
MEASURE SUBMITTED TO THE VOTERS

MUNICIPAL

**CITY OF BELVEDERE
FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
APPROPRIATIONS LIMIT ADJUSTMENT
MEASURE C**

C Shall the City of Belvedere be authorized to continue adjusting its appropriations limit for the annual fire protection and emergency medical services levy, pursuant to Article XIII B of the California Constitution, for the period 7/1/2004 through 6/30/2008? The levy for FY 2004-2005 shall not exceed the rate authorized in Chapter 3.28 of the Belvedere Municipal Code. (The current levy is \$444 per residential dwelling unit, \$509 per commercial occupancy, and \$90 per vacant parcel.)

**CITY OF BELVEDERE
FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
APPROPRIATIONS LIMIT ADJUSTMENT
IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS BY CITY ATTORNEY
MEASURE C**

This ballot measure authorizes the adjustment of the City of Belvedere's appropriations limit under Article XIII B of the California Constitution for the period July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2008, to allow for the continued expenditure of the approved annual fire protection and emergency medical services tax, adopted by the City's voters in 2000.

The maximum amount that may be derived from this levy cannot exceed the rate authorized by Chapter 3.28 of the Belvedere Municipal Code. The amount of the levy for the 2003-2004 fiscal year is \$444.00 per residential dwelling unit; \$509.00 per commercial occupancy; and \$90.00 per vacant parcel of land.

Adoption of this measure will increase the City's appropriations limit to the extent of the proceeds derived from the levy for the next four fiscal years, and Article XIII B of the California Constitution requires this adjustment of the appropriations limit to be approved by a majority of the electors voting on the measure on March 2, 2004.

A "Yes" vote on this measure authorizes the City to adjust its appropriations limit and thus to continue expenditure from its approved levy for fire protection and emergency medical services for four more years commencing July 1, 2004.

A "No" vote on this measure prohibits the City from adjusting its appropriations limit and thus from expending the proceeds derived from its approved levy for fire protection and emergency medical services after June 30, 2004.

GARY T. RAGGHIANI
City Attorney

**ARGUMENTS FOR
AND AGAINST
THIS MEASURE
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ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE C

Your YES vote on Measure C is essential if we hope to continue providing professional fire protection and emergency medical services to the residents of the City of Belvedere.

Since 1980, Belvedere has contracted with the Tiburon Fire Protection District and the Southern Marin Emergency Medical Paramedic System for fire protection and emergency medical services. Consequently, every four years since that time, Belvedere voters have overwhelmingly approved special assessments to cover these essential costs that are over and above the City's Proposition 13 and Proposition 4 General Fund budget appropriation limits. Measure C does not create a new tax, but simply allows the City to continue spending the tax proceeds voters previously approved by a two-thirds majority to be levied specifically for this purpose. Measure C will provide Belvedere with only 72% of the necessary funds to defray the costs for fire protection and emergency medical services. The remaining 28% will be covered by the City's General Fund.

Under Measure C, the amount paid by Belvedere residents, property owners and commercial occupancies over the next four years will remain the same as the previous voter approved measure, with minor adjustments to account for changes in population and inflation. Last year's increase permitted by Article XIII B of the California State Constitution was a minor 3.1%.

Vote YES on Measure C in order to ensure that essential fire protection and emergency medical services that protect Belvedere's residents and their properties can be funded and those services will continue to be available when they are most needed.

- s/ Justin M. Faggioli
Former Mayor and Former Citizen of the Year
- s/ Kenneth G. Johnson
Former Mayor and Citizen of the Year
- s/ Paul Ogden, M.D.
Belvedere Representative to the Southern
Marin Emergency Medical Paramedic System
- s/ Denise Bauer
Belvedere Parks & Open Space Committee Member

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE C

It's good when people can agree. We all agree that we deserve excellent emergency services.

Here's the difference of opinion: Tax opponents want to use just that small amount of the city's ballooned surplus, which is now fully 85% as much as total city expenditures, to pay for emergency services. Those favoring the tax want to tax for that money.

I wish the pro tax ballot argument had even mentioned Belvedere's large surplus, and acknowledged that, even without the proposed tax dire State and County finances will soon, and inevitably, require all of us to pay higher taxes, charges and fees, for a host of State, County and School costs.

I also wish that the tax proponents had shown even a little sensitivity to the reality that this tax, on top of all of the other above noted coming cost increases, will cause hardship for many of our older neighbors who are suffering recession-caused declines in their incomes. Let's also not forget that these same elderly neighbors must already bear the burden of skyrocketing costs for "medigap" insurance, and prescription drugs. Should we impose an additional burden?

Yes, of course well-meaning people can disagree. I suggest only that we all carefully consider this tax, before voting. **Perhaps you will conclude, as I have, that we shouldn't tax, at this time, but should instead pay for our excellent emergency service using just that small portion of our excessively large current surplus that will amply cover its cost.**

s/ William Rothman, M.D.
Retired Physician

ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE C

Yes, we do need excellent emergency services. The question is whether we need to be taxed additionally, at this time, to pay for that service.

Belvedere's burgeoning building fees, hundreds of thousands of dollars from construction over-time fines, and increased property tax revenue, have created ample surpluses.

How big is Belvedere's surplus?

Existing fees and taxes have ballooned our surplus a startling 45% in just two years. The now unspent surplus is fully 84% as large as total expenditures. **Furthermore, the City's budget projections have taken into account decreased car tax, and other revenue from Sacramento. So, the surplus will remain secure, without an additional City tax.**

The proposed, and I believe unnecessary tax, will take \$444, from each home owner, each year. The only effect of rejecting it will be to limit next year's ballooned surplus to \$4.1 million, well above the ample excess of just two years ago.

So the real question, I believe, is whether we should tax anyway, even though it is not now necessary?

With the State and County's governments in dire circumstances, **increased non-city taxes, tolls, fees and other charges are inevitable.** Soon enough we will be paying plenty more for a host of State, County and School costs. Why make things harder than they need to be?

Belvedere's ongoing increasing revenue from building-fees and property taxes may well eliminate the need to ever impose the proposed City tax. If, however, in the future, the tax is necessary, the City can then go to the ballot for that purpose. **Belvedere residents will always be willing to pay for needed services.**

Before automatically voting yes, please give this tax issue careful consideration. Intelligent people can certainly come to varied conclusions. I believe this tax is not necessary at this time.

s/ William Rothman, M.D.
Retired Physician

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE C

It is important to correct the inconsistencies contained in the Argument Against Measure C:

- In 2002 Belvedere residents' taxes were reduced by \$195 per year because of responsible City financial planning.
- Measure C is not a new tax. It is a continuation of Measures that have been overwhelmingly approved by Belvedere's voters for over 20 years.
- There is no \$4 million surplus. The General Fund reserve is projected to be \$2,200,000, **only if Measure C passes**, approximately the same level it was in year 2000. This reserve is needed to provide cash for operations and to meet emergency needs, including fire, flooding earthquake, severe storms and landslides, as well as anticipated continued decreases in funding from the State.
- Depleting reserves by \$470,000 per year (as suggested in the Argument Against Measure C) would place the City's General Fund in a deficit in less than 4 years.
- Measure C does not pay the total cost for fire and emergency medical services. Belvedere's General Fund contributes over \$220,000 annually to help share the total annual estimated contractual costs of \$690,000.

Drawing down the City's finances is irresponsible. Look at what has happened recently in other cities that did not anticipate decreases in State funding. Support responsible financial planning by supporting the continued funding of Belvedere's Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

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