

BELMONT TAXES
REDWOOD CITY TRIBUNE
MAY - AUG. 1970

Belmont Residents' Taxes May Increase

MAY 8 1970

By KEN ROWE
Tribune Staff Writer

Belmont property owners will be asked to pay an 11-cent tax rate increase to support what remains essentially an austerity budget for 1970-71, according to a preliminary budget analysis presented last night to city councilmen.

City manager Art Brandow told councilmen at a study session that an increase of "at least" 11 cents on the tax rate, from 65 to 76 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation, will be necessary to "maintain" the present level of services offered by the city.

The councilmen examined "budget forecasts" presented by Brandow. A preliminary budget is yet to be presented. For all practical purposes, councilmen must act on the budget and tax rate before Aug. 20.

Brandow said the 11-cent increase would yield an additional \$77,000 in revenues.

For the owner of a \$36,000 home, assessed at \$9,000, the 11-cent hike would mean an increase of \$6.60, from \$55.50 to \$62.10, on his property tax bill if he has no exemptions.

Brandow noted the city reduced its tax rate by four cents last year. He declined to comment today when asked by the Tribune if he felt the four-cent reduction last year was

an artificial one. He did say, however, that the four cents would be "made up" in this year's 11-cent boost.

Last night, Councilmen Joseph Zucca said the city's tax rate has represented only six per cent of the local property tax, with fire, school and county district taxes taking the rest.

Brandow said the major variable which could affect the tax situation is the negotiation of salaries.

By his request, Brandow said, departmental budget requests do not contain wage increase packages. He said \$55,000 has been placed in a contingency fund for council use in salary negotiations.

Excluding salary increases, the police department budget request is up \$14,052, from \$367,036 to \$381,088.

Brandow today said of the police budget request, "a great deal of it is being red-lined, it just has to be, to stay within these (austerity) guidelines."

Police salary negotiations will be handled this year by

the Belmont Policemen's Association, representing 26 of the 27 Belmont policemen below the rank of lieutenant.

Despite the aura of austerity, the new budget will include architectural fees for planning of a new police station.

On Monday night, the councilmen are expected to discuss the Belmont Teen Center's plea for financial aid (or even a complete city takeover of the program), as well as the reaction of the Belmont Recreation and Parks Department to the idea.

Without some kind of city support, the teen center at Ralston Avenue and Alameda de las Pulgas appears doomed to extinction, according to its volunteer supporters.

(OVER)

18-Cent Tax Increase In Belmont City Budget

JUN 24 1970

Belmont taxpayers, having enjoyed the luxury of a four-cent tax rate reduction this year, will have to dredge up an extra 18 cents in 1970-71 if a proposed budget by City Manager Art Brandow is adopted without substantial change.

The new budget, released yesterday totals \$1,414,517, up \$98,011 from the 1969-70 figure.

The 18-cent tax rate boost, from 65 to 83 cents, is required to restore operating reserves which dwindled because of this year's reduction, according to Brandow. Some critics in the community termed last year's reduction in the tax rate "artificial."

To the owner of a \$36,000 home, evaluated without exemptions at \$9,000, the 83-cent rate per \$100 of assessed valuation will mean a tax bill of \$74.70, an increase of \$13.50 over what the same property owner is paying in 1969-70.

Brandow's proposed budget, which he terms "balanced,"

includes \$60,000 for possible salary and benefit increases, to allow a 7.7 per cent increase in the city's \$779,592 annual payroll.

The budget proposes the creation of a finance director's

position, combined with the vacant assistant city manager's post, a move Brandow terms "vital to achieve financial coordination" and to relieve him of certain time-consuming duties.

BELMONT TAXES
REDWOOD CITY TRIBUNE
AUG. 1970

Belmont Tax Rate Official: Up 11 Cents

AUG 25 1970

By KEN ROWE
Tribune Staff Writer

After nearly two months of trimming and paring, Belmont councilmen last night unanimously adopted a \$1.2-million budget calling for a tax rate increase of 11 cents.

The tax rate hike, from 65 to 76 cents per \$100 assessed valuation, is seven cents lower than the increase (to 83 cents) recommended by the city manager in conjunction with a \$1.4-million budget proposed in early May.

For the owner of a \$36,000 home, assessed at \$9,000, without exemptions, the 11-cent hike will mean an increase of

\$6.60, from \$55.50 to \$62.10, on his tax bill.

The 76-cent overall rate comprises rates of 66 cents for the general fund, nine cents for parks and recreation, and one cent for bond redemption.

The city tax rate does not cover fire protection services. The Belmont Fire Protection District's 1970-71 rate has been set at 83 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation, an increase of six cents. It also does not cover schools and some other services, also charged by other districts.

