

## Budget

from front page

cuts spoke the council, asking to be spared while acknowledging the tough choices before the council. The Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce will have its \$210,000 allocation suspended. "We're doing the very best we can with cutting," Chamber President Helen Duncan said. "We do have some reserves...but it would be very difficult for us to continue all of the things that we do and keep the reputation of this city the way we have over the years without these things."

Councilmember Richard Montgomery told Chamber members to pick out some key programs they would like the city to restore, but made no guarantees. "You pick the ones you really think helps the city the best... which ones are key," Montgomery said. "If council wants to go along with the idea then maybe they look at that as a funding source."

Council members looked at some of the Chamber's expenses and encouraged the organization to look closer at its expenses. "Do you really need more magazines...can we survive without calendars for one year? I think that the answer is pretty evident," Ward said. "But you want to pick that choice yourself and come to council and say which ones of these do you feel are necessary that help citywide, and the rest...that's what reserves are for."

Arts Manhattan Chairperson Homeira Goldstein said her organization was surprised to find their budget was completely cut. She said Arts Manhattan has already spent money on its Fall Exhibition but would not say how much. "I would really ask you if you would consider at least supporting us for that and leaving something in the budget," Goldstein said. "We squeeze everything so much with \$20,000 it's so hard to do any exhibitions."

Councilmember Ward said the council would need more information, given the financial ramifications for other programs. "I'm sorry, we absolutely have to have these numbers, because people are coming up to us asking us not to remove \$600 in some situations," Ward said. "We cannot operate on vagueness, we need to know specifics. I'm sorry."

The Council halved conference budgets for itself and city staff, reduced employee recognition programs, and cut the Community Police Academy to one class a year. The city will no longer give financial support for Mira Costa's Grad Night. The current budget includes a \$1.3 million gift to the District from the Council earlier this year to help prevent teacher layoffs. "We'll pay for teachers, but grad night? I never had grad night," Mayor Portia Cohen said. "It's not a necessity"

Councilmember Nick Tell said he wanted to remind residents why he voted for the \$1.3 million donation to the MBUSD, saying the city's millions of dollars in budget reserves could be attributed to school performance. "It's the quality of our school system that we've gotten a big chunk of them in the first place, and were just handing back a small percentage of them," Tell said.

The Council instructed City Manager Geoff Dolan to cut an additional \$400,000 by reducing staffing expenses, mainly through hiring freezes and attrition. "We were fortunate this

year in that we had seven vacant positions that you have eliminated in the budget that has helped us solve our problem," Dolan said.

Finance Director Bruce Moe said the Council also has to prepare for the state borrowing \$1.8 million in the coming year, which could be taken from the budget reserves. He said sales tax income has declined 11 percent from last year, but after 2010, expects three to four percent growth each year. "Even if sales volume doesn't increase, the prices go up and therefore we get more sales tax revenue."

Mayor Cohen said 70 percent of the city budget is spent on labor, and 75 percent of the labor budget is covered by union contracts. She said she also wanted to be fair to the 25 percent of employees not covered by labor agreements. "Part of what we need to decide tonight is how to treat both types of employees," Cohen said. "We want equity and we want to reward our employees for the spectacular service that they continue to provide for us."

Manhattan Beach Fire Department Battalion Chief Frank Chiella asked the council to be fair to employees and residents alike. "My only concern is for the middle managers that I work with. Don't try to balance something totally on our backs at this time," Chiella said. "There are some people who really perform in this management group and some of them deserve this recognition."

Cohen said she wished she could give everybody a raise, but that it was not the Council's money to spend. "Everybody I come into contact with in this city, I'm wowed," Mayor Portia Cohen said. "I just feel so lucky to be amongst them. On the other hand, I'm not spending my money, I'm spending tax dollars, and the rest of the world is not getting raises."

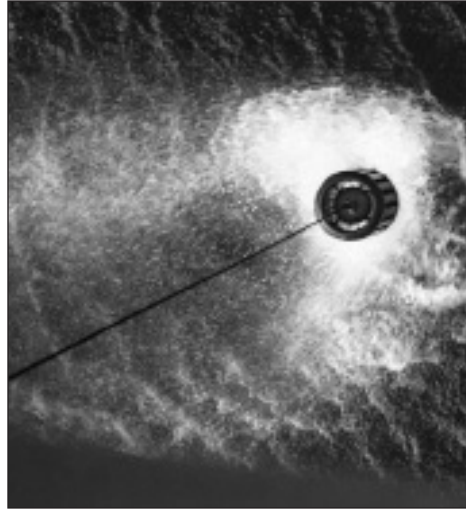
As an administrative assistant to the city manager, Patricia Schilling asked that she and other employees not covered by labor agreements get consideration for bonuses and salary increases. "This staff works hard so hard and so diligently every single day to provide the best services they can for the city and the residents," Schilling said. "The level of staff you're talking about are...they're the ones you call when there's a crisis. They're going to be coming in when everyone else is coming out."

Dolan said the city could give raises to employees if it ends up getting more money at a later time. Council members instructed him look into the compensation that non-union employees of other cities receive, so the Council could decide on whether to grant raises to employees not covered under its labor agreements.

