



# Veterans Memorial Buildings Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes – February 4, 2025

Sebastopol Center for the Arts

## Advisory Committee

Cloverdale – Terry Conway  
Cotati – Brandon Stewart (absent)  
Guerneville – Ken Holybee (absent)  
Petaluma – Duane Wilson  
Santa Rosa – Lou Nuñez  
Sebastopol – Lewis Spengler  
Sonoma – Terry Leen  
UVC – Bob Safreno (absent)

## Sebastopol Center for the Arts

Danny Foster – Facilities Manager

## Guests

Ronda Ross-Leen – VFW Aux 1943

## County of Sonoma

Tammy Curtis – Department Analyst  
Amanda Bouillercce – Veterans Liaison (absent)  
James McBeth – Facility Manager  
Kara Mack – Events Mgmt Supervisor  
Johannes Hoevertsz – Director (absent)  
Eric Buchold – Asst Building Superintendent  
Michelle Ling – Deputy Director (absent)

## Sonoma County Fairgrounds

Stephanie Goodwin – Operations & Bldg Mgr  
Matthew Daly – Fairgrounds COO (absent)

## City of Cotati

Ashley Wilson – Recreation Manager

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of Minutes
  - a. Correction: from the Santa Rosa Auditorium Report (10.e.) “DAV 283” to “VVA 223”
  - b. Motion to accept by Lou, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Terry Conway
5. Public Comments/Questions
  - a. None
6. Old Business
  - a. n/a
7. Guest Speaker
  - a. None
8. Correspondence
  - a. None
9. Building Reports by Building Operator
  - a. Public Infrastructure
    - i. Guerneville: Still a shelter. Ivy was just cut, tree work done, no rodents found.
    - ii. Petaluma: Parking lot restriped, landscaping done, heater fixed in banquet room, ordered more silverware and 10x10 portable screen. If it works well we’ll get one for Sonoma. Lots of fundraisers booked and more reservations during the week.
    - iii. Sonoma: Dead bushes removed, heater is now working in the lounge room (thermostat replaced), soap dispenser installed in kitchen. Reservations include fundraisers and normal bookings.

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- iv. Operational Budget (Tammy): Expenditures: \$548K, revenue: \$157K, net cost: \$391K. Mid-year projections: on target to hit net cost based on current general fund lead in.
  - c. Cotati: use agreement has extended for another six months with the hope to extend beyond that after negotiations. Gopher issue in the park and surrounding area, being resolved. 28 total events (3 for vets), 3 more scheduled this month. Expect for things to pick up in the spring – every weekend in May has been booked.
  - d. Santa Rosa: Solar project has been completed (Jan 15). Final power testing with PG&E is tomorrow. Jan: 24 veteran, 41 non-veteran; Feb: 20 veteran, 37 non-veteran projected; March: about the same projected. Event types include memorials, pancake fundraiser, Valentine’s craft fair, outdoor market (Mar 16 – October).
  - e. Sebastopol: Everything is going smoothly. We have a decent number of events – posted to tourism to bring attention to the facility. We’re working with the Rotary Club to help clear the ground – UC Master Gardeners will host educational/demonstration garden on site. Kitchen renovation is proceeding slowly (renovation delayed, looking for designers).
- 10. Auditorium Reports by Veteran
  - a. Cloverdale: Thank you to maintenance crew who worked hard to resolve the drainage issue. Lighting issues taken care of, still hoping for LED lights in the auditorium, but the current lights are maintained. Painting needed, mostly the trim. 31 veteran events, 5 private events, 6 community events. Full calendar for February. Conducting an energy review inside the building.
  - b. Cotati: absent
  - c. Guerneville: absent
  - d. Petaluma: Thank you to James and Kara for resolving the sewer issue last year, carpet replaced, new wainscoting, new drapes. Went from a 1960s smoker’s bar to light and airy – big thank you to everyone. Parking lot striped.
  - e. Santa Rosa: Parking lot striping only partially done – will they do the whole thing? Ans (Erich): the project is being done in phases, the second phase after solar project is done.
  - f. Sebastopol: Frustrated about the kitchen remodel and annual budget. Nothing is happening yet, and they keep saying they need an inspection but nothing seems to be happening. The date keeps getting pushed off, what is the hold up? Why can’t we get a crew in there? Will we have a kitchen for our St Patrick’s dinner on March 15? Contact has been Kasey Williams who reports to Michelle Ling.
    - i. James: that’s the capital projects team, not the maintenance team (James and Erich), but I will look into this for you.
    - ii. Lewis: The money has been approved but nothing has happened, and Sebastopol has been left out of the loop.
    - iii. Danny: I spoke with Kasey who said the main issue is that there have been several project managers (Kasey took over for Yulis). He said the designers would take a month, then they can shop for contractors and get a permit at the same time. He needed to find a 2023 health report too.
    - iv. Terry: James please talk to Kasey and loop me in on this. I know turn over is a big frustration and we don’t want to have this project stalled.

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- v. James: The kitchen is small, but it won't be done by St Patrick's Day. Permitting is a several month process, and realistically this is a year-long project. You can try to streamline, but I would rather not overpromise.
- vi. Lewis: Should we be concerned about our next big fundraiser around Christmas?
- vii. James: I will see what I can find out.
- viii. Terry: Please keep me in the loop and make sure Lewis is informed.
- g. Sonoma: What is happening with the patio? Ans: Kara and James are working on it, needs ADA improvements.

