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## Still in Flux, FY 2013 Budget Inches Closer to Balanced Picture

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The City of Orinda's current fiscal year budget (FY 2013) remained a moving target as staff and City Council members continued to whittle down a nearly quarter million dollar deficit in yet another budget workshop - this time prior to the regularly scheduled Council meeting on June 5.

The latest projections still reflect one percent declines in property taxes of \$182,773 and in lieu of vehicle license fees of \$73,642, along with estimated losses of \$9,000 and \$45,000 due to pending property tax appeals and flat planning and permit revenues.

With an improved picture from Comcast and PG&E, however, the estimated Franchise Fee and Property Transfer Tax decline will likely now only be \$22,395. This dip is due to Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority fees coming in at only 0.04 percent of what was originally anticipated in initial budget projections.

With the "To Solve" pared down to \$124,626, staff recommended the following changes for the Council's consideration:

- City Clerk - Reduce Election Costs \$ 1,000
  - City Manager - Eliminate ICLEI Local \$ 600
- Government for Sustainability Membership
- Planning - Restructure \$ 93,468
  - Police - Non-Personnel Savings \$ 28,558
  - Public Works/Engineering - Reduce \$ 1,000

### Consulting Fees

Council Member Victoria Smith asked for clarification regarding the item labeled as non-personnel savings, and was advised by Orinda Police Chief Jeffrey Jennings that, following his analysis, he was able to predict a lower supply budget, and added that his staff will reduce gasoline costs by turning off their automobiles in non-critical situations. While several variables might alter this new scenario - increased arrests that might require costs to rise for blood tests to suspects, for example - the reductions are likely to be realized since Jennings found similar savings occurring consistently in the five years prior to the current budget cycle.

Staff also proposed restructuring workload in the Planning Department. Described as the most difficult item on the agenda, Council members were asked to consider eliminating the position of one employee, but held off making a final decision pending efforts by City managers to search for additional savings and upcoming negotiations with union leaders.

No employee furloughs are being planned, but Council members advised attendees that they retain the right to enact these if needed. City Manager Janet Keeter stated that she anticipates moving a final revised budget for adoption by Council at its June 19 meeting.

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