

Garbage

isn't going to be the determining factor," Tell said. "This isn't you're father's trash hauler."

Montgomery questioned the use of an RFP if the Council was going to be inclined to work with Waste Management from the start of the process. "Why even look at ten others if I can look at one with a track record?" he said. "If they don't give us a deal we can all live with...then we go to an RFP."

Councilmember Wayne Powell said he preferred an RFP. However, he stressed that he was happy with Waste Management and eventually voted with the rest of the Council. "To me I believe it's important to do competitive bidding," Powell said. "How would our community know we've got the best possible price?"

Councilmember Mitch Ward said he was satisfied Waste Management and the current contract. "I'm one of the hose people who value loyalty and experience," Ward said. "Waste management has been a very good partner; that doesn't mean we can't put demands on them, knowing they are a business partner with us."

Ward said wanted the Council to push hard to get the best possible value for residents. "We've asked everyone here in town to take on some additional burdens...we are looking at the bottom line very carefully."

Tell said that no matter what decision the Council made, it would be aggressive in its renegotiations. "I don't think you will find concerns or issues with Waste Management," Tell said. "But we are talking about a twenty- or twenty-five million-dollar contract... there's going to be a significant increase. Our residents are going to be faced with an increase at exactly the wrong time."

Representatives from Waste Management spoke to the Council, and were joined by residents who received support from the company and also spoke in their support. The entourage included two representatives

from the company who appeared to be waste haulers, wearing company uniforms complete with reflective vests and Waste Management baseball caps.

Vickie Wippel of Waste Management suggested the city hire the consultant to renegotiate the contract to help lower costs, rather than seek an RFP. "Over ninety-three percent of residents here prefer to do business with us," Wippel said, citing a recent JD Power survey. "We're active on the Environmental Task Force...our drivers have years of experience, and like I said, they know the streets like the back of their hand."

Some residents, like Julie Ginella, spoke in favor of Waste Management, saying the company has been supportive of local education and environmental programs. One resident, Will Arvizo, wanted the city to go through the RFP process.

The council also spoke with Laith Ezzet, who represents Hilton, Farnkopf & Hobson, LLC, a solid waste consulting firm. Ezzet helped the city with the current contract, and said he would be able to help the Council and staff renegotiate the city's contract with Waste Management, or guide them through the RFP or process.

Mayor Cohen said that she agreed with the staff recommendation to hire the consultant. "I'm also convinced after tonight's discussion that our best economic benefit comes from

using a consultant," Cohen said.

City voted unanimously to hire Hilton, Farnkopf & Hobson, LLC to renegotiate the current contract for a fee not to exceed \$70,000.

Holiday Hours

After hearing comments from residents and business owners, the Council voted to allow restaurants and bars throughout the city to extend their hours on New Year's Eve.

In April, the Downtown Manhattan Beach Business Association requested four holidays get treated as weekends, which would allow for them to close at the hour their license mandates for closing on weekends. For many businesses it would mean closing about an hour later.

The downtown business owners requested to change the Sunday before Memorial Day and Labor Day, Halloween, New Year's Eve and July 4th. The Council sent the request to extend hours on Labor Day and Memorial Day to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Mike Simms, owner of the downtown establishment Simmy's, said customers on the weekday eves of Labor Day and Memorial Day are confused when the restaurant begins to close at 11 p.m. He said many customers consider it a holiday.

Tell told Simms he was a more worried

about residents living nearby. "The issue is not the people that are at the bar or the restaurant, it's the people who live around them," Tell said.

Water Restrictions

Jim Arndt reported that the city has so far received about 225-250 calls regarding the recently passed water ordinance. Most of them were for clarification on the new law, although about 20 people called in anger about the new restrictions. Arndt said that some callers sounded more understanding, after listening to the staff explain the reasoning behind the ordinance. Ten violations were also reported and will receive letters from the city. •



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