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SBWIB, Northrop Grumman Welcome Engineering Grads



The South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) and its Aero-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship partners recently welcomed the first graduates from Northrop Grumman's Spring 2017 HIP (High School Involvement Partnership) program. Among the 23 youth enrolled in Northrop Grumman's HIP program, 20 enlisted in SBWIB's pilot "earn and learn" Aero-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship in Engineering. Photo Provided by SBWIB

Residents Strongly Support Tax Increase as Council Approves Ordinance for November Ballot

By Derrick Deane

With overwhelming support from local residents in attendance, the Hawthorne City Council on Tuesday unanimously approved an ordinance that will place a proposal for a 75-cent municipal tax increase on November's Special Election ballot.

One after another, residents urged the Council to pass the ordinance and for Hawthorne residents to support the increase later this year. "I think this tax increase is necessary because I think Hawthorne is on the cusp of potential greatness," Neal Gaffney said. "We've landed the Marriott, we've got a number of other things going on with national chains, and for sure business developers are going to look at the status of Hawthorne from a financial standpoint and want to see stability."

Many who addressed the Council spoke of the city being poised for a bright future. "I see us with a future that looks great," Planning Commission member Pat Carey said. "We see improvement on Hawthorne Boulevard. I see the plans that are coming for the mall and the developments that we've approved and blessed. I applaud the City's efforts to proactively address the fiscal emergencies of the city."

Tax increases are of course tricky issues to propose to voters. However, every person who addressed the Council echoed the necessity of this particular increase. "We don't like tax increases, but this is very special," Alex Monteiro said. "We need this. The City has aggressively controlled costs by addressing almost \$50 million in deficits for these past eight years. It is about time to pursue a balanced budget approach that cannot involve employee reduction, concession, or reduction of service."

As of July 1, 15 other California cities will increase their municipal sales tax in order to maintain a balanced budget without cutting services. Area cities include Compton, Inglewood, Culver City, Santa Monica and Long Beach.

"During our recent budget meeting, I mentioned that the structural deficit is still there and by no means are we out of the woods," City Manager Arnie Shadbehr said during his fiscal presentation to the Council regarding the tax increase. "A lot of work is ahead of us and \$2.6 million of additional revenue in the 2017-2018 fiscal year should not even be

called a surplus."

The City Council decided to set aside that surplus as a reserve, a move that Shadbehr called "a very responsible thing to do." Shadbehr added that despite the current council's best efforts, it cannot be expected to wipe away years of mismanagement that has put the City in its current financial state. "If the general fund is healthy, it should provide funding for street and park maintenance,--not the other way around," he said of nearly \$3 million of funding that has come from Public Works in the past two budgets.

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Weekend Forecast

Friday
Sunny
74°/63°



Saturday
Sunny
73°/63°



Sunday
Sunny
74°/64°



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