Most expenditure reductions and deletions made in budgeting sessions over the past several weeks have been relatively minor, but, combined

with several upward revisions of estimated revenue figures, the changes reduced the budget from \$1.4 to \$1.2-million.

Brandow said the city's total estimated revenues amount to \$1,641,717, with \$163,000 cash on hand.

In adopting an employe compensation plan last night, the councilmen agreed to apply a 7.5 per cent wage hike, negotiated with the Belmont Police Officers Association, to all policemen in the city, including the chief, deputy chief, lieutenants, and the one patrolman who has refused to join BPOA.

In last-minute plumping and slenderizing of the budget, councilmen voted to add \$550

to buy seven pump-shotguns for the police; knocked an estimated two cents off the tax rate by reducing the contingency fund by \$12,000; voted an extra \$3,100 to the Chamber of Commerce; and deleted \$400 revenue to kill a hike in the league entry fees for the city's adult softball program.

The budget includes \$15,916 salary for an assistant city manager-finance director, and the mayor was authorized last night to begin recruitment procedures to fill the position.

In other financial action last night, Brandow announced low bid on \$500,000 worth of sewer bonds, received yesterday from Security Pacific National Bank at 6.03 per cent interest

over 25 years. Councilmen, pleased with what experts considered a very low-interest bid, unanimously awarded the sale to Security Pacific.

BELMONT TAXES
REDWOOD CITY TRIBUNE
JUNE - AUG. 1971

Belmont JUN 15 1971 Tax Rate Same ⁽²⁾

By OTTO TALLENT

Belmont's City Council last night adopted a budget for 1971-72 of almost \$5-million, with only three members of the audience making any comment whatsoever.

City Manager James DeChaine expects the 76-cents per \$100 assessed valuation tax rate to remain unchanged.

The budget as adopted unanimously with amendments totals \$4,927,371. Of this amount, \$3,327,200 — or 68 per cent of the total budget — is for capital improvements.

Councilman Edward D. Valerga said he had been seeking a balanced budget since he has been on the council "but I haven't gotten it."

Councilman Charles Ketcham said the budget "is a masterful attempt to get off the ground."

Mayor Robert A. Jones, in commending City Manager DeChaine on the format of the budget, said "we not only know where we are going next year but we have a five-year capital improvements plan."

Councilman Joseph Zucca moved for the adoption of the budget.

Robert De Laurentis successfully argued an item for an Ocean-to-Bay marathon foot race was misplaced and should be included in the Chamber of Commerce budget. The \$375 item was deleted.

About 40 persons were in the audience when the budget was adopted.

In a message to the council, DeChaine stated "I am pleased to say that this is a balanced budget — at least to the extent that projected expenditures can be met without an increase in property taxes

— as long as our existing but limited reserves are used to meet these expenditures."

"A projected reduction in general fund reserves of \$152,831 is reflected to balance the proposed budget," DeChaine said. "Of this amount, approximately \$95,000 in property tax revenue has been transferred to the sewer fund for bond redemption in lieu of the proposed increase in sewer service fees."

The council has decided not to increase the sewer service fees.

Before submitting the proposed budget to the council, the city manager had trimmed departmental requests by approximately \$147,900. Of this, \$49,526 resulted from manpower request reductions.

The city manager pointed out that the bulk of capital improvements is financed by outside sources of revenue — county, state, federal and other agencies. Outside sources will contribute \$2,074,400.

First capital improvements project is the \$2.5-million Ralston Avenue-overpass project scheduled to get underway in March or April of 1972.

DeChaine said the proposed overpass structure to be constructed over El Camino Real, the Southern Pacific railroad tracks and Old County Road will greatly improve traffic safety and circulation and will serve as a major impetus for the redevelopment of the central business area.

The second major project provides for the installation of Phase I trunk sewer improvements authorized and financed by a sewer bond issue approved by the voters in 1969. This project will provide for \$600,000 sewer trunk line improvements along certain streets abutting Ralston Avenue, as well as a main line on the east side of Bayshore Freeway, connecting the whole sewer system to the joint sewage treatment plant operated jointly by Belmont and San Carlos.

The third major project envisions the widening of Ralston Avenue between Cipriani Boulevard and Hallmark Drive, costing \$360,000.

(over)

Belmont Keeps Same Tax Rate

AUG 1 1 1971
Belmont City Council this week voted to hold the line on the property tax rate for fiscal 1971-72, again establishing a rate of 76 cents per \$100 taxable valuation.

Although San Mateo County assessed valuation figures released last week are up, the figure for Belmont is lower than originally had been estimated. Belmont's anticipated assessed (taxable) valuation was \$60,614,700, whereas the actual is \$59,907,088, a reduction of \$707,612.

