (juvenile rehabilitation) project, \$700 for City Hall improvement, \$1,500 for the Park Boosters, \$1,000 to the city Youth Committee, \$12,087 for police communications equipment, and \$25,000 for a city library improvement fund.

It also voted \$500 for a Hallmark tennis court hydro-seal slide-protection project and \$2,000 to fence Alexander Park to prevent casual vandalism by children who might cross over into private property.

In both the cases of the Park Boosters and the Youth Committee, the monies will be used as seed money — to initiate and back projects which might bring in a profit as fund raisers.

The library improvement fund also is designed to attract other money as a city guarantee of interest or participation in projects such as the county might fund.

A suggestion for a \$23,000 contingency fund was set aside, with the council leaving the balance of the funds for later disposition.

Whether or not there had been tongue-in-cheek in suggesting funds for the community organizations, the notification by the council they were under consideration brought out a number of representatives of the affected groups who generally said they could use or needed the money.

Dennis Spillane, Jaycees representative, who pointed out that Jaycee does not mean Junior Chamber of Commerce, described the many projects of benefit to the community the organization offers, and said that the City Council action in banning this year's fireworks sale had cost the Jaycees an estimated \$1,500 at least.

"We made \$1,500 to \$2,000 last year," he said.

Joan Peceimer, a 4-H Club leader, also noted that the city action had cut off her organization from expected fund support that might have raised \$800 in fireworks sales.

"Our 4-H Club serves 150 directly," she said — "a lot of youth in wholesome activity." She pointed out that this costs an average \$2 apiece, whereas Little League pays \$20 to \$30 per child.

"We could use the money," she said.

She outlined projects where supplies might be bought, such as leathercraft tools, money to raise goats which are then supplied to developing nations, and even funds for rabbit scales and sheep shears.

She noted that "Half Moon Bay and San Bruno" give their kids "fantastic support."

Joanne Berridge, a spokesman for the Belmont

soccer program, pointed out that it represents 500 children in Belmont, but said she was not for "nickle-and-dime" support but rather for placing the money, in larger sums, into long-range improvements and to fund projects already begun.

BEL. COURIER 3/30/77

# Assessments Climb in County, Belmont Jumps 17 Per Cent

By NANETTE ORMAN

Preliminary figures for San Mateo County residential property (assessments show that some areas have indeed inflated by the leaps and bounds predicted last year.

Other areas have shown a more modest increase in value, but their turns will come next year, says San Mateo County Assessor Jack Estes.

In the Central county area, Belmont showed a gain of 17.2 per cent in the assess value of property within the city limits, and San Carlos showed a 15.65 per cent increase.

Both cities were "trended," or given an estimated percentage increase, and will be reassessed next year. By contrast, San Mateo properties were reassessed, and experienced a 31.89 per cent gain.

The average rise in the county of 23.8 per cent was the greatest jump since the 1965-66 fiscal year, when a 30-per-cent gain resulted from a crash reassessment program in the county. Last year's increase was a modest 4 per cent.

Mr. Estes explained last week that property in cities which had been reassessed comparatively recently was "trended" this year, or given an estimated increase according to the inflationary trend of local real estate.

Other cities whose property was last reassessed several years ago came in for the closer scrutiny of reassessment, and they showed the most dramatic jump.

Woodside and Portola Valley, for example, last underwent reassessment in the 1974-75 and 1975-76 fiscal periods. All of Menlo Park and Atherton, by contrast, were last reassessed in the 1975-76 fiscal

year.

Cities where property was not reassessed this year will undergo reassessment next year, Mr. Estes promised.

The secured assessment roll this year so far is \$3,151,733,680, compared to a total gross assessment roll last year of \$3,019,940,240 on July 1, when unsecured property assessments were added to the total.

The final figures for the current year will be available in July, Mrs. Estes said.

"I can't see any diminishing in the way property values are increasing," Mr. Estes commented. The trend of the past few years—of 1½ to 2 per cent per month, or 15 per cent annually—is continuing, he said.

Although in theory an assessment increase should not necessarily mean an increase in the homeowner's tax bill, "historically, when the assessment goes up, the taxes go up too," Mr. Estes said.

It is for that reason, he said, that current tax reform bills are attempting to regulate the total revenues that taxing agencies can bring in, rather than the amount that they can raise per \$100 of assessed valuation.

A homeowner's property assessment is the foundation for his or her tax bill.

Each city or taxing agency sets its own tax rate, and the homeowner receives a bill in October of each year for the combined total.

Notification of property assessments will be mailed by Mr. Estes' office on April 11. A record total of 152,334 letters are expected this year.

