

BUDGET ISSUE SUMMARY FORM

Budget Issue Title: Captioning for Council Meeting Broadcasts

Lead Department: Office of the City Manager

1. What are the key elements of the issue? What precipitated it?

This issue considers whether or not to caption City Council meetings. Currently, Sunnyvale broadcasts its City Council meetings on the City's cable channel KSUN-15 without a captioning feature. Councilmember Whittum noted that providing captions for Council meetings would improve the ability of hearing-impaired viewers to follow the meetings as well as provide a transcript of the meeting for people wishing to review the details of conversations not recorded in the official Council meeting minutes.

There are two key options to consider – live versus recorded (also known as archived or offline) captioning. Live captioning displays a real-time transcription of the meeting dialogue on the viewer's screen as the meeting is occurring. Recorded captioning is typically used to apply captions to recorded television shows. The service provider would use the recording of the meeting to transcribe the dialogue and then create the captioning feature for display when the meetings are re-broadcast. Live captioning has about a 98% accuracy rate which means that viewers would see an average of three to four errors every minute if a speaker is talking at about 250 words per minute. Recorded captioning would yield near 100% accuracy; however, this service costs significantly more and takes several days to complete depending upon the length of the meeting.

Staff gathered some initial price quotes and estimated the City's annual costs based upon an average of 30 Council meetings per year at four hours per meeting (120 hours of meetings annually). With both live and recorded options, a written transcript of the captioned material is provided and could be archived with other meeting materials in the City's agenda management system. For comparison, staff included the cost to simply obtain a transcription of the meeting without the captioning technology.

- Live captioning: \$85/hour; \$10,200 (annual)
- Recorded captioning: \$350 - \$400/hour; \$42,000 - \$48,000 (annual)
- Transcript only: \$200/hour; \$24,000 (annual)

The price range for recorded captioning reflects options for how the captioned information is displayed for viewers

2. How does this relate to the General Plan or existing City Policy?

Policy 7.2.1 Community Engagement— Goals and Policies

Goal A: Achieve a community in which all community members are well informed about local issues, City Programs and Services.

Policy A.1 Assure that all community members have reasonable access to City information, services and programs within budgeted resources.

Policy A.3 Ensure an integrated approach to informing community members about local issues, City programs and services that reaches segments of a diverse community.

Goal B: Achieve a community in which all community members can be actively involved in shaping the quality of life and participate in local community and government activities.

Policy B.2 Simplify processes and procedures to make it easy and convenient for community members to participate in City activities and programs.

3. Is the budget issue a: PROJECT _____ OPERATING ___X___

4. If the issue is operating, specify the change in service objective(s) that would result (from what, to what). If the issue is a project, write N/A.

Captioning would not change any City service objective; rather, it would allow staff to better achieve the existing objectives identified under #2 above.

5. Origin of issue: Council ___X___ Councilmember Whittum

Board and Commission _____ Board/Commission: _____

Staff _____ Department _____

6. Projected cost (list rough annual cost of budget item):

Operating Issue \$10,200 – 48,000 (Annual Operating Costs)

Capital/Project \$ _____ (Project Cost)

\$ _____ (Associated Annual Operating Costs)

7. Recommended funding source:

New revenue source General Fund

Service level reduction _____

Other _____

Please describe recommended funding source: _____

8. Staff evaluation and recommendation of proposed budget issue:

Evaluation: While the proposed captioning/transcription options would have positive outcomes such as assisting the hearing-impaired with engaging in City business and governance and providing written documentation of the meeting dialogue, the cost of these services would need to be weighed in the context of all other City priorities.

Refer budget issue for consideration in Recommended Budget X

Defer budget issue to future fiscal year _____

Drop budget issue _____

Reviewed by:

 Scott Wallen, Asst. City Mgr.
Director Name, Title

Reviewed by:

 [Signature]
for Gary Luebbers, City Manager