



CITY OF PACIFIC GROVE
300 Forest Avenue, Pacific Grove, California 93950

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Cynthia Garfield, Council Member

MEETING DATE: February 1, 2017

SUBJECT: Report from League of California Cities Academy for New Mayors and Council Members

CEQA: This action does not constitute a “project” as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines section 15378.

RECOMMENDATION
Receive the report.

DISCUSSION

Attendance at the League of California Cities included classes to orient new council members and mayors to legal, political, constituent and collegial issues; the schedule included networking events and discussion opportunities to learn more about other cities’ issues.

Classes and sessions were held on January 18, 19 and 20, necessitating my absence from the January 18 City Council Meeting. The 700+ page manual can be seen at <http://www.cacities.org/Education-Events/New-Mayors-Council-Members-Academy/For-Attendees/Materials>

ACADEMY SUMMARY

As part of the Academy, the League of California Cities presented their role in advocating for local cities’ interests, tracking legislative trends and actions that impact cities, and providing expertise in more complicated legislative issues such as pension reform and FAA influence on issues such as drone regulation. In 2017, the League will be advocating in seven areas of local concern:

- Increased funding for water and transportation infrastructure
- Realistic funding for homelessness
- Increased attention, with state-level incentives, for affordable housing
- Public Safety, including local enforcement issues surrounding legal adult use of marijuana.

In addition to these priorities, the League supports seven committees; one deals with pension issues. Finally, the League allows cities to join a joint-purchasing alliance, bond financing for development projects, CalTrust for investment of funds and group health-insurance purchasing. The Academy opened with a Boot Camp to cover the basic necessities for those of us serving our first terms as elected officials. Additional sessions in Advocacy, Policy Role in Land Use

Planning, Relationships with City Manager and Staff, Communications, Legal Responsibilities, Revenues, City Departments and Ethics.

Further attention, across sessions, was placed on the importance of budgeting (from creating to managing and evaluating outcomes), assessing financial health/warnings, setting logical policy direction, clear communications within and from individuals and council as a whole, and the importance of transparency and clarity in all dealings. The sessions stressed the value of modeling tolerance and learning in our reactions to and interactions with concerned public.

Various presenters underscored the value of metrics, the importance of emergency planning, and the challenges and value of social media.

The group of attendees spent every available free moment comparing notes on issues raised during all of our recent campaigns. Key issues of concern to other communities included: marijuana growing and sales regulations and resulting policing issues for a cash-based industry, large-scale development challenges for infrastructure and community, reaching out to include public input and thinking, preparing for increasing pension obligations, affordability of housing, social media use/policies, and short-term rentals. Pacific Grove's STR policy was received as a model for many of our fellow cities to use to craft their own ordinances.

The conference provided very valuable information that will be immediately useful for my service on council. In addition, learning the concerns of other communities' underscored how wonderful Pacific Grove is.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

In addition to attending the above described sessions, I was able to meet with State Assembly Member Mark Stone to put forth Pacific Grove's concerns about needed pension reform. I also met with Stockton's City Manager, Kurt Wilson, to learn first-hand about their experience with bankruptcy in relation to their pension obligations. Stockton elected to NOT reduce their pension obligations during their Chapter 9 bankruptcy proceedings because the reduction would have applied equally to current as well as past pension obligations. Stockton's assessment was that such a reduction (up to 40%) would have led to wholesale resignations and extreme difficulty in subsequent recruitment, particularly in public safety positions.

OPTIONS

1. Information only; no action required.

FISCAL IMPACT

Expenses related to attendance at the League of California Cities were covered as part of the City budget.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Cynthia Garfield

Cynthia Garfield, Councilmember