Homeowners who believe their assessments are too high are encouraged to discuss their assessment with Mr. Estes' office. About 25 per cent of those who protest their assessment eventually obtain reductions, Mr. Estes said.

## By Belmont Council Special Meetings Set

BEL. COUR. 7/13/77  
A series of public hearings on Belmont's budget for the 1977-78 fiscal year, will continue next Tuesday night at Central School's auditorium, 525 Middle Road.

The meeting, which will be conducted by the Belmont City Council and the city's Finance Committee, starts at 7:30 p.m.

The following week, Tuesday, July 26, the Council and Finance Committee will hold a public hearing in Nesbit School's multi-purpose room, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

The hearings will discuss the preliminary budget in general, and proposed capital expenditures in particular.

In one other special meeting next week, the council will meet the Manor Building at Twin Pines Park Thursday, July 23, to discuss whether to renew the city's lease to the San Mateo County Arts Center.

The center has requested the lease be extended until 1980, and the council will begin discussing the question at 7:30 p.m.

# Belmont Approves

## Wage Increases

S.M. TIMES 8/24/77

The Belmont City Council has authorized contracts for city employes and police allowing a more than 6 per cent across-the-board increase in wages and benefits.

The council, in discussing dispersal of revenue-sharing funds (about \$140,000 of new and unexpended funds are expected to be available) added a number of organizations to its list of subsidized groups Monday night after considerable audience input. The matter will be decided Sept. 12.

New councilman John McInerney was sworn in. McInerney did not come up with any "No" votes, and voted with the majority. However, Councilwoman Pam Ketcham several times voted against the majority.

The council left to the city Planning Commission action on a request from the San Mateo County Arts Council for a lease extension on the Twin Pines manor building through Sept. 30, 1980. The commission also will consider at its Aug. 29 meeting a city application for a use permit for Rebec Hall as a Twin Pines Art Center.

The police and city employe contracts are retroactive to July 1.

City employes won a

two-year contract. The first year brings a 6.6 per cent gain in benefits. The second year will add wages and benefits on a sliding scale related to the cost-of-living index and have a range of 5 per cent to 8.2 per cent.

Involved are gardeners, maintenance men and clerical assistants. The management group will next come before the council for contract authorization.

Police won a flat 6.5 per cent across-the-board increase in wages and benefits, with the Police Officers Association the negotiator.

A number of citizens joined the discussion on allocation of revenue-sharing funds. Originally, Vice

Mayor Walt Worthge asked for \$1,000 each to be allocated from the funds to the Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees) and the Belmont Arts Council.

Before the input was over, this list was expanded to include the Chamber of Commerce (currently subsidized from general funds), the Belmont Arts Council, the Jaycees, the 4-H Club, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, Bobby Soxers, Little League and soccer.

The council introduced a modified ordinance establishing a city finance commission, but requiring its nominations to come not from the finance group itself but from the Citizens Advisory Commission.

S.M. TIMES 6/22/77

# Belmont Streamlines Public Works Unit

A shakeup in the engineering and public works departments and a possible revenue shortfall in the police budget were the major topics of a joint meeting of the Belmont City Council and Finance Committee at City Hall Tuesday night.

The council did vote unanimously for Mayor Frank Gonsalves' resolution of intention to hold the present tax rate to 80 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation for the 1977-78 fiscal year.

It also directed Gonsalves to set up a schedule of budget study and public hearings for July, leading to adoption of the new document. Next Tuesday, the two groups will discuss capital improvements.

Gonsalves outlined a plan to streamline the engineering and public works departments, all under the city engineer, with the two divisions sharing inspectors and clerical help and possibly doing part of the job with part-time inspectors.

The city hasn't enough fulltime inspectors now and work is being done without inspection, Councilman William H. Hardwick said, adding, "We're being derelict in our duty."

City Manager James P. DeChaine said the city in the past two years "has had the biggest building boom in its history," overwhelming the building official and inspector, and a return to a normal load still would keep them busy.

With the retirement of Zoning Administrator Alex Hokamp at the end of this month, the city will be left with one building inspector and two public works inspectors.

Finance Commissioner Chuck Paetzke said he could find only \$11,000 in possible cuts from the \$1,036,000 police budget, but noted there is a net change of \$100,000 in it this year, including a \$40,000 cut in

drunken driving fines because of new laws controlling these cases in court.

