

VENETA CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Title/Topic: Law Enforcement Services Funding

Meeting Date: March 10, 2025
Department: Law Enforcement

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ISSUE STATEMENT

Should the Veneta City Council direct staff to prepare a resolution to adjust the Public Safety Fee to close a funding gap for the law enforcement services provided by the Lane County Sheriff's Office?

BACKGROUND

The City of Veneta contracts with the Lane County Sherriff's Office (LCSO) to provide law enforcement services. The City's contract provides the community twenty hours of dedicated police coverage each day by a part-time sergeant and four deputy sheriffs, including the necessary equipment to conduct police services. Starting January 1, 2025, the contract sergeant position changed from a part-time position to a full-time one.

It has been the City's budgeting policy to limit at 50% the percentage of property taxes that go towards the LCSO contract. This policy prevents increasing contract costs from diverting property tax funding from parks, planning, and administration services. The City's Public Safety Fee, enacted in 2021, added a flexible funding mechanism for public safety expenditures including law enforcement services.

With the increased sergeant time and a new deputy union contract, the total contract cost increased about \$177,000 to \$1,257,225. Compared to similar-sized cities' law enforcement costs ranging from \$1.4 million to \$3.6 million, the City's LCSO contract is the best-priced option for the City.

The City's estimated property tax revenue for the coming 2025-2026 fiscal year is \$1,976,661, of which 50% for the LCSO contract is \$988,330. This is \$32,000 more than last year.

Last year, the City Council approved a \$2.00 adjustment from \$4.00 to \$6.00 per month reflecting a \$0.75 adjustment to cover increased LCSO contract costs and a \$1.25 adjustment for code enforcement costs. At \$6.00/month, the revenue generated is roughly \$150,000.

Taking the LCSO contract cost and property tax and Public Safety Fee revenue together, the resulting funding gap is roughly \$118,895.

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The table below summarizes these figures:

Expenditures		
	LCSO Contract	\$ 1,257,225
Revenues		
	Property Tax FY 2025	\$ 988,330
	\$6.00 Public Safety Fee	\$ 150,000
	Total	\$ 1,138,330
Difference w/ Total Estimate Revenue		\$ 118,895

In October 2024 when the City Council deliberated on adding the full-time sergeant, Staff shared that an \$11.00/month Public Safety Fee would cover the anticipated funding gap. Later, the Council elected to adjust the Fee \$2.00 to \$6.00/month and use reserves to bridge the remaining funding gap. Staff also shared that if property tax revenue continues to increase, the funding gap could diminish and be covered.

Again, increasing the Public Safety Fee to \$11.00/month should cover the funding gap. However, the City Council could elect to use any available reserves or inter-loan funds to lessen the needed Public Safety Fee adjustment. For example, the Council could elect to adjust the Public Safety Fee \$2.00 to \$8.00 (adding roughly \$50,000 of revenue) and direct staff to budget for the remaining estimated \$75,000 funding gap in the upcoming 2025-2026 fiscal year budget to cover the estimated \$118,895 funding gap.

COUNCIL OPTIONS

1. Direct staff to bring forth a resolution to increase the Public Safety Fee to \$8.00 per month.
2. Direct staff to bring forth a resolution to increase the Public Safety Fee to \$11.00 per month.
3. Direct staff to bring forth a resolution to increase the Public Safety Fee to a monthly level directed by Council.
4. Direct Staff to conduct further analysis on the public safety fee and come back to City Council in April with additional options.
5. Take no action. Maintain the Public Safety Fee at \$6.00 per month.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATION

Option #1: Direct staff to bring forth a resolution to increase the Public Safety Fee to \$8.00 per month.

SUGGESTED MOTION

"I make a motion to direct staff to bring forth a resolution to increase the Public Safety Fee to \$8.00 per month."

ATTACHMENTS

None