

LONG BEACH

City to vote on \$95M budget

Barring changes, plan carries 12.3% raise to taxes

BY JOHN ASBURY
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The Long Beach City Council will hold a special meeting Wednesday to vote on a proposed \$95 million budget that could carry a 12.3 percent tax hike.

City Council members must approve by Wednesday any

changes to reduce the tax hike. If they do not, the proposed budget and double-digit tax hike will become permanent for the next year.

The tax increase represents a \$4.5 million deficit that needs to be closed to maintain current services, officials said. The proposed tax hike would cost Long Beach homeowners an average of \$400 more a year.

City Council members have not proposed any cuts to jobs or services.

"The City Council is working tirelessly to try to craft a financially responsible budget that is

fair to the taxpayers," City Council Vice President Chumi Diamond said. "I remain committed to making the tough decisions necessary to ensure that the city has a comprehensive fiscal plan going forward."

City Council members have said during past meetings that they would like to reduce overtime and require reimbursement for expenses related to special events, such as festivals.

Council members will also vote on the city's \$4 million capital improvement plan for the next fiscal year that starts July 1 and to schedule a hearing June

19 to consider requiring special-event organizers to cover their costs.

Acting City Manager Michael Tangney at a May 15 public hearing gave a presentation of the city's biggest budget items, including city-operated day care, employee health care contributions, the paid fire department, the police department and special events. He said city health care costs and salaries account for nearly half the budget. He suggested increasing city revenue by adding parking meters.

Residents have said that City

Council members and city management should sacrifice salaries and raises.

The City Council voted May 15 to exceed the city's 2.65 percent tax cap.

The meeting is set for 7 p.m. on the sixth floor of Long Beach City Hall.

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BROOKHAVEN TOWN

\$15M trash contracts questioned by labor

BY CARL MACGOWAN
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A labor leader has questioned Brookhaven Town's decision to award trash-hauling contracts worth nearly \$15.8 million to nonunion companies.

Long Island Federation of Labor executive director Roger Clayman said at a town board meeting Thursday he was disappointed that Maggio Sanitation of Medford and Dejana Industries of Port Washington did not win contracts to collect trash and recyclables in four town garbage districts.

Both companies employ union workers, Clayman said.

The contracts, each for seven years and collectively worth \$15,783,621.20, were awarded to European-American Waste Disposal Corp. of Ronkonkoma and Jody Enterprises of Medford.

"I think this is unfortunate," Clayman said. Maggio and Dejana "have provided good services to Brookhaven Town," he said, adding that union jobs are "a pathway to the middle class for many people who have them."

Brookhaven officials told Clayman they are required by state law to award the refuse deals to the qualified companies that submit the lowest offers in a competitive bidding process.

Officials said the town is not allowed to favor union firms over nonunion companies.

"All of our contracts are competitively bid," Town Supervisor Edward P. Romaine told Clayman at the meeting. "Normally, we're very supportive of

our contractors paying fair wages."

Matt Miner, Brookhaven's chief of operations and commissioner of the Department of Recycling and Sustainable Materials Management, said Dejana and Maggio submitted bids that were "much higher" than those from at least six other companies, including European-American and Jody Enterprises.

Miner said the Jody and European-American deals will save the town about \$2.5 million next year.

European-American bid \$4.55 million, \$5.28 million and \$3.65 million for the three contracts they won. Jody submitted a successful \$2.3 million bid for the fourth contract.

The town board voted 7-0 Thursday to approve the Jody and European-American pacts. Trash collection contracts for the town's 31 other garbage districts had been approved for five companies on May 3.

Clayman said European-American and Jody don't pay their workers as much as union companies, adding he believes the nonunion companies' costs ultimately will prove to be higher than their bids. Miner said those companies are "in compliance" with state rules requiring government contractors to pay prevailing wages to employees.

He added Jody and European-American "have been serving the town for 10 years" under previous contracts.

Officials from European-American and Maggio Sanitation declined to comment. Jody Enterprises and Dejana officials did not return calls for comment.



A sure sign that summer isn't far away

EAST MEADOW. Al Berasti of Carle Place tosses his ball on a bocce court at Eisenhower Park on Tuesday. He was among two dozen regulars who come to the court when the weather is good.