Councilman Robert A. Jones concurred, but added that he wanted a new patrolman added who was "schooled in ordinances" so such things as illegal excavations could be better policed. He said he had been called earlier and "The same ----- called me today and said he's proceeding with his excavation without a permit. He didn't identify himself, as usual. The police department says it can monitor these things, but it doesn't.

"This is part of my caretaker philosophy," Jones said, pointing out that the high-profile public works projects of the early 1970s were past and now it's time to settle down with better administration and law enforcement.

There were indications the tax rate may go down if costs can be held. The total assessed valuation of Belmont property rose 17.2 per cent this year, worth \$140,000 to the city, according to the present tax rate.

S.M. TIMES 8/12/77

# Belmont Council Adopts Budget It Can Revise at Any Time

By LIN DAY

The Belmont City Council, in a session pronounced "bewildering" by some, Thursday night set the city tax rate at 80 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation — the same as at present — and approved a budget it can revise at any time during the year.

It also, former Councilwoman Eve Sterry charged today, violated the Brown Act by going into a huddle during a recess after a debate over a coordinating position at Twin Pines Park. She termed the long council session "weird, the most bewildering I ever saw."

The council left the budget, which totals \$4,496,578, subject to revision at any time by adding, in a resolution put out by Mayor Frank Gonsalves, the sum of \$50,000 for the Recreation Department to be used for new programs and enriching "the quality of life in Belmont."

Councilmen indicated they expect department heads to confer with them

during the next month of so on the cuts to be made.

Mrs. Sterry asserted that the Brown Act had been violated because after a wild discussion of the retention of a coordinating position for new recreation programs that ranged from eliminating the position to making it full time with extra help, Mayor Gonsalves called a recess, during which councilmen met together.

On budget matters, Mrs. Sterry said, all discussion of the council is supposed to be in the open.

The council resumed its open session with a series of quick votes that went as follows:

First, Councilman Walt Worthge successfully moved a resolution to maintain a part-time recreation coordinator at \$4,800 annually, plus \$1,000 for expenses. (This replaced a budget item for a fulltime position plus part-time assistance.)

Next he moved and obtained removal of \$7,080 from the teen-age program. This eliminated the program except for a \$1,000 city contribution, as a general fund expenditure. However, \$5,000 from revenue sharing funds was left in the program.

Next, Worthge success-

fully reduced the senior citizen program by \$5,082 (eliminating the program).

Then he won deletion of \$5,078 from a handicapped program (eliminating the program).

At that point, Councilwoman Pam Ketcham pointed out: "You have basically wiped out the community services program for this year."

Worthge then moved to reinstate \$10,000 of general fund money for recreation, which includes expenditures in the programs just cut, but is otherwise undesignated. It was to be put into administration.

"You wipe out programs, then you put them back in," Mrs. Ketcham observed.

Finally, Gonsalves, announcing that he felt Belmont "lives in an affluent society" and that "we are trying to upgrade the quality of living here," moved to adopt an 80-cent tax rate and the budget and to include a sum of \$50,000 for recreation additionally, which would come from tax cuts in the budget.

Worthge pointed out that he wanted to say where the cuts would be and requested that city staff

respond to the council on them.

Assistant City Administrator Allen Beck pointed out that in a cut of expenditures, it must be remembered that they have been going on for a month and 10 days, and that nearly all general fund money goes into operating programs.

The total revenue increase in property taxes from the city general fund and fire district came to \$458,440, it was indicated.

City Manager James P. DeChaine, in his budget message, said that the proposed operating budget for the city reflected an increase of 5.06 per cent over last year's budget, and that the Belmont Fire District budget showed an increase of 8.02 per cent.

He noted that the percentage increases came after \$275,000 had been deleted from departmental requests.

He also noted that there had been dramatic rises in electricity, natural gas and gasoline costs, overtaking city attempts to cut usage.

The cost of living rose 6.5 per cent, he said while assessed valuation in the city rose 21 per cent and in the Fire District 19 per cent this year.

# Assessment Rate Stays Same, But Residents Will Pay More

BELMONT COURIER 8/11/77

The Belmont City Council voted Thursday night to maintain the same tax rate for fiscal year 1977-78, resulting in higher tax expenditures by virtually all Belmont property owners.

The council voted to maintain a tax rate of \$.80 per \$100 of assessed property valuation. Since assessed property values were raised by 22.3 per cent in the past year, City Finance Director Allen Beck estimates that Belmont taxpayers will pay roughly \$158,000 more than they did last year.

The total operating budget adopted by the council, including the fire district budget of \$1,324,838 but not including expenditures on capital

improvements, is \$4,607,334, an increase of \$386,559 over last year's budget.