This will mean the city will receive \$7,076 less than had been anticipated in the budget. The decrease is equal to 1.1442 cents on the tax rate. City

Manager James P. DeChaine said the councilmen felt this was the year to hold the line on the tax rate in view of economic conditions. The reduction will be absorbed from existing reserves.

Belmont's budget for 1971-72 totals \$4,927,371. Of this amount, \$3,327,200 — or 68 per cent of the total budget — is for capital improvements. Outside sources — county, state, federal and other agencies — will contribute \$2,074,400.

The tax rate was predicted following a public hearing on the budget June 14.

BELMONT TAXES
REDWOOD CITY TRIBUNE
AUG. 29, 1972

Belmont AUG 29 1972 tax cut: 5 cents

By OTTO TALLENT

Belmont taxpayers last night received a surprise tax rate reduction when the City Council adopted a tax rate of 71 cents—down five cents from the predicted 76 cents per \$100 assessed valuation.

At the same time the council adopted its revised budget for 1972-73 totaling \$3,118,000.

The city was able to reduce its tax rate from the 76 cents which has been in effect the past two fiscal years because the total assessed (taxable) valuation for Belmont came to \$69,229,699 in figures released this month. The estimated as-

(Please Turn to Pg. 2, Col. 7)

(Continued from Page 1)

essed valuation had been \$63,192,972.

Before the revised figure came from the county, City Manager James P. DeChaine had estimated the 1972-73 tax rate would remain at 76 cents. The reduction will amount to about \$5 per home with a value of \$40,000, DeChaine said. The owner of a home valued at \$40,000 will pay \$71 as the city's share of property tax.

Belmont residents pay a separate tax for fire protection.

The city will receive \$36,875 less at the 71-cent tax rate than if it had set the rate at 76 cents.

Councilman Robert A. Jones said the increase in assessed valuation for Belmont came mostly from new apartment developments.

Councilman Ferdinand Giuliani indicated it might have been wise to keep the tax rate at 76 cents as a hedge against inflation and for landscaping, sidewalks and other improvements, but he voted with the other councilmen in favor of the 71-cent rate.

Councilmen last night earmarked \$50,000 from unappropriated reserves for improve-

ments in police facilities and equipment.

Councilman Charles Ketcham questioned the need for purchasing eight new radios, but they were left in the budget after DeChaine argued for the need for two-way communications.

Five study sessions were held on the budget, but the final figure is not far from the preliminary figure of \$3,080,073.

Belmont council has to adopt budget soon

AUG 25 1973

Belmont's city council is under the gun to adopt its 1973-1974 fiscal year budget of approximately \$4 million Monday night so the city's tax rate can be established.

The tax rate for 1972-1973 was 71 cents per \$100 assessed valuation. The rate may go up to 75 cents, to cover a portion of the Twin Pines bond interest expense.

Belmont residents last November voted to purchase 17.12 acres of Twin Pines property for park and open space.

Councilmen at their Aug. 13 meeting decided to include \$350,000 in the city's new fiscal budget to purchase an additional 2.5 acres of Twin Pines property. Purchase would depend upon satisfactory negotiations between the city and owners of the property.

Of the \$350,000 set up in the budget, \$225,000 is from revenue sharing funds and \$125,000 is from the general fund.

The council will discuss a

proposed ordinance prohibiting conduct that would produce noise levels which exceed specified standards. It also will discuss a request by the Homeview Association for a crosswalk at Elmer Street and Ralston Avenue.

The council meeting will be at 8 p.m. Monday at the Belmont City Hall, 1365 Fifth Ave. It will be preceded by a study session at 7 p.m.

Surprise Belmont tax cut

AUG 28 1973

By OTTO TALLENT

Taxpayers in Belmont last night received a surprise tax rate cut of 6.5 cents from the projected rate of 75 cents for the 1973-74 fiscal year.

The Belmont City Council adopted a budget totaling \$4,034,375, and set the tax rate at 68.5 cents per \$100 assessed valuation. The rate for 1972-73 was 71 cents, down five cents from the previous two years.

The savings from the projected rate amounts to \$6.50 for the owner of a \$40,000 home.

Belmont's city budget and tax rate do not include fire protection for water service.

City Manager James P. DeChaine had projected the tax rate at 75 cents. However, Councilman Robert A. Jones asked his fellow councilmen to "see if we can't lower the tax rate." He wanted to pare back to offset the increased tax rate of the Belmont Elementary School District.

The school district's tax rate tentatively was boosted four cents from last year, from \$3.62 to \$3.66. The rate was to be set officially today.

