

Revenues

from front page

McDowell believes contracting fire protection services to the County could solve much of the City's long-term shortfall issues. "Our new Fire Station 2 would also be attractive to the County since it could also serve portions of Hawthorne, Del Aire and the airport," he said. "It would expand their coverage, making it a win-win for all parties concerned."

McDowell also suggested stepping up the City's business recruitment campaign, particularly in the entertainment sector. "Entertainment represents one of our best opportunities," he said. "It hasn't been hit as hard as other industries."

Last but not least, the Mayor believes a beachfront resort hotel would pay huge dividends for El Segundo. "Assuming the power plant doesn't proceed, let's move forward with a hotel on the beach," he said. Based on informal discussions with hotel developers, such a property could be built within three years after an agreement is signed, McDowell noted. "The revenue estimates for this run between two to three million a year," he said. "It would be the only resort on the sand between Santa Monica and Huntington Beach."

Said power plant's long-awaited redevelopment project remains up in the air thanks to a court ruling prohibiting air credits from being issued to power plants. But upcoming Senate legislation loosens those restrictions. If the project gets off the ground, the City could see estimated revenues of \$40 million over a five-year period from sales, property, franchise and user taxes, plus other fees.

Councilmember Carl Jacobson echoed his colleague's concerns and said he is "not out there trying to tax people." He added that even if the power plant comes back online, it won't make a difference in the current recession, as it won't be up and running until 2013 the earliest. After that, Jacobson didn't offer any immediate solutions. "Any revenue is going to have to be a tax in one form or another," he said. "So we have to look at our budget expenditures and start with public safety services." Though he deemed it too early to elaborate on what sort of cuts that could entail, Jacobson noted that public safety is the single highest line item expenditure for the City.

While admitting that "no one likes a tax increase," Mayor Pro Tem Eric Busch said that the number one structural problem with the City's budget is that business license taxes are not indexed. "We need to fix that so we don't pass that problem on to future councils," he said. Busch also supports a related sales tax credit reduction to maintain service levels.

Busch would also like to petition the State of California to upwardly adjust El Segundo's share of property taxes. "We receive a lower percentage of property tax than most cities," he said. "In the past, cities similar to El Segundo have approached the State government to increase their percentage shares so those are more in line with other cities. It's an equity issue."

Like McDowell, Busch also believes business recruitment can help bolster City revenues via new sales or business license taxes. "We need to target companies so when they move here, they not only move their people but also their point of sale, so we

can receive the additional taxes," he said.

Councilmember Bill Fisher agrees that business recruitment is vital in the City's quest to increase its revenues. "When other cities have come to a standstill as far as companies coming in, we still have folks moving into our city and still looking into El Segundo as a viable place to move," he said. "We've got to make sure we continue our business recruitment and focus on that."

Fisher is also proponent of the proposed business license tax (BLT) indexing. "The key to that is that since 1993, the BLT has not adjusted, so that's one area where the business community has benefited from...and we have to protect the taxes we do collect, including the continuation of UUT (utility users' tax)," he said.

A few revenue-raisers won't be enough to stave off cuts in next year's budget, warned Councilmember Don Brann. "The ample reserves will be needed to soften the blow and prevent loss of employees as much as possible," he said. Brann feels that much of the City's current budgetary crisis is self-inflicted. "Every time the Council increases salaries and shuns new revenues, they enlarge the gap between income and outgo."

Among his several revenue-enhancing ideas, Brann recommends raising transient occupancy taxes (currently at eight percent, which is lower than surrounding communities) for tourists and business travelers staying in local lodging facilities. The Council recently opted not to go that route in deference to hotel operators who complained that business is down 20 to 30 percent. Brann also favors increases for both utility users' and business license (through indexing) taxes. His other suggestions include increasing filming permit fees, billing residents for services such as street sweeping and refuse removal, and maximizing revenues from the sale or lease of the old, soon-to-be-vacant Fire Station 2 property. Brann is also open to the idea of shifting fire protection services to LA County and merging emergency dispatch services with other South Bay cities.

Though decidedly more controversial on budgetary matters than his colleagues, Brann contended that his recommendations would reap immediate benefits. "Taken as a whole, these moves would raise millions of dollars for the City," he said of the proposed tax increases. "Combined with borrowing from reserves and department belt-tightening, these ideas can serve to attain a balanced budget for 2010/11."

In addition to his mantra of no tax increases, Mayor McDowell was leery about balancing the budget with reserve funds. "We have already used substantial amounts from reserves this fiscal year," he said. "Using one-time money for recurring expenses is a slippery slope and risks financial soundness."

Not all revenue-generating ideas had been exhausted, however. When asked about the possibility of selling future naming rights for certain City-owned facilities, McDowell replied, "We had great success licensing naming rights for the new athletic fields at Campus El Segundo. Opening up that discussion concerning new City projects from the fire station to a future aquatics center could lead to windfalls for El Segundo and relief for taxpayers."

Police Reports

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29

One male adult was arrested at 0151 hours from Aviation Boulevard and Imperial Highway for two outstanding misdemeanor warrants.

One female adult was arrested at 0224 hours in the 1400 block of East Imperial Avenue for prostitution and possession of less than one ounce of marijuana.

Burglary (auto) occurred between 11/28/09 at 1600 hours and 11/29/09 at 1030 hours in the 2000 block of East Mariposa Avenue. Taken were a laptop computer, a computer case, an antique camera, a camera case, and a camera lens, total loss \$3,080.00.

Misdemeanor hit and run occurred at 1810 hours in the 500 block of Indiana Street, vehicle versus parked vehicle.