The capital improvements budget was set at \$5,189,057, bringing total expenditures for 1977-78 to \$5,189,057, nearly half a million dollars less than last year's total of \$5,651,297. Beck said the overall reduction was

because the city was undertaking no capital improvement program to rival last year's Upper Ralston project.

That project cost the city \$800,000.

## NO NEW SPENDING

Despite the increase in the operating budget, Beck said the city undertook no new major projects, blaming increased costs largely on state mandated programs which force local expenditures upwards.

Chief among the increases were insurance costs, which rose \$20,000 over last year; worker's compensation, which rose by \$20-25,000; and the specter of paying unemployment insurance.

In the past cities have been exempted from paying for unemployment insurance for their employees, but as of January 1, Belmont, barring an overturning of the regulation in court, will have to spend over \$30,000 in the first half of 1978 alone, according to Beck.

Beck called the extent of state mandated increases unusually large. "It's atypical because the in-

creases are significant in areas where we have no control," said Beck, who called the increases "much more than in the past."

Beck also said that the city came through its first year of program budgeting, which breaks down costs into individual programs rather than simply into material and salary costs, with a relatively small amount of confusion.

"The council has come a long way since we began program budgeting last November," he added. In addition, Beck said, "the Finance Committee has already begun to look on it as a significant tool to achieve good management data in terms of next year's budget."

By focusing on the costs of specific programs, the budgeting system is designed to provide more insightful data on whether a program is desirable and whether it is being run as efficiently as comparable programs in other cities.



# New Park Fund Delays

BEL. COURIER 8/17/77

The Belmont City Council voted to keep the same tax rate for the coming fiscal year, but a belated plan to create a new fund for the Park and Leisure Services Dept. has delayed the city's approval of a final budget for 1977-78.

The council maintained its tax rate of \$.80 per \$100 of assessed property valuation, but it delayed a vote on final budgets for the city's individual departments, after voting to create a new \$50,000 fund to serve as a nucleus for future improvements for their city's park and recreational facilities.

Because the \$50,000 was taken from the general fund, the council was forced to delay final budget approval until \$50,000 in cuts can be made in other areas. The council directed the city staff to examine areas where the cuts can be made and report back to the council.

## WISDOM QUESTIONED

The action came after city Finance Director Allen Beck

questioned the wisdom of putting the staff in charge of designating areas to be cut, telling Mayor Frank Gonsalves, who proposed the fund, that it was the council's job to set budget policy and not the staff's. After some clarification, the council directed Beck to simply draw up possible alternatives for cost-cutting.

Beck said after the meeting that the proposal probably should have been put forward earlier in the budget process.

"I think it should have come up a long time ago," said Beck. "Pam Ketcham said that if this is the way we were going to deal with it, we might as well go back to line-item budgeting, and I really agree," he remarked.

Beck added that his concern with the council's initial directive was that he felt the council was telling the staff to recommend specific programs for reduction or elimination. "That has the effect of having the staff

# Budget Approval

setting policy, which is not a common situation, to say the least," he said.

## RELUCTANCE 'UNDERSTANDABLE'

Gonsalves called Beck's reluctance to re-examine staff's budget recommendations understandable. "They've spent a lot of time on this thing, and then we come along and tell them to cut \$50,000 more," he noted.

He also defended the late introduction of his motion, saying the council had been too swamped to consider it earlier.

Gonsalves said he is confident the cuts will be managed without a major trauma. "I know it can be done; I don't know exactly how," Gonsalves said.

Despite the last-minute confusion created by the council action's inception, Gonsalves said he is extremely happy to have established a fund to improve park facilities. Noting that it had been a goal of his ever since he had been

elected to the council, Gonsalves said he would have actually preferred the fund to be even bigger.

He said he hopes the fund, which will be considered for such uses as a new soccer field or possibly a city swimming pool, will be augmented in future years. "If you added \$75,000 or \$100,000 every year, then after four years, you'd have close to \$500,000," he said.

## FUTURE VOTES EASIER

In addition, Gonsalves said he felt last Thursday's vote will make future additions to the fund easier. "If the council sees that finding \$50,000 didn't cause an undue burden, it should be much easier next year," he commented.

Beck, however, questioned just how easy it will be to make the cuts this year. "We've done a lot of soul searching about this. I'd say this is the tightest budget I've

(Continued on page 3)

# —Budget Approval Delayed—

(Continued from page 1)

seen since I've been with the city," Beck remarked.

Beck feels the budget has been so reduced that it is no longer feasible to think in terms of cutting fat without reducing services.