Councilman Eugene P. Sullivan moved to set the tax rate at 61 cents. Councilman Jones seconded the motion to get the matter on the floor for discussion. Vice Mayor Ferdinand Giuliani said he did not see how the council could pos-

(Continued from Page 1)

sibly set a tax rate with such quick figuring.

Mayor Edward D. Vallerga called for a "five-minute recess" which stretched into 30 minutes while the councilmen, DeChaine and Allen R. Beck, finance director, discussed ramifications of the proposed cuts.

When the council was called back into session Sullivan and Jones withdrew their motion and the council voted 4-0 on the 68.5-cent tax rate. Councilman William H. Hardwick is on vacation.

Included in the tax rate is 4.6 cents to cover a portion of the Twin Pines bond interest expense. Belmont citizens last November voted to purchase 17.12 acres of Twin Pines property for park and recreation and open space purposes.

Part of the reduction of the property tax rate will be brought about by charging up to \$28,000 in engineering costs to gas tax funds. Councilmen told the staff to effect economies to take care of the rest of the reduction.

The council voted to delete from the proposed budget \$50,000 for a landscaped safety median on Ralston Avenue from Cipriani Boulevard to Alameda de las Pulgas.

In contrast to the council meeting of Aug. 13 when several persons paraded to the microphone to encourage the council to set aside funds to purchase additional Twin Pines acreage, opposition to

the move was voiced last night.

Mrs. James Barko, 2721 Comstock Circle, said she did not agree with the proposed expenditure.

"I consider the price of well over \$350,000 to be excessive for 2½ acres of land," she said.

"According to promises made to the public at the time of the proposal to the people (for the purchase of the 17.12 acres of Twin Pines property), it was freely stated the federal government would provide at least half of the money, leaving the city with only \$340,000 debt. That money never came.

Now the city is stuck with the full amount."

She asked the council to "put the new land purchase proposal (for an additional 2.5 acres of Twin Pines property) to a vote with all the same fanfare as you did the original park bond issue."

John De Felice, president of the Belmont Heights Civic Improvement Association, said a number of questions about the proposal had been raised by residents of his area, including whether prices had been obtained for alternate sites for a police station, and the possibility the buildings on Twin Pines property would have recurring problems.

Councilman Sullivan said he believed promises that were made in the Twin Pines campaign had been kept. The city applied to the federal government for funds but didn't get them.

BELMONT TAXES
REDWOOD CITY TRIBUNE
MAY 24, 1973
AUG. 25, 28

A four-cent tax hike for Belmont residents?

MAY 24 1973

By OTTO TALLENT

Belmont homeowners can expect a four-cent increase in their tax rate for fiscal year 1973-74 if the Belmont City Council adopts a \$3,972,963 preliminary budget proposed by City Manager James P. DeChaine.

The new rate would be 75 cents per \$100 assessed valuation, compared to 71 cents for 1972-73. Belmont taxpayers last August received a surprise tax rate reduction when the City Council adopted a tax rate five cents down from the previous year's 76 cents.

DeChaine explained the recommended increase of four cents in the next fiscal year's budget is to cover a portion of the Twin Pines bond interest expense. Voters of Belmont last November voted to buy 17.17 acres of Twin Pines property for park and open space purposes.

The preliminary budget for the next fiscal year includes \$1,931,925 for capital improvement projects.

The total operating budget for 1973-74, exclusive of the capital improvement program, reflects a 1.7 per cent increase over the 1972-73 council-approved operating budget for all funds, prior to any sala-

ry adjustments which the council may approve.

Belmont's net taxable (assessed) valuation for 1973-74 is estimated at \$67,473,009. This is down from this year's \$69,229,699, because of Senate Bill 90, which increased homeowners' exemptions from \$750 to \$1,750.

DeChaine explained that SB 90, from the last legislative session in Sacramento, "effectively precludes much more of an adjustment than is reflected with this tax rate (75 cents) for 1973-74, even if the council was interested in making further tax rate adjustments to better our fund balance positions."

The city manager continued that "it is interesting to note that the portion of the tax rate to cover general fund operations is now projected at a level of less than half of what it was four years ago, and has been constantly decreasing since fiscal 1970-71."

The proposed budget reflects the addition of three new full-time city employees — a gardener to maintain newly acquired Twin Pines Park, a typist clerk for the Public Works Department to assist the city engineer, and a patrolman to allow for the for-

mation of a full-time youth services officer position in an effort to improve community-school relations.

Various departmental budget requests for 1973-74 have

been trimmed by \$71,293.

"In addition," DeChaine said, "we have been able to further reduce total operating expenses by \$125,182 below last year's council-approved

budget."

