

From: [James Gurke](#)
To: [City Council Public Comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment on Item 16.1, May 7 Council Meeting
Date: Monday, May 6, 2024 1:56:57 PM
Attachments: [BV public hearing May 6.pdf](#)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment via an email. Please feel free to contact me should you any problems opening the document.

Jim Gurke



Public Comment on Item 16.1
Bennett Valley Golf Course Fees
Submitted May 6, 2024
By: James Gurke

Honorable Members of the Santa Rosa City Council;

My name is Jim Gurke. I've maintained an annual membership at the golf course since 2014. I'm also a member of a 40 person senior mens' club who play every Monday morning, weather permitting. In addition, I'm also one of several public members who serve on the Bennett Valley Advisory Committee, assembled by Touchstone Golf.

At our April 11, 2024 meeting we were joined by Jen Santos, Deputy Director, Parks Department. Ms Santos and Touchstone staff provided us background information about the capital needs of the course, and the rationale for the proposed rate increases. Based upon the arguments presented and my first hand experience playing Bennett Valley, I fully understand the need for the rate increases before you.

Although no one enjoys paying more for any purchase, I encourage you to approve the increases. Additional revenue will contribute toward the betterment of a golf course (that I consider a jewel in our community), a still affordable course that sees more than 50,000 rounds of play annually.

I and virtually all my playing partners understand the need for the rate increases. However, we saw a nominal increase last year and more substantial one proposed this year. I think I speak for many of us in the hope that this increase last at least through fiscal year 2026.

I imagine there might be concerns among you about the economics of the course and any city contributions to retain its viability. Santa Rosa has a bond debt for six remaining years for construction of the neighboring event center. It is golf course revenue that pays approximately \$450,000 annually towards that debt. Were it not for that expense, Bennett Valley would be fully self sufficient.

Thank you for considering my comments and for the energy you put into the job as City Council Members.