"If I'd thought there were a lot of things in the budget to cut out without drawing unwholesome fire, I would have suggested it," said Beck.

One area that is likely to be considered for a possible reduction is that of fees for City Attorney Ken Dickerson, whose hourly rate for outside litigation was boosted by the council Thursday night to \$65 per hour.

Currently, \$6,000 for litigation, which would pay for 90 hours at the new rate, but Beck noted that if Belmont should get entangled in any serious litigation in the coming fiscal year, the total could run higher.

# City Buys Computer System

*Bel. Cour. 7/10/77*

The Belmont City Council voted last Tuesday night to spend \$106,000 to install a new data processing system for the city, despite some opposition.

The council authorized the expenditure of \$85,000 for an on-line computer system from Digital Equipment Co. The council also appropriated \$21,000 to G&L Systems, Inc. to set up the program.

The unanimous votes,

with Councilman William Hardwick absent, came after arguments from Gary Feierbach that the system was too expensive and too sophisticated for the city's needs.

Feierbach complained that the city had only taken bids on on-line systems, arguing that it should have an off-line system, which uses components called floppy disks.

Such disks are faster and cheaper than the ones used by the system purchased by the city, but are thought to be less reliable.

Feierbach suggested that a floppy disk system

would require only one terminal. A representative from the computer system to be set up responded that two floppy disks would be needed for the city payroll alone and that 110 would be needed to equal two of the disks offered by her company.

City Finance Director, who had argued that the new system was needed for the city to successfully switch to program budgeting this year.

Under the program budgeting system, the city will attempt to evaluate the cost versus output of each

program rather than simply tallying up the costs of salaries and materials used by the city, as has been done in the past.

City Manager Jim DeChaine estimates that the new system requires

three times as many variables to be evaluated as the old budgeting method.

Beck also urged the council to take immediate action, arguing that serious delays would result

if the council waited until the next fiscal year started before ordering the proposed system.

Finance Committee Chairman Paul Louie asked the council to wait until it could determine the city's exact needs, as well as the viability of such other possibilities as time-sharing.

Beck told Louie, however, that time-sharing would cost Belmont at least \$2,000 a month.

In other actions, the council heard an appeal from the Friends of the Library in its bid to get more county funds for the Belmont branch.

Meg Buckley, speaking for the president of the Friends, urged council members to attend a

budget hearing scheduled by the County Board of Supervisors for July 22. She expressed confidence that council support would be invaluable.

Bobbie Mazas read a letter from Christine Scott, president of the Friends, thanking the council for its past support.

# Belmont, SC

## In Clash Over Hallmark

S.M. TIMES 10/20/77

government had made it clear that their attitude was "We will see you in court."

At one point, when Belmont City Attorney Ken Dickerson told San Carlos Mayor James Kilburg "If you will be quiet I will explain it to you," Kilburg rapped and rapped for order while San Carlos Police Chief Owen McGuigan raised a cautioning hand and the audience seethed.

One Belmont woman was warned she might be ejected and left the chamber, only to return to apologize but to add that she was not used to "this kind of situation."

The meeting opened quietly enough with the San Carlos staff explaining that historically, when Hallmark Drive and Crestview Drive were planned, both cities had contemplated

Belmont residents packed San Carlos City Hall council chambers Wednesday night in a tension-filled "joint session" that drew the battle lines firmly between the cities on the issue of a Hallmark Drive barrier between Belmont and San Carlos.

The residents lined the walls and were six deep in the chamber. A show of hands showed that more than 90 percent of the audience was from Belmont.

It may not have helped, either, that San Carlos made no special seating provisions for the Belmont City Council, which like San Carlos was conducting an official meeting, and merely allowed the Belmont councilmen, mayor, vice mayor and city attorney and clerk to find whatever seats they could in the audience. Before the meeting was

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# Belmont, San Carlos Feud

(Continued from Page 1) making a through, connecting street at the Hallmark intersection with the city line, and that the county had such plans.

Later, a barrier was erected during construction, and was maintained by Belmont after completion of Hallmark, the city's largest subdivision. Now Belmont wants to make the barrier permanent and create a giant cul de sac at Hallmark, with a single traffic entrance, it developed.

San Carlos police and fire leaders explained the need for access for "automatic aid" in cases of fire and police calls.

Belmont residents and others accused San Carlos of attempting to use a small, residential street as a main thoroughfare for its residents to reach Highway 280.

They said the cul de sac concept had resulted in extremely low crime rates in Hallmark and that they could only lose by a through street being put in.

As to fires, they pointed out that Belmont has a fire station nearby whereas San Carlos has none, and that the benefit is all one way.