Councilmember Tell said he wanted the Council to approach salary increases on a year-by-year basis with the city's collective bargaining units once their agreements expire. "We have to send a policy message tonight that when these bargaining unit contracts expire, based on what we see in front of us today, we can't afford increases," Tell said. "We have to go year to year and it has to be a policy that this council says, that's what we're doing until we can afford more."\*

## Earthtalk

From the Editors of  
E/The Environmental Magazine



Asonardevicebeingloweredintotheoceanbyananti-submarine squadronhelicopter.Suchdevicesgenerateslow-rolling sound wavestoppingoutataround235decibels;theworld'sloudest rockbandstopoutatonly130.Evidenceshowsthatwhaleswill swimhundredsofmilesrapidlychangetheirdepthandeven beachthemselves togetawayfromthesoundsofsonarimage byU.S.Navy.

Dear EarthTalk: Is it true that military sonar exercises actually kill marine wildlife?

— John Slocum,  
Newport, RI

Unfortunately for many whales, dolphins and other marine life, the use of underwater sonar (short for sound navigation and ranging) can lead to injury and even death. Sonar systems—first developed by the U.S. Navy to detect enemy submarines—generate slow-rolling sound waves topping out at around 235 decibels; the world's loudest rock bands top out at only 130. These sound waves can travel for hundreds of miles under water, and can retain an intensity of 140 decibels as far as 300 miles from their source.

These rolling walls of noise are no doubt too much for some marine wildlife. While little is known about any direct physiological effects of sonar waves on marine species, evidence shows that whales will swim hundreds of miles, rapidly change their depth (sometime leading to bleeding from the eyes and ears), and even beach themselves to get away from the sounds of sonar.

In January 2005, 34 whales of three different species became stranded and died along North Carolina's Outer Banks during nearby offshore Navy sonar training. Other sad examples abound around the coast of the U.S. and elsewhere around, notably in recent years with more sonar testing going on than ever before. According to the nonprofit Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), which has campaigned vigorously to ban use of the technology in waters rich in marine wildlife, recent cases of whale strandings likely represent a small fraction of sonar's toll, given that severely injured animals rarely make it to shore.

In 2003, NRDC spearheaded a successful lawsuit against the Navy to restrict the use of low-frequency sonar off the coast of California. Two years later a coalition of green groups led by NRDC and including the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), the League for Coastal Protection, Cetacean Society International, and Ocean Futures Society upped the ante, asking the federal courts to also restrict testing of more intense, harmful and far ranging mid-frequency types of sonar off Southern California's coastline.

In filing their brief, the groups cited Navy documents which estimated that such testing would kill some 170,000 marine mammals and cause permanent injury to more than 500 whales, not to mention temporary deafness for at least 8,000 others. Coalition lawyers argued that the Navy's testing was in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act.

Two lower courts upheld NRDC's claims, but the Supreme Court ruled that the Navy should be allowed to continue the use of

some mid-frequency sonar testing for the sake of national security. "The decision places marine mammals at greater risk of serious and needless harm," says NRDC's Joel Reynolds.

Environmental groups are still fighting the battle against the sonar, lobbying the government to curtail testing, at least during peacetime, or to at least ramp up testing gradually to give marine wildlife a better chance to flee affected areas. "The U.S. Navy could use a number of proven methods to avoid harming whales when testing mid-frequency sonar," reports IFAW's Fred O'Regan. "Protecting whales and preserving national security are not mutually exclusive."

Contacts: NRDC, [www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org); IFAW, [www.ifaw.org](http://www.ifaw.org).

Dear EarthTalk: How does the microwave compare in energy use, say, to using a gas or electric stove burner to heat water for a cup of tea?

— Tempie  
Dexter, MI

The short answer is that it depends upon several variables, including the price of electricity versus gas, and the relative efficiency of the appliances involved. Typically, though, a microwave would be slightly more efficient at heating water than the flame on a gas stove, and should use up a little less energy. The reason: The microwave's heat waves are focused on the liquid (or food) inside, not on heating the air or container around it, meaning that most if not all of the energy generated is used to make your water ready.

Given this logic, it is hard to believe that a burner element on an electric stovetop would be any better, but an analysis by *Home Energy Magazine* found otherwise. The magazine's researchers discovered that an electric burner uses about 25 percent less electricity than a microwave in boiling a cup of water.

That said, the difference in energy saved by using one method over another is negligible: Choosing the most efficient process might save a heavy tea drinker a dollar or so a year. "You'd save more energy over the year by replacing one light bulb with a CFL (compact fluorescent light bulb) or turning off the air conditioner for an hour—not an hour a day, one hour at some point over the whole year," says consumer advocate Michael Bluejay.

Although a microwave may not save much energy or money over a stove burner when heating water, it can be much more energy-efficient than a traditional full-size oven when it comes to cooking food. For starters, because their heat waves are concentrated on the food, microwaves cook and heat much faster than traditional ovens. According to the federal government's Energy Star program, which rates appliances based on their energy-efficiency, cooking or re-heating small portions of food in the microwave can save as much as 80 percent of the energy used to cook or warm them up in the oven.

The website *Treehugger.com* reports that there are other things you can do to optimize your energy efficiency around the kitchen when cooking. For starters, make sure to keep the inside surfaces of your microwave oven clean so as to maximize the amount of energy reflected toward your food. On a gas stovetop, make sure the flame is fully below the cookware; likewise, on an electric stovetop, make sure the pan or kettle completely covers the heating element to minimize wasted heat. Also, use the appropriate size pan for the job at hand, as smaller pans are cheaper and more energy-efficient to heat up.

Send your environmental questions to: EarthTalk, P.O. Box 5098, Westport, CT 06881; [earthtalk@emagazine.com](mailto:earthtalk@emagazine.com).

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