

Opinion: EDC supes vote to raise taxes

By Larry Weitzman

At the Jan. 24 El Dorado County Board of Supervisors meeting, not only was there a 5-0 vote to support a \$7 billion annual increase in gasoline tax and vehicle registrations fees, there was another agenda item (No. 30) also having to do with raising taxes.



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Item No. 30 on the agenda, which had no direct actual references to raising taxes or exploring such an idea, stems from the CAO's recommendation not to unwind the Missouri Flat Master Circulation and Financing Plan for road maintenance funding, which is in the 2016-17 budget.

The actual agenda item read: "Chief Administrative Office, Community Development Agency Transportation Division, and County Counsel recommending the Board: 1) Receive a presentation on the following: a) The condition of the County's road infrastructure, including a discussion of the County's Pavement Management System; b) The current road maintenance funding situation within the State and the County; c) The possibility of using Missouri Flat Master Circulation and Financing Plan (MC&FP) funding for road maintenance; 2) Receive and file the attached Staff Report on the same; and 3) Provide policy direction to staff regarding the MC&FP and

options to explore for road maintenance funding.”

The discussion went to exploring the feasibility of raising the hotel tax, the franchise fee on trash collection and a special sales tax.

Because the agenda item says “options” of funding it is not a Brown Act violation to have approved wanting to explore increasing taxes.

Two motions were made, the first by Supervisor Shiva Frentzen to limit the feasibility study to everything but the special sales tax. That motion failed for lack of a second.

Another motion was made by Supervisor Brian Veerkamp to include the feasibility of raising all the aforementioned taxes, including the sales tax. That motioned was seconded by Supervisor Sue Novasel. It was carried by a vote of 4-1, with Frentzen voting no vote.

Both motions also directed staff to pursue additional options for road maintenance revenue. There was no motion made to explore cutting General Fund spending.

Regarding the gas tax and registration fees, on average the deal will cost every resident of EDC \$180 annually on a per capita basis. According to CAO Don Ashton, EDC would receive about one-third of the amount collected back for road maintenance – about \$60 per person.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.