After San Carlos officials had wondered if Belmont really was united on this or whether only one of its six homeowner associations was involved, leaders of several Belmont homeowner associations rose to take strong positions on the issue — all against San Carlos.

Vice Mayor Walt Worthge of Belmont came close to issuing an ultimatum to San Carlos when he told that council:

"Before a decision is made, I hope you discuss with your attorney the chance of winning a suit. Before we spend a lot of taxpayers' dollars you should realize it is a suit you cannot win."

Worthge was referring to the action before the San Carlos council which had brought out the Belmont response — a condemnation proceeding which would allow it to purchase 500 feet of Belmont land (where the street barrier is located).

He introduced Belmont City Attorney Dickerson, who after a brief appearance by Councilman William Hardwick of Belmont returned to explain the legal position as he saw it:

To adopt a resolution of necessity to condemn 500 feet or so in Belmont, Dickerson said, San Carlos must

prove it is required by the public interest and necessity, that it is for the greatest public good and the least private injury, and that the property involved is necessary.

The staff reports of San Carlos express concern, he said, but the issues mentioned are not relevant. There was no reason, for example, he said, that emergency access could not be provided for that purpose. (Later, Belmont staff showed that one permanent barrier could be swung open in emergency.)

Public necessity does not require Hallmark Drive, he said.

"If you want to condemn property outside your city to get to 280, why not use the watershed?" he asked.

He pointed out that the San Carlos staff reports had not contained any study of the number of vehicles that would use the road, that there was no environmental impact study, and that the street was not built as a thoroughfare.

It was when he pointed out that he would advise his city to defend against the condemnation proceeding that Mayor Kilburg sharply asked if that meant Belmont "would take legal recourse."

A moment later, after Dickerson said, "I do not

understand," Kilburg said he wanted no evasion.

"I am not trying to evade," said Dickerson. "If you will be quiet — and I resent your inference I am trying to evade — I will explain it to you."

When Belmont residents spoke, they were accusatory: Peter Wolf declared that the matter has nothing to do with emergency access.

Wolf said "It has to do with running traffic through the Hallmark area. My viewpoint is that the San Carlos resident wants to eliminate a 10-minute inconvenience that will mean a steady stream of traffic every hour through Hallmark."

Joanne Berry, president of the Belmont Heights Homeowners Association, declared "a great number of my 600 council constituents are here to present their objections. We are a proud association. We do not wish your (San Carlos) protection. We like our police protection. We would resent your saying we needed yours."

Belmont resident Bob

Hoffman said, "I look around at this beautiful Mahal that is your city hall. If you can afford city hall like this, you can afford to put another fire station in the hills."

"We in Belmont have a fire station," he pointed out.

Summing things up Mayor Kilburg moved to put off a decision on the condemnation until the next council meeting in San Carlos.

He said he wanted to look into the legal aspects brought up.

Calderhead agreed. "We know the area will be developed," he said, referring to the Lincoln Properties project currently in court. "We know there will be 397 new units or less. That will certainly generate traffic."

The matter was then postponed and the meeting adjourned.

So large was the crowd that McGuigan set up police traffic patrols with flares at the corners to move it out from city hall

# It's Tax Bill Time Again

*BEL. COOP. 10/19/77*  
By NANETTE ORMAN

It's tax bill time again. San Mateo County Tax Collector Ross Conti's office mailed a total of 187,766 bills to county residents last Friday informing them of the grand totals they owe to a number of different taxing agencies.

Although the county mails the bills only about 20 per cent of the total tax take stays with the county, with the balance being divided among schools, fire protection districts, sanitary systems and other agencies.

"I expect a number of taxpayers to be surprised by the size of the bills," Mr. Conti said.

As a result of steep assessment increases on residential properties in the county this year, tax rates (the amount charged per \$100 of assessed valuation) have gone down in all cities but tax totals have increased everywhere with the exception of Colma, San Bruno and Millbrae.

This year's total tax take of \$279,984,872 represents an increase of \$29.4 million over last year's take, Mr. Conti said.

Using a mythical home which was worth \$65,000 before reassessments were done this year, here is how Mr. Conti's office calculated homeowners would be affected in the south county:

—Atherton: A tax bill increase of \$99.96, although the average tax rate dropped from \$9.52 to \$8.45. Homes were revalued upwards an average of 20.82 per cent.

—Belmont: A tax bill increase of \$65.48, although the average tax rate dropped from \$10.22 to \$8.82. Homes were boosted in value an average of 20.99 per cent.