Among capital improvements is \$775,000 to construct sewer trunk line improvements. Among major roadway projects are phase II of Upper

Ralston Avenue improvements, Tahoe Drive to Cipriani Boulevard, \$390,000, and new traffic signals at Ralston-El Camino Real-Old County Road, \$100,000. Ralston Ave-

nue improvements from Maywood to Chula Vista are estimated at \$80,000.

Construction of a multipurpose meeting room building on Twin Pines property is esti-

mated at \$100,000.

Allen R. Beck, assistant city manager-finance director, compiled the preliminary budget under DeChaine's direction.

BELMONT TAXES
REDWOOD CITY TRIBUNE
AUG. 27 + AUG. 30, 1974

8-cent Belmont tax cut?

By OTTO TALLENT

Councilman Eugene P. Sullivan took some of the other members of the Belmont City Council off guard last night by proposing that the city's tax rate for 1974-75 be slashed from its old rate of 68.5 cents to 60 cents.

City Manager James P. DeChaine, who is on vacation, had recommended the tax rate be set at 65 cents.

The council adjourned its meeting to Thursday at 8 p.m. to set the tax rate — Friday is the deadline — and to further consider the proposed \$4,302,097 budget.

Sullivan did not consider his proposal so stunning, declaring that the assessed valuation upon which tax rates are based — had been estimated at \$68,752,136, but turned out to be \$71,111,116. This would take care of 3¼ cents of his proposed cut. He said he was sure another \$13,000 cut in the budget could be made over a period of year to offset the remainder of his proposal.

Vice Mayor Robert A. Jones agreed with Sullivan, declaring that assessed values are going up tremendously and "we are forcing a growing proportion of senior citizens away from Belmont. We have to take restrictive measures now."

Councilman William H. Hardwick said the council had been talking about the budget and tax rate for 2½ months and "I think it's rather capricious to suddenly say 'forget the budget, let's go for 60 cents'."

Mayor Ferdinand Giuliani and Councilman Edward D. Vallergera exchanged words when Vallergera interrupted the mayor to move that the tax rate be discussed at an adjourned meeting Thursday. Giuliani said he didn't like being interrupted.

Vallergera countered that the mayor had not kept a commitment to call an executive session at 9:45 so he (Vallergera) could leave the meeting at 10.

An executive session was called, after which the four remaining councilmen listened to representatives of the Carlmont YMCA-sponsored Whole Earth program argue the merits of the program.

The Whole Earth program is one of 11 on a list of priorities submitted by the Parks and Recreation Commission for inclusion in the budget. Giuliani and Sullivan asked the Whole Earth representatives if the program recommended abortion.

Sharon Rumford, who has been with the Whole Earth program for four years, said when problem pregnancy questions arise, alternatives must be given. The alternatives include keeping the baby, putting it up for adoption or abortion. She said persons with problem pregnancy are referred to parents, clergy and counselors.

Thirty members of the Belmont Seniors Club went home happy after the council voted to put \$92,500 in the budget for improvement to the lodge building at Twin Pines Park. Nick Barber, past president of the group, told the council "we need a place to meet."

Belmont tax rate lowered

By OTTO TALLENT

Belmont taxpayers will have a tax rate which is down 5½ cents from the 1973-74 rate but is three cents more than had been proposed.

Belmont City Council at an adjourned meeting voted at 12:40 a.m. today to set the tax rate for the current fiscal year at 63 cents. Today was the deadline for adopting a tax rate.

The vote was 3 to 2, with Mayor Ferdinand Giuliani and Councilman William H. Hardwick in opposition. They indicated they thought the rate was too low.

City manager James P. DeChaine had recommended the rate be set at 65 cents. Monday night Councilman Eugene P. Sullivan made a motion that the rate be 60 cents and it was seconded by Vice Mayor Robert A. Jones. Before the motion could be put to a vote the council adjourned its meeting to last night.

The two council members withdrew the motion last night. Jones moved for the 63 cents tax rate and Sullivan seconded.

Jones proposed that by the end of the calendar year the council review the budget to make a cut of \$15,000.

The tax rate was set at .042 for ordinary governmental activities, .2205 for a retirement program for city employees tax, .2055 for recreation and park tax, .09 for improvement bonds of 1969 Series A and B, and .072 for recreation and open space bonds of 1972.

The council continued consideration of the 1974-75 budget to the next regular meeting Sept. 10. After six sessions by the council of trying to trim the proposed budget submitted by DeChaine of \$4,302,097, the budget instead has been increased by about \$20,000.

Nearly \$8,500 was added last night — an additional \$4,200 to the Carlmont YMCA-sponsored Whole Earth program and \$4,280 for an equipped motorcycle for the police department.

