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Midnight is always the best time for passing tax hikes.

This past Monday, Valentine's Day at midnight, Pacifica City Council approved polling to crowbar the largest tax hike in Pacifica history onto the November 2022 ballot.

And they did it again the next night, holding a secret meeting attended by zero members of the public to consider raising wastewater rates.

So what's prompting this? Ex-Mayor Sue Beckmeyer's folly, a \$12M new Civic Center construction project passed with no oversight or knowledge, has virtually bankrupted the City of Pacifica.

Beckmeyer was concerned that the new taxes would coincide with her re-election attempt.

City Manager Kevin Woodhouse opened the meeting by stating that "the can has been kicked down the road as far as it can be kicked down the road," adding that Pacifica is less than 24 months from a \$2 million annual structural deficit and that the city is being kept afloat only by American Rescue Act (Covid-19) funds.

Woodhouse's pledge to run a "transparent process with robust public input" was belied by the fact that there was only a single public attendee, who pointed out the irony of this statement, suggesting that the council ask former San Carlos City Manager Brian Moura about the impact of a 20% Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) or immediately canceling the \$12 million Civic Center project, but those questions were not asked.

Council heard recommendations by Moura, now with RGS, before directing staff to immediately retain a polling agency to poll on a 15.5% TOT (hotel tax), a new citywide sales tax, and an increase in what are already the highest user utility tax rates in San Mateo County, intending to put the possibility of three new taxes to a June approval for the November 2022 ballot.

The meeting ended at 12:32 a.m. or 32 minutes past midnight.

<http://www.smcfree.com/tax/ppt.pdf>