—San Carlos: a tax bill increase of \$81.88, although the average tax rate dropped from \$8.62 to \$7.79. Homes in this community rose in value an average of \$17.90 per cent.

—Menlo park: A tax bill increase of \$158.20, although the average tax rate dropped from \$9.31 to \$8.18. In Menlo park, where homes were reassessed during 1976-77, values rose an average of 27.15 per cent.

—Woodside: A tax bill increase of \$193.13, although the average tax rate dropped from \$9.66 to \$8.20. Homes here were also reassessed last year, and rose in value an average of 50.87 per cent.

—Portola Valley: A tax bill increase of \$372.56, although the average tax rate dropped from \$10.27 to \$8.40. The homes here, also reassessed, rose in value an average of 52.85 per cent.

—East Palo Alto: A tax bill increase of \$180.93, although the average tax rate dropped from \$12.59 to \$10.89. Homes here rose an average of 27.07 per cent in value.

This mythical \$65,000 home is not typical in many communities such as Woodside or East Palo Alto, however, Mr. Conti noted, so that increases in those communities may be expected to be either considerably more or considerably less.

Cities in which homes were not reassessed by careful figuring this year will be reassessed next year, Mr. Conti said. In the meantime, they have been "trended" by the assessor's office—that is, revised upward using the general inflation rate.

Senior citizens living on fixed incomes will get a real break this year, Mr. Conti said, because the state legislature did approve a deferred payment plan for those over 62, although no general property tax relief measure passed.

Under the provisions of AB 1070, seniors may postpone payment of their property taxes until their death or sale of the property, by proper application to the state franchise tax board.

The filing period, which extends through Jan. 31,

1978, may be used by those who meet the following qualifications:

—All owners except a spouse must live in the home and be 62 as of Dec. 31, 1976.

—During 1976 the combined income of household members may not exceed \$20,000.

—The home must be receiving a homeowners' property tax exemption and a separate tax bill.

—Recorded liens, mortgages or loans against the home cannot amount to more than 80 per cent of its value.

A 7 per cent interest charge on the amount of taxes is payable on property with taxes postponed under the plan.

Tax bills are payable in two installments. The first must be paid by Dec. 12, and the second by April 10, 1978.

## City Receives Funds

*BEL. COOP. 12/1/77*  
Belmont has received \$52,000 from the Federal Government to be spent on Housing and Community Development after June 1978.

Neal Martin, city planner, would like as much public input as possible on how best to spend this money. "It has got to be spent on projects

which will benefit the moderate to lower income families.— those who are in the \$13,600 per family of four income bracket," said Martin.

Martin would like to receive suggestions and encourages citizens to forward their ideas to City Hall.

# Private Groups Don't Get Revenue Money

*BEL. COVR. 9/14/77*

Belmont Resident Floyd Sampson found Monday night that sometimes a joke can be taken seriously.

Sampson had jokingly suggested in August that the Belmont Bobby Sox, 4-H, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts be considered for a share of over \$140,000 in federal revenue-sharing money to illustrate his point that the money shouldn't be given out to private groups, but the joke triggered serious requests for money from at least four groups at Monday night's council meeting.

The city council, ultimately decided to give none of the revenue-sharing money to the groups listed by Sampson, but not before listening to numerous appeals for a share of the money, which is diverted back to the city each year from the federal treasury.

## OVERWHELMED

Response from private organizations included Joan Peceimer of Belmont 4-H. Saying she was "overwhelmed that someone saw our need," she said that although 4-H was a private organization, anybody could join. She added that it serves 100-150 individuals and provides wholesome activities for teenagers.

Ms. Peceimer complained "Belmont doesn't support their kids in their activities half as much as Half Moon Bay or San Bruno."

She noted that the

money—her group was listed as requesting \$1,000—would be especially valuable this year, since it lost a large portion of its normal income when the sale of fireworks was banned earlier this year.

## JAYCEE APPEAL

Other concrete requests for money from private groups included an appeal from Dennis Splain of the Belmont Jaycees, whose placement on the original list of potential recipients touched off Sampson's inclusion of various other groups and from Karen Johnson of the Belmont Search and Rescue.

Splain said the money would help make up for revenue lost by the fireworks ban, and that it would be used strictly for community activities, while Johnson said her group's request of \$1,000 was needed to repair radio equipment.

Not all the groups included on the list asked for small donations.

Speaking for the Belmont Heights Civic Association and the Amerivan Youth Soccer Organization, JoAnn Berridge criticized what she termed piecemeal expenditures, saying that as much federal money as possible should be pooled together for larger projects.

