

Crescent City ready to send sale tax increase measure to voters

August 6, 2020



Crescent City is ready to send to voters Nov. 3 a 1 percent sales tax increase proposal to pay for many sectors within public safety.

The City Council approved to spend up to \$39,900 with the Arcata-based PlanWest Partners and its subcontractor TBWBH Props & Measures for an information campaign about the proposition. They also approved paying an additional \$3,500 for a digital campaign to include content for videos, banner ads and social media.

City Manager Eric Wier explained that if voters approve the sales tax measure, that rate within city limits would increase from 7.5 percent to 8.5 percent through 2022. It would then drop back down to 8.25 percent after a sales tax benefitting the Del Norte County Fairgrounds sunsets in 2022.

Wier expects the sales tax increase to generate \$1.3 million annually and go toward staffing at Crescent City Fire & Rescue and Crescent City Police Department. The money would also go toward infrastructure projects, such as potholes, resurfacing streets and installing and repairing sidewalks. Lastly, the extra dollars would fund keeping the Fred Endert Municipal Pool open.

In addition, the tax proposal would create a citizens' oversight committee to report on how the funds are spent and would require an annual audit of the tax measure. The City Council agreed to appoint Mayor Blake Inscore and Mayor Pro Tem Heidi Kime to an ad-hoc committee that would write an argument in favor of the measure and a rebuttal against an opposing argument.

"I have already begun work on this and because Mayor Pro Tem Kime is a local business owner in the city limits, I ask the council to approve my appointment of myself and Mayor Pro Tem Kime to serve on the ad-hoc committee," Inscore said.

Inscore added it will cost the city between \$5,000 to \$7,000 from its general fund to place the measure on the ballot.

TBWBH Props & Measures Partner Joy Kummer explained how the City Council's extra \$3,500 toward a digital media campaign will help them.

Static banner ads would run digitally for 70 days, generating about 200,000 impressions, increasing the likelihood a person is likely to see the ad to about twice a day on a variety of websites including CNN, MSNBC or Fox News, Kummer said.

Kummer added TBWBH staff would work with the city to create 15-second video ads that could be shown on such platforms as Hulu or YouTube.

"The digital provider, this particular one I'm suggesting we use, we're picking them because of the way they target. They perform much better in smaller communities," Kummer explained. "The reason they do is they purchase a voter file of all registered voters within Crescent City — because we are communicating with all registered voters, we're not going to exclude anyone — everybody in that segment will receive our advertising and given information about the city's measure."

She said the digital provider uses global positioning or radio frequency to define a geographic boundary then use that information to send a message to the specified area, ensuring the digital campaign information reaches eligible voters.

"The other advantage to this is if their ballot is going somewhere else, we'll still be able to target and get them the information wherever they are," Kummer said.