The vote on the motorcycle fund was 3-2, with Giuliani and Hardwick voting against it.

The Whole Earth program offers a variety of activities for high school students in San Carlos and Belmont.

A sum of \$5,000 already had been budgeted for the Whole Earth program, but YMCA and Whole Earth representatives pleaded for an additional fund to bring it to the same total as last year.

The council voted to set aside for possible use for the Whole Earth program \$7,000 for 1975-76; \$5,000 for 1976-77, and \$3,000 for 1977-78 and thereafter.

BELMONT TAXES
REDWOOD CITY TRIBUNE
AUG. 1975

Belmont Council sets new tax, argues rental tax

By OTTO TALLENT

Although it has not yet adopted the 1975-76 Budget for city operations, the Belmont City Council last night set the tax rate at 61 cents per \$100 assessed valuation, down two cents from the 1974-75 rate.

At a meeting which lasted until 12:45 a.m., the council also introduced an ordinance which provides an annual license tax of two per cent of the gross receipts from rentals for dwelling purposes. Approximately 175 persons were in the audience to listen to and argue the pros and cons of the proposal.

Second reading of the controversial ordinance will be Tuesday, Sept. 2, at 6 p.m. The next regularly scheduled council meeting, which would have been Aug. 25, has been cancelled because of the possibility of a lack of a quorum.

The city budget for 1975-76 also is expected to be adopted at the Sept. 2 meeting. The council last night approved capital outlay items of the budget.

Councilmen have approved a 9 per cent salary raise for members of the police department plus uniform allowance, incentive pay and dental

insurance benefits. They gave management personnel salary increases of 7½ per cent.

Sitting as directors of the Belmont Fire Protection District, they adopted an operating budget of \$1,003,086, and recommended to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors that the fire district tax rate be set at 86 cents, down from 93.3 cents.

The directors have approved a salary raise of 9 per cent for firemen under a 15-month contract, with another 2 per cent increase scheduled to go into effect Jan. 1. A uniform allowance adjustment also was made.

Councilmen, who have spent 11 meetings whittling the proposed city budget for the ensuing fiscal year, at one stage of frustration while ordering the cutting down of services, raised the possibility the city tax rate might have to be raised 40 cents per each \$100 of assessed valuation.

Councilmen Morton L. Podolsky and Eugene P. Sullivan last night upbraided the other three councilmen for taking action at a special meeting Friday night to hire an administrative analyst while they were absent. The matter was voted on again last night, with the hiring approved 3 to 2:

BELMONT TAXES
REDWOOD CITY TRIBUNE
JUN. - AUG. 1976

Taxes, fees may go up in Belmont

JUN 9 1976

COVER

By OTTO TALLENT

Belmont, feeling the same economic crunch as in neighboring communities, may face both a sharp increase in property tax rates and an adjustment in fees just to maintain city services at their current levels.

City Manager James P. DeChaine, for the first time since he came to Belmont in 1970, has not projected a tax rate in the proposed supplemental budget for fiscal year 1976-77 he submitted to the City Council.

The rate will depend on a lot of contingencies — what the council decides about services, salary adjustments, operating reserve funds, and what the business license fees and sewer service funding will be, the city manager said.

DeChaine said the city tax rate could be increased as much as 25 cents per \$100 assessed valuation, and the tax rate for the Belmont Fire Protection District could go up 10 to 15 cents above the present rate of 86 cents.

Current tax rate for other city services is 61 cents.

The city budget submitted by DeChaine for 1976-77 totals \$4,396,560, compared to the current budget of \$3,514,621. DeChaine said this is a confusing comparison, however, because about \$750,000 in the new budget is for capital improvements.

The proposed fire district budget is \$1,238,415, including \$100,000 unappropriated reserve. Current budget is \$1,037,189, with no unappropriated reserve.

The council's newly-appointed, 16-member Finance Committee will meet each Thursday night at 8 o'clock during the rest of June and first part of July at the City Hall to study the proposed budget and make recommendations to the City Council. Donald Oswald is its chairman and Paul Louie is vice chairman. The meetings are open to the public.

The Finance Committee's recommendations probably will go to the council July 26.

DeChaine said he

already has trimmed \$264,180 from various departmental budget requests, "over and above the \$346,996 which I had cut out for fiscal year 1976-77."

"Notwithstanding these budget reductions," DeChaine said, "it will be necessary to even make further downward adjustments for this coming fiscal period. . ."

"If the council desires to maintain service levels anywhere near their current levels, it is envisioned that both a sharp increase in the property tax rates as well as an adjustment in the business license tax and sewer service fee structure will be necessary."