### 11. Capital Projects Update

#### a. Current Projects –

- i. Cloverdale Kitchen & ADA: a design firm has been procured and our kickoff meeting is Friday 2/7. Next steps:

1. Pre-design conceptualization and feasibility: 2/10-2/24
  - a. Project objectives, budget, other requirements identified
  - b. Conduct feasibility studies
  - c. Develop initial site concept and vision.
2. Schematic Design: 2/25-3/11
  - a. Develop early conceptual sketches and diagrams
  - b. Define space planning, layout, aesthetics
  - c. Identify basic structural, mechanical, electrical systems
  - d. Preliminary cost estimates

- ii. Santa Rosa Exterior Wall Repair

1. Bid is complete, contract award estimated for 3/20

- iii. Cloverdale Generator

1. Redesign is in progress, completion estimated 2/7
2. Next steps: rebid scheduled for 2/21

#### b. Capital Priorities –

- i. Sonoma Vets HVAC: contractor doesn't have shipping date for rooftop, exhaust fans will ship in February.
- ii. Sonoma lobby/lounge AC, Sonoma parking lot ADA, Sebastopol ADA: all have contracts and construction documents sent out, due to be completed by 2/14. Contracts will be executed the week of 2/18.
- iii. Q: Sonoma is supposed to have an energy review, was that done?
  1. Erich: Yes, for lighting. Estimated timeline is within the next six months.

### 12. New Business

- a. Rental Rates (Tammy) – It looks like rates have not been raised since 2011/2012, with discounts for weekdays and nonprofits added in 2015. We would like to ask the Board of Supervisors to increase all rental rates by 10% at the next fee hearing on March 25<sup>th</sup>. Many sites have asked for increased, even bigger than 10%.
  - i. Lou: it's too low. Can we increase more than 10%? Tammy: yes we can, the problem is they're going to want to do baby steps. My plan is to ask for 10% but review & increase annually until we catch up. We can look at the impact of a 10% increase and adjust as needed every year. Keep in mind that when we

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increase our revenue our general fund match will decrease, so this doesn't mean we'll have more money for other projects. But the more revenue we have the smaller offset we need, so raising it more than 10% will not give us an increased benefit. Clarification: the 10% raise will be rounded (\$90 vs \$87.72 or similar).

- ii. Lou: we have asked customers how they would feel about a rate increase, and they are comfortable with it. Stephanie: Matt sent an email asking how a rate increase would impact our customers, and everyone was on board. Tammy: can Matt send me that information?
- iii. Cloverdale: 10% is fine.
- iv. Cotati: I'm fine with 10%. What's the next step if the BOS approves? Tammy: new rates as of July 1.
- v. Petaluma: Why do we want to raise rates if it won't increase our overall revenue, and just decrease the offset from the General Fund? Tammy: Because we don't always get that general fund. If purse strings get tight, they will pull back from us. Duane: okay, let's bring it up a bit. Tammy: I'm happy to ask for more, but we'll see what management says. We don't want to be shut down, but having positive feedback here is good.
- vi. Lewis: I have a mixed opinion. The veterans buildings are operated for the benefit of the veterans and should be paid for by the county, the same way they pay for the Sheriff. They don't ask the Sheriff's Office to write more tickets or the Fire Dept to have more fires – they just pay for the Fire Dept. I realize these buildings are rented to generate revenue, which offsets the cost of the buildings. Our building is operated by the Center for the Arts, so they're more involved in this than we are. Tammy: this would allow them to raise their rates. Danny: according to my reading of the lease I am allowed to raise the rates once a year as long as its under a certain threshold, and I did that last fall. I believe its within the lease terms. Tammy: I'll let Pamela know and we'll work on that with you.
- vii. Terry Leen: This is going to go before the Board with our recommendations. I understand that we need to cover some costs, but I'm more in Lewis' camp in that these are public buildings designated by the Board of Supervisors for the benefit of veterans and the community. I don't like to see increased rates because some of the buildings are underutilized, and it will impact some community members that can't afford to rent them anymore. We will take a vote on 10% - and I would add an automatic increase of 3% every year for cost of living. Tammy: fee hearings only let you go a year at a time, so we would have to ask every year.
- viii. Terry Conway: After listening to the discussion, I'm in favor of an increase for cost of living, especially considering our single biggest expense is utilities and we have to match those increases.
- ix. Lewis: Is there any way our increase in rental rate increase would not decrease the general fund contribution by the county? Tammy: No, this is just a protection in case the general fund contribution reduces. We never really know

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how much the BOS will contribute annually – and neither do they, since we don't know what the annual ask will be county-wide.

- x. Motion to increase rates by 10%: Lou. 2<sup>nd</sup>, Duane. All in favor: Terry Conway, Duane, Lou, Lewis; Nay: Terry Leen. Motion passes.
- xi. Ashley: Is it possible the BOS will counter with, for example, 5%? Tammy: There are annual caps, but given that we've not raised rates in a while we can argue that 10% is reasonable.
- xii. Stephanie: SR does not do nonprofit or weekday discounts. Is it possible that not all buildings have to raise their rates? Tammy: Yes, it's possible.

### 13. Good of the Order

- a. Terry: Please pass the word to your organizations that we all need to treat the staff respectfully. There have been issues. We are all on the same team – trying to make these buildings successful. Please pass that along. Continue to talk to your Board of Supervisors, I am excited about our new supervisor and I feel confident. She has worked with Mike Thompson and knows local/federal veterans affairs. Please build a rapport with your Board members.
- b. Lou: St Patty's dinner on March 15 – doors open at 5pm, dinner at 6pm.

### 14. Motion to Adjourn – Terry Leen.