"Soccer would rather see the proposed revenue-sharing money go to other priorities like a pool, library, field, or the maintenance of the existing school fields," she said.

## FIELDS NEEDED

Carol Dittman of Belmont Bobby Sox echoed Berridge's request, saying that money was desperately needed for adequate playing fields.

"I am here for a field

that children can play on. We are the only city on the peninsula that doesn't have a lighted field," she said.

After hearing the long list of comments from the groups, the council finally took no action on giving money to any of them, instead choosing to dole out strictly to non-private groups and projects, with the exception of \$1,500 to the Belmont Park Boosters.

The council's appropriations totaled \$96,837.

The largest sums went to reconstructing the Twin Pines Entrance, \$20,000; data processing, \$25,000; the library improvement fund, \$25,000; Police communication equipment, \$12,037; and the Whole Earth program, \$10,000.

The council actions left \$43,382 unspent.

## And Gets Tongue Lashing

# Council Opens Revenue-

# Sharing Hearings

BEL. COUR. 8/24/77

The Belmont City Council absorbed several tongue lashings Monday as it set out to allocate federal revenue-sharing funds, set up a hearing for use permit for the Twin Pine Art Center at Rebec Hall, and moved the Finance Committee one step closer to its goal of being a commission.

The council, in the first stage of its hearings on what to do with \$140,495 in revenue sharing money, got itself embroiled in a series of heated comments when Councilman Walt Worthge, placed the Belmont Jaycees and the Belmont Arts Council on the list of groups and projects to be considered in September for disbursement of the money.

### INCLUSION PROTESTED

Lyda Paetzke, wife of Finance Committee member Chuck Paetzke, protested the inclusion of the two groups on the list. "I would strenuously object giving money to the Belmont Jaycees and the Belmont Arts Council. They are private organizations and have nothing to do with city government," she said.

Floyd Sampson, president of the Plateau-Skymont Homeowners Association, followed Mrs. Paetzke's lead. "Since we're filling out the Sears and Roebuck wish list, we shouldn't stop right there," he commented. Sampson added sarcastically that the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts,

Bobby Sox, and Belmont 4-H be included for consideration.

Mrs. Paetzke put in a tongue-in-cheek request for \$500 for herself in federal money. "I'm not greedy," she averred.

Councilman Worthge explained that he was not declaring his support for money for either organization, but that it was required by law, if the Jaycees and Arts Council were to have any chance when the Council holds its next hearing on Sept. 12, for them to be included on the list Monday night.

### CHANCE FOR HEARING

"We're just giving them a chance to have their case heard," Worthge noted.

He explained after the meeting that the Jaycees had contacted him about receiving federal funds after the group lost one of its major sources of annual revenue when the city banned the sale and use of fireworks last May. Worthge added the name of the Arts Council, he said, because the group had received money last year and he thought they might want to reapply.

The hearing did produce one serious request that had not been placed on the original list prepared before the meeting. Takis Vourvoulis proposed that \$1000 be set aside to plant hedges between the corporation yard and the Holiday Inn.

The council found itself in another heated argument when Worthge moved that the city apply for a use permit on behalf of the 33 artists with studios at Rebec Hall in the Twin Pines Park.

### PROCESS CRITICISED

Rose Ozwirck, who has heavily criticised the city's decision to rent any of the park's buildings to artists' organizations, termed the process suggested by Worthge meaningless. "The City Council is sending this to the Planning Commission, but if the Planning Commission rejects it, it goes back to the City Council. It doesn't make sense," she complained.

Worthge explained that he felt a city application for a use permit for the art center, although deemed legally unnecessary by City Attorney Ken Dickerson, was the fairest way to set up a public hearing on the art center. Worthge said that a hearing could clarify such questions as use of the parking facilities at Twin Pines and the restrictions on such practices as welding that aren't covered currently.

In other actions, the council held its first reading of an ordinance that will convert the Finance Committee into a full-fledged commission. A decision was put off on whether to allow the proposed commission to nominate its own replacements, subject to council approval, when vacancies occurred until the council could determine whether the Citizens' Advisory Committee wished to interview and recommend candidates for vacant positions.

The committee is responsible for making such nominations to the city council for the city's other boards and commissions.

The council also passed an ordinance allowing the Chief Building Official to approve excavation and hauling permits of less than 550 cubic yards for individual homes. The previous limit of 200 cubic yards in force before the council voted an emergency ordinance regulating building in the San Juan area earlier this summer, had in effect forced all applicants for new homes in the area to get approval directly from the Planning Commission and City Council.