DeChaine recommended that some contingency reserve fund be re-established and incorporated into the budget for the next fiscal year. He noted that for the past several years the City Council has reduced the tax rate, using a large portion of the existing operating reserve funds to balance the budget.

"With the city's previously available financial resources rapidly eroding, and with the alternative of utilizing reserves to partially balance the budget no longer available to the City Council in lieu of a property tax increase, we must now look to increased tax and fee adjustments in order to maintain a reasonable level of city services," DeChaine said.

"With the western hills and various citywide commercial developments slow to materialize, and with any Harbor Industrial Area annexations not likely to materialize in the near future, there obviously has resulted a temporary shortfall of revenues, as previously projected from a variety of sources necessary to finance existing services," the city manager said.

"These anticipated additional reserves were partially the basis upon which the council made downward ad-

justments in property tax rates during each of the past five years."

DeChaine said liability insurance costs have increased approximately 113 per cent over the 1975-76 adopted budget level, with workers' compensation insurance increasing 73 per cent. He said there will be a substantial increase in utility billings, particularly as it affects street lighting.

Tax rate hike likely for Belmont

By OTTO TALLENT

Belmont's assessed valuation has jumped from approximately \$96 million to almost \$111 million but the tax rate still must be increased by 17 cents if the proposed \$4.4 million budget for 1976-77 remains unchanged.

Allen R. Beck, assistant city manager and finance director, said at a budget hearing last night that 17 cents would be needed if the Belmont City Council adopted the budget as presented several weeks ago by City Manager James P. deChaine, based on the city assessment figure.

That budget does not include salary and fringe benefits increases.

Beck said after the meeting that approximately two cents have been knocked off the tax rate in budget reductions to date by the council.

The tax rate must be set by Sept. 1.

Council members and the Finance

Committee have wrangled over the budget for many hours trying to squeeze out more reductions.

Mayor William H. Hardwick said last night that the council faced a frustrating task. He said it would be necessary either to reduce services, eliminate particular projects or reduce personnel.

"If you reduce personnel you have to reduce services or projects," he said. "We need a handle on projects we're going to do the next year."

"Generally we have a pretty austere program," he added.

Most of the possible increase in the tax rate is from mandated costs.

DeChaine had pointed out when he first presented the budget that liability insurance costs have increased approximately 113 per cent over the 1975-76 budget level, with workers' compensation insurance increasing 73 per cent.

Retirement contributions for city em-

ployes increased 12 per cent, not counting a result of additional salary adjustments.

For the past several years the council had reduced the tax rate by using a large portion of the operating reserve funds to balance the budget. Anticipated additional reserves have not materialized, however.

The council during each of the past five years had made downward adjustments in property tax rates anticipating reserves from western hills and various citywide commercial developments, which have been slow to materialize, and the annexation of the Harbor Industrial Area, which did not come about.

Hardwick said DeChaine had chopped about \$600,000 from the budget before presenting it to the council.

Tax rate for the 1975-76 fiscal year was 61 cents per \$100 assessed valuation.

The council adjourned last night's meeting to tomorrow at 4 p.m. to further consider the budget.

Belmont tax rate increases 19.5 cents next year

AUG 20 1976

By OTTO TALLENT

A tax rate up 19½ cents probably will be needed to finance a \$4,439,067 Belmont budget adopted by the city council last night for 1976-77. The budget will be \$214,000 higher than this year's figure.

The new budget is \$30,000 lower than proposed several weeks ago by City Manager James P. DeChaine.

Allen R. Beck, assistant city manager and finance director, said the city will need a tax rate of 80½ cents — an increase of 19½ cents — to cover the adopted budget. The tax rate must be set by Sept. 1, and the council will hold a regular meeting Monday night.

If the council adopts a tax rate with a 19½-cent increase, this will cost the owner of a \$60,000 home an extra \$25.85 for the year.

Beck said that \$190,000 of the budget increase is for costs over which the city has no control — insurance, workers compensation, utilities, bond redemption and equipment maintenance costs.

The new budget includes a year-ending balance of \$250,000 in the general fund and a zero balance in the recreation and park fund. The latter has had a deficit balance in the past.

Biggest reduction in the budget was \$6,000 cut out of the recreation and parks budget for tree maintenance.

After considerable discussion, the council last night increased the figure for an air compressor for the Public Works-Engineering Department from \$6,500 to \$10,000. The present compressor does not meet state safety and noise level regulations.

Beck said that since the regulations were mandated by the state, the city will send a bill to the state for the cost of the compressor.

