



April 13, 2020

Mayor & City Council Members
City of Fort Bragg
416 N. Franklin St.
Fort Bragg City Hall, ext. 147
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

Re: Responding to the Budget Challenges Caused by the COVID-19 Crisis

Dear Mayor Lee and Members of the Council:

The dramatic and unprecedented impacts of COVID-19 on our community, our ability to provide city services and on city revenues needed to cover city operations are indeed deeply concerning. As representatives of the citizens of Fort Bragg, you have a weighty and challenging task to guide the city through this crisis. We appreciate your commitment and service to the city. You all have recognized the difficult days ahead and the hard decisions that will need to be made going forward to continue to provide essential services while overseeing the city's financial stability.

As city staff we have worked hard to keep services running, our water and wastewater systems operating efficiently, our streets clean, infrastructure in good repair, and our community safe. In fact, the city switched over to its new wastewater system in the midst of this crisis without a hitch. We want to work with the Council to get through this challenging time.

The city has been able to operate with a small but efficient staff in meeting its many duties and obligations. These lean operations don't have much excess capacity. Every employee plays a key role in keeping our city operating.

The Council faces a challenge about how best to confront the budget shortfall that will come with significant drops in the Transit Occupancy Tax and Sales Tax revenue. We ask that you proceed cautiously and conservatively. Cutting too much or forgoing certain functions may have a bigger financial impact on the city than keeping things as they are. We urge you to take a longer term view on confronting the fiscal challenges the city is facing. Use the reserves and rainy day set asides wisely and judiciously, so that we keep things working and are able to take advantage of opportunities that arise.

This crisis will end and our economy will rebound, we need our staff intact and in place to hold things together and to ramp up when the situation brightens.

Sincerely,

Alden Ramos, Heath Daniels, Joanna Gonzalez and Laura Bianchi Limbird
Fort Bragg Employees Organization, SEIU Local 1021