Recovered stolen vehicle report was taken at 2202 hours from Sycamore Avenue and Washington Street. The truck was originally reported stolen out of Oxnard Police Dept.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28

One male adult was arrested at 0137 hours from Imperial Highway and Hughes Way for driving on a suspended license and was subsequently issued a citation.

One male adult was arrested at 0220 hours at Eucalyptus Street and Franklin Avenue for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Lost property report was taken at 0624 hours from the 200 block of Main Street. The victim lost 22 books of stamps valued at approximately \$264.

One male adult was arrested at 0900 hours from Aviation Boulevard and Rosecrans Avenue for driving without a license and was subsequently issued a citation.

Grand theft report was taken at 1503 hours from the 700 block of S. Sepulveda Boulevard. Unknown suspect(s) took the victims bicycle valued at approximately \$2,000.

One male adult was arrested at 0007 hours from the 100 block of South Sepulveda Boulevard for misdemeanor DUI.

Burglary report (auto) was taken at 0005 hours in the 2300 block of East Rosecrans Avenue. Unknown suspect(s) stole items from the victim's vehicle.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27

One male adult was arrested at 0108 hours at Mariposa Avenue and Sepulveda Boulevard for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Court order violation report was taken at 0902 hours in the 300 block of Kansas Street.

One male adult was arrested at 1231 hours in the 1400 block of East Imperial Avenue for spousal abuse.

Burglary report (vehicle) was taken at 1918 hours in the 700 block of South Sepulveda Boulevard. Unknown suspect broke into the victim's vehicle and took a television.

Battery report was taken at 1921 hours in the 900 block of Eucalyptus Drive. Suspect bit his father.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26

One male adult was arrested at 0207 hours at Concord Street and Grand Avenue for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Robbery report was taken at 0442 hours in the 500 block of North Sepulveda Boulevard. Three suspects took the victim's backpack.

Burglary (auto) report was taken at 0915 hours in the 1100 block of E. Imperial Avenue. Unknown suspect(s) smashed the passenger side window to the victim's vehicle and took his iPhone.

Grand theft report was taken at 1107 hours from the 100 block of Main Street. Unknown suspect(s) took the victim's purse which contained a military ID card, a cell phone and a camera.

Burglary (auto) report was taken at 1519 hours in the 1200 block of E. Imperial Avenue. Unknown suspect(s) smashed the window to the victim's vehicle. Unknown what was taken.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25

One female adult was arrested at 0103 hours from Mariposa Avenue and Center Street for one Gardena P.D. misdemeanor traffic warrant.

Petty theft report was taken at 0154 hours in the 800 block of Lomita Street. Taken was a red Beach Cruiser bicycle.

One male juvenile was detained at 0330 hours in the 500 block of East Walnut Avenue for possession of known stolen property. He was cited and released to his mother.

Burglary (auto) report was taken at 0756 hours from the 800 block of McCarthy Court. Unknown suspect(s) broke into the victim's vehicle and took an iPod.

Forgery report was taken at 0931 hours from the 500 block of N. Nash Street. Unknown suspect(s) duplicated checks, forged a signature and attempted to deposit them.

Burglary (auto) report was taken at 1127 hours from the 500 block of E. Walnut Avenue. Unknown suspect(s) broke into the victim's vehicle and took two GPS units.

One female adult was arrested at 1443 hours from the 500 block of E. Walnut Avenue for one outstanding ESPD misdemeanor warrant.

Burglary (auto) report was taken at 1544 hours from Hornet Way and Imperial Highway. Unknown suspect(s) smashed the window to the victim's vehicle and took the victim's stereo.

One male adult was arrested at 1755 hours from Mariposa Avenue and Sepulveda Boulevard for one outstanding LAPD misdemeanor warrant.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24

One male adult was arrested at 0059 hours from Manhattan Bch Boulevard and Redondo Avenue, Manhattan Bch, for one ESPD misdemeanor traffic warrant and one LASD misdemeanor traffic warrant.

One female adult was arrested at 0154 hours from Grand Avenue and Vista Del Mar for drunk driving.

One male adult was arrested at 0147 hours in the 500 block of Illinois Street for drunk driving.

Traffic accident (no injuries) occurred at 0318 hours in the intersection of Maple Avenue and Washington Street, vehicle versus bushes and chain link fence.

Traffic accident (no injuries) occurred at 1244 hours in the intersection of Arena Street and Grand Avenue, vehicle versus vehicle.

One adult male and two adult females were arrested at 1409 hours in the 500 block of North Sepulveda Boulevard for burglary, forgery, and unauthorized use of an access card.

Petty theft occurred at 1601 hours in the 700 block of South Sepulveda Boulevard. A purse was taken from an unlocked vehicle.

Attempt grand theft report was taken at 2031 hours in the 300 block of Loma Vista Street. Unknown suspect tried to take the headlights from victim's vehicle.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23

Vandalism report was taken at 0919 hours in the 700 block of West Imperial Avenue. Graffiti was found on the rear wall of a detached garage unit at the location.

Criminal threats report was taken at 1650 hours in the 100 block of South Sepulveda Boulevard. A male adult made threats against the victim because the victim would not hire him.

A male juvenile, who was reported missing out of Torrance P.D., was located at 2107 hours in the 500 block of East Walnut Avenue. He was cited for 647(F)PC/308(B)PC, plain drunk in public and possession of tobacco products, and released to grandparents.

One female juvenile was detained at 2107 hours in the 500 block of East Walnut Avenue for plain drunk in public. She was cited and released to her mother. •

Advertise with The El Segundo Herald!

Call Norma at 310-344-3932

email: advertising@heraldpublications.com