A special departmental expense in the sewer maintenance part of the public works budget was cut from \$110,000 to \$105,000. An item in the budget for a mobile radio was cut from \$1,150 to \$1,350.

The council decided to cut out proposals for signalization of Ralston Avenue at Notre Dame Avenue and of Ralston Avenue at South Road.

BELMONT TAXES
REDWOOD CITY TRIBUNE
AUG. 20, 24, 1976

Belmont ^{tax} rate up 19 cents, highest ever

AUG 24 1976

Two members of the Belmont City Council last night set the tax rate for Belmont at 80 cents per \$100 assessed valuation — the highest in the city's history.

Voting in favor of the new tax rate to finance a \$4,439,062 budget adopted last Thursday night for fiscal year 1976-77 were acting Mayor Frank R. Gonsalves and Councilman Walter J. Worthge. Councilwoman Pamela S. Ketcham voted against the new rate.

Mayor William H. Hardwick and Councilman Robert A. Jones were absent.

It was the council's last regular meeting prior to the Sept. 1 deadline for setting the tax rate.

The new rate is an increase of 19 cents over the 61-cent rate for the past year. It will cost the owner of a \$70,000 home an additional \$29.93 for the year.

Mrs. Ketcham, who noted that the city already has increased the sewer service charges by \$36 a year, declared it was the obligation of the council to recognize what it is doing to the citizens of Belmont.

A proposed increase in the city's business license fees is scheduled to be presented to the council in September.

When the motion to adopt the tax rate came to a vote, Mrs. Ketcham asked, "Are you saying two councilmen can take the responsibility for the tax rate?"

City Attorney Kenneth M. Dickerson said that three members of the five-member council constitute a quorum. Adoption of the motion takes only a majority of those present.

Allen R. Beck, assistant city manager and finance director, said the closest recorded tax rate was 79 cents in 1960-61.

Gonsalves said the 61-cent tax rate of last year was not a fair comparison. He said that rate would have been close to 80 cents if the reserve fund had not been used.

Worthge likewise charged the 61-cent tax rate set by last year's council was artificial. Gonsalves, Worthge and Mrs. Ketcham all came on to the council this year.

Mrs. Ketcham said the finance committee had recommended a freeze on raises for city employees but that the council raised salaries. Gonsalves said a lot of salaries depend on negotiations with unions.

Mrs. Ketcham had voted against the budget as adopted.

The new budget includes a year-ending balance of \$250,000 in the general fund and a zero balance in the recreation and park fund. The latter has had a deficit balance in the past.

BELMONT TAXES
REDWOOD CITY TRIBUNE
AUG. 12, 1977

Same tax rate OK'd in Belmont

AUG 12 1977

By OTTO TALLENT

Belmont residents will have the same tax rate for the upcoming fiscal year as last year, but homeowners of a house valued at \$75,000 will have to pay \$30 more for the year for city services than last year.

After about three hours of debate on the budget for fiscal 1977-78, the Belmont City Council last night adopted a tax rate of 80 cents, the same that was in effect last year.

Net increase in assessments for Belmont is 22.3 per cent. A homeowner whose house was valued at \$60,000 last year paid \$120 for city services, based on an assessment of 25 per cent of the value of the house. Based on increased assessments, that same house this year is valued at \$75,000 and \$150 must be paid for city services.

The council adopted an operating budget of \$4,607,334, which includes \$1,324,838 for the Fire District. This is an increase of \$386,559 over last year's operating budget.

Capital improvements total \$582,423, bringing the grand total budget to \$5,189,057. This compares to last year's total budget of \$5,651,297.

Although the budget total has been set, individual figures for departments are in limbo. At the proposal of Mayor Frank Gonsalves, the council adopted the budget with a sum of \$50,000 "on top of the Park and

Recreation Department budget" for capital improvements, with the general fund to be reduced by \$50,000.

The staff was instructed to recommend cuts in the budget so it would not exceed the figure adopted. This prompted Assistant City Manager-Finance Director Allen R. Beck to tell Mayor Gonsalves it was the job of the city council to set policy.

Councilman William H. Hardwick said he thought Mayor Gonsalves' proposal was unfair and asked "what are you going to cut after we've been through this? It puts the staff in the position of deciding what those cuts are going to be." He voted against the proposal.

Councilman Walter Worthge insisted that the council make the final decisions as to what cuts are to be made.

City Manager James R. DeChaine declared today "there isn't money like that to cut. If there had been I would have cut it before I gave it to the council."

He had cut \$275,000 from departmental requests before submitting his proposed budget.

"We'll take a careful look at it and do what we can to recommend adjustments to the council," DeChaine said. "We may wind up having to take a large portion out of the projected ending fund balance, which would reduce the beginning balance for next year."