



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

SPECIAL MEETING STAFF REPORT

April 15, 2020

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Garrett Toy, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Discuss/consider business assistance programs related to COVID-19

RECOMMENDATION

Discuss/consider business assistance programs related to COVID-19 and direct staff as appropriate.

DISCUSSION

Mayor Goddard and Councilmember Hellman requested that this matter be placed on the agenda for discussion. With the Shelter in Place (SIP) order due to COVID-19, many businesses are experiencing financial hardships.

The Town's approach to date has been to financially assist the Chamber of Commerce with website modifications/upgrades to better publicize to the community which businesses are open during the SIP order. Given our limited resources, this seems to better leverage our funds.

However, some businesses and the Chamber have expressed interest in the San Rafael business relief program. Our understanding of the City of San Rafael program is that San Rafael reallocated \$50,000 it normally provides to the Chamber and BID (business improvement district) toward the grant program. The Chamber and BID agreed to the reallocation. However, the majority of the program funding came from private donors. The County of Marin is also considering some level of matching funds. If the County does do that, they would most likely extend a similar match to other communities. The San Rafael program provides grants up to \$5,000 to eligible small businesses affected by the SIP order.

That being said, any program adopted by the Town would be on a much lower scale because we don't have the same resources as San Rafael. Factors to consider for such a program would include the amount available, effectiveness (i.e., is the funding sufficient to allow a business to reopen and/or stay in business), use of funds (e.g., owners, rent, employees), and loan v. grant. Another key factor would be the available matching funds from the County.

Should the Council want to consider a business relief program, we may want to survey the businesses first about their preferred structure of any business program.

FISCAL IMPACT

To be determined