

# Mountain View VOICE



**Food  
fit for  
the gods**

WEEKEND | P.13

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INSIDE: MOVIES | PAGE 16

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## City Council sets the stage for major budget cuts

By Daniel DeBolt

Mountain View residents and city employees responded en masse to the prospect of city budget cuts, packing the City Council chambers Tuesday night until there was nowhere left to stand.

Council members said they had received more than 100 e-mails that afternoon alone from people concerned about a list, released by the city manager last Thursday, which outlined potential cuts to various city services. The list includes

potential cuts to police and library services, cutting off funds to local nonprofits, possibly closing Deer Hollow Farm and a possible 2 percent increase in water rates.

City manager Kevin Duggan said the potential cuts might appear to be severe because the city exhausted its options for less painful cuts last year.

By June, the City Council must sift through the potential cuts, which total somewhere between \$3.3 million and \$4.3 million, to find about \$2 million in savings. The city hopes to find other ways

— including \$1 million in new revenue and \$1 million in employee compensation cuts — to fill the rest of an estimated \$5 million deficit in the 2010-11 fiscal year.

The cuts could mean the elimination of 37 employee positions, about 24 of which are currently filled. Duggan said 80 percent of the city budget is employee compensation costs.

The list of potential cuts includes eliminating or partially cutting funds to

► See **COUNCIL**, page 8

### ■ AT A GLANCE

Proposed measures to improve the city's budget outlook include:

Cuts to the Police Department .....	<b>\$1.4 million</b>
Reduced library hours .....	<b>\$150,000</b>
Reduced code enforcement .....	<b>\$110,000</b>
Eliminating funding to nonprofits .....	<b>\$272,000</b>
Eliminating weed abatement .....	<b>\$105,200</b>
Raising water rates by 2 percent .....	<b>\$300,000</b>

## City may allow medi-pot dispensaries by year's end

TEMPORARY BAN APPROVED, GIVING STAFFERS ENOUGH TIME TO CRAFT REGULATIONS

By Daniel DeBolt

The City Council approved a one-year ban on medical marijuana dispensaries Tuesday to allow time for the city to craft regulations allowing medical marijuana to be sold in Mountain View.

There now appears to be three potential Mountain View dispensary operators, including a man who introduced himself to the council Tuesday as corporate attorney Matt Rocero.

"It can be a very important source of tax revenue," he said. "I have been here since 5 p.m. and heard everything you have been talking about," referring to city's potential budget cuts.

City attorney Jannie Quinn said the council would hold a study session on medical marijuana-related issues before summer break, and proposed regulations could be approved by the council sometime by the end of the year — which is when a City Council election will also be occurring.

Approved by a 4-2 vote, the "non

urgency" prohibition takes effect within 30 days and would sunset on April 18, 2011. It was proposed after an "urgency" interim ban brought before the council two weeks ago failed to gain the six votes it required due to opposition by council members John Inks and Tom Means. Both continued their opposition to any kind of temporary ban on Tuesday.

So far no council member is clearly opposed to having a dispensary in Mountain View. Council member Laura Macias appeared to come close two weeks ago when she noted that the federal government still has not legalized medical marijuana — though the Obama administration has turned a blind eye to it — possibly putting the city in a difficult position.

"There is an interest in making this available," Macias said Tuesday.

Medical marijuana lobbyist Max Del Real said he was surprised at the lack of opposition to medical marijuana in Mountain

► See **POT**, page 9



JAMES TENSUAN

### MAHALO:

Members of Halau 'o Keikiali'i perform traditional Hawaiian dances at the Community School of Music and Arts on Sunday. The group's mission is to educate the public about Hawaiian culture through its performances.

## Guv's Challenge gets teens off the couch

By Kelsey Mesher

When Los Altos High School senior Anna Lee quit competitive swimming last year to participate in Main Street, the school's top choir, she also gave up regular exercise.

There was always an excuse, she explained: She was too busy; her bike tires were flat; her knees were bad and she couldn't run.

Then, in December, she heard about the Governor's Challenge, a statewide program put on by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's Council on Physical Fitness and

Sports aimed at getting students to exercise more. Its premise is simple: commit to exercising for at least 30 minutes three times a week for a month. Perks for participants include free gym memberships and lift tickets at

► See **CHALLENGE**, page 6

INSIDE

MARKETPLACE 18 | REAL ESTATE 21 | VIEWPOINT 12

## COUNCIL

▶ Continued from page 1

13 local nonprofits and services, such as the Day Worker Center and the Community Services Agency, to save up to \$272,000. Council members Jac Siegel and Laura Macias defended the city's funding of local nonprofits, with Macias saying that those services are needed more than ever during a recession.

One resident expressed frustration that some of the wealthiest companies in the world, which are based in Mountain View, could not provide the city more tax revenue.

"The amount of money we are talking about here is a rounding error for Google," he said. "Just because (Google) is not selling physical things, we don't get the same revenue of an Ikea or Walmart. That's insane."

One item on the list is the city's \$110,000 share of funding to Deer Hollow Farm at Rancho San Antonio, which is actually on county land in the hills above Los Altos and Cupertino. If the city cuts that funding, staffers said, it could lead to the full closure of the demonstration farm enjoyed by hundreds of schoolchildren every year.

The meeting was attended by many button-wearing Deer Hollow supporters, including Sue Gale, president of Friends of Deer Hollow Farm, who said the city's funding is matched by 80 volunteers working for free to give tours of the farm every year at a value of at least \$100,000. Most council members agreed it was time to ask neighboring cities to help Mountain View and the county fund Deer Hollow Farm, and Gale agreed.

After residents, city employees and nonprofit representatives spoke in defense of their many programs and services, council member Tom Means said, "Everyone thinks their program is essential, but tell me what isn't."

**On the block**

The list of potential city cuts includes:

■ About \$1.4 million in cuts to the Police Department, including the loss of an unspecified number of low-level police officers, or "community service officers," to save \$785,300. Several other administrative assistant positions would be cut as well. Among the impacts if those cuts

are made, the department says, is that about 100 crime victims a year would not have their cases investigated. Interaction with the public may be handled increasingly by automated phone services and reports taken on the Internet.

■ Eliminating city funding of \$272,000 for 13 local nonprofits and services, including the Community School of Music and Arts, the Community Services Agency, the Day Worker Center, Health Trust, Junior Achievement, Mayview Community Center, Project Sentinel, Catholic Charities long term care ombudsman, Santa Clara Family Health Foundation, Support Network for Battered Women, a youth sports fee waiver and Parents Helping Parents.

■ Reducing library hours by six to eight hours a week could save \$150,000, while library staff,

Employee Services Department would save up to \$150,000.

■ Reducing tree trimming of the city's 28,000 trees, or transferring maintenance of 12,800 street trees to property owners, would save up to \$325,000. The report says the city could lose its "Tree City USA" status.

In addition to these proposed cuts, the city is considering raising water rates on residents by 2 percent, saving the city government \$300,000 on its own water bills.

The council has until June to pass a final city budget.

**Reasons for deficit**

The city's costs are increasing by about \$4 million every year, officials say, mainly due to rising employee compensation costs — increasingly expensive pensions,

retirement health benefits and contractual cost-of-living adjustments.

For now, however, the city is unable to significantly contain those costs, council members say, as only the Police Department's

***The city's costs are increasing by about \$4 million every year, mainly due to rising employee compensation costs — increasingly expensive pensions, retirement health benefits and contractual cost-of-living adjustments.***

union contract is up for renegotiation this year.


The remaining city employees are largely represented by three other unions, which have contracts up for renegotiation in June 2011. Duggan said the city could save \$1 million a year by reducing the Fire Department's minimum staffing requirement of firefighters on duty from 21 to 19. The current staffing requirement is set in a union contract with firefighters.

In his report released last week, Duggan announced that city staffers have found \$1 million in other budget savings over the last year, reducing the projected deficit from \$5 million to \$4 million. The \$1 million in savings was found mostly in a reorganization of the Police Department for a savings of \$512,000. There is also \$25,000 in reduced fuel costs, \$70,000 saved from contracting out an emergency medical services coordinator in the Fire Department, \$170,000 in savings from paying its pension rate to the state at the beginning of the year, and \$100,000 saved from renegotiating the city's purchasing contracts.

The 26-page report can be found at [www.mountainview.gov](http://www.mountainview.gov) under City Council agendas and public records. Look for the Feb. 23, 2010 council meeting packet. ▀

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**Tutor Quotes:**

"I wish I could spend even more time with her, she is learning so quickly."

"I have learned to listen carefully, enthusiastically and to build our great personal relationship."

**Partners for New Generations****You can make a difference ...**

...by being a mentor or tutor for the Los Altos and Mountain View schools and Child Advocates in Silicon Valley.

We need more volunteer tutors and mentors to assist our community's children. Our motto is: "You're only young once but you can make a difference forever." Please help us make a difference by volunteering today.

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