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**Comment to be posted to the Town Council's May 27th package**

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**From** Betsy Morgenthaler [REDACTED]  
**Date** Wed 5/27/2026 1:14 PM  
**To** z PV Town Clerk (Shared) <pvtownclerk@portolavalley.net>

May 27, 2026

Mayor Craig Taylor  
Vice Mayor Mary Hufty  
Members: Rebecca Flynn, Judith Hasko, Helen Wolter

The learnings at the Town Finance Committee meeting on Tuesday May 19th were hard to hear. The 2022 -23 Audit already delayed by 6 months may be done next month, but the commitment to complete the 2023-24 and 2024-25 Audits has been seriously postponed, likely not to be available until 2027.

If there's been one area where we as a Town came together in shared broad agreement, Town Finances was indisputably it. The Council's priority setting sessions over 3 years, placed it in first place, and the residents expressed the same sentiment in surveys conducted. Our Financial priorities were to complete the Audit backlog, to make Town finances accessible, opening OpenGov to all, and for residents to address the Town's shortfall of money in the form of a vote for higher taxes this November. These issues are intertwined, the audit schedule the Town signed up included recognition of the import of getting back audits completed in advance of our November's ballot measure.

Something has gone wrong. Postponing the completion of our Audits for 6 years plus is what got us into this mess. We are repeating our past mistakes.

You inherited this problem, and in volunteering your services and making Finances your #1 priority, you adopted it as your legacy responsibility. If we choose not to do what we said we were going to do, what is the state of our credibility? We need to get the audits done before we vote.

The problem goes beyond the Audits. Town finances are not transparent, they are open to a privileged few, none of whom are sitting Council Members. That translates to depriving the Council of the means to take your fiscal responsibility seriously. Please be a force for completing our all important commitment.

Sincerely yours,  
Betsy Morgenthaler

Submitter DB ID 7905  
IP Address [REDACTED]  
Submission Recorded On 05/27/2026 12:00 PM  
Time to Take the Survey 3 minutes, 19 secs.

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**Page 1****1. First and Last Name**

Patty Dewes

**2. Email address ( will not be publicly displayed)**

[REDACTED]

**3. Organization ( Enter name of organization, business, or non profit if you are submitting comments on their behalf.)**

Parks and Recreation Committee

**4. Street address ( will not be publicly displayed)**

[REDACTED]

**5. City**

Portola Valley

**6. State**

CA

**7. Zip Code**

94028

**8. Date of Meeting you are submitting comment for.**

05/27/2026

**9. Agenda Item number or name**

Master Fee Schedule

**10. Comment**

This might be a duplicate. I sent this in yesterday and asked for an email confirmation which I never received. I am submitting it again in case it was missed.

Thanks,

Patty

**11. Optional: You can upload a copy of your comments.**

[Master Fee Schedule Letter to TC 05\\_27\\_2026.docx](#)

On behalf of the Parks and Recreation Committee, I would like to ask the Town Council to defer any action on Recreation Fees as proposed in the Master Fee Schedule attached to this agenda. The reasons are as follows:

- The Parks and Recreation Committee was first made aware of the results of the consultant's study when it was brought before the Finance Committee on Monday, May 18. At the Parks and Recreation Committee meeting the following evening, (Tuesday, May 19) we reviewed the information. We have many questions regarding the data which we feel needs to be addressed before we can begin to analyze the data, understand the impact of the proposed fee changes on our recreational users and the subsequent overall impact to the Town.
- As the advisory committee to the Town regarding Parks and Recreation, we feel it is only prudent for the Town to allow us the opportunity to understand the data and for you to hear our recommendations before any decisions are made.
- We have scheduled a meeting w/ Darcy Smith (Town Manager) and Tony McFarland (Town Finance Manager & Interim Assistant Town Manager) for Wednesday, May 27 at 3:00 to discuss our questions.

Here is a brief summary of our questions/concerns:

- **Revenue:** We are requesting a more detailed breakdown of the revenue of \$144,200. The components that go into revenue vary greatly from community hall rentals to user fees from adult/youth soccer, little league, etc. and the revenue/fee drivers for each component can be quite different.
- **Cost:** We are requesting a more detailed breakdown of the costs of \$430,931. This is particularly important since some of the fees that are later proposed are derived from a cost recovery model ONLY.
- **New Fees:** There are new fees that are proposed that we do not fully understand. E.g. a rental fee proposed for Town Fields of \$82/person/season when "it appears" to indicate that the requestor is a Town Committee. Does this mean that the Parks and Recreation Committee will be charged \$82/person for Town Picnic attendees?
- **Sport User Fees:** It does not appear that there was adequate competitive analysis performed of the fees of adjacent communities or the impact on usage. For example, youth league fees would increase from \$44 per player per season to \$82 per player per season, an 86% increase. Because most other Towns use a different fee structure (hourly field rental rate), it "appears" that the consultants defaulted to proposing a cost recovery fee. The Parks and Recreation Committee has data from 2022 that shows Portola Valley fees were significantly higher than adjacent communities when translated to like for like. Why were we not consulted or asked

to provide assistance to this important benchmark? It is our opinion that we risk having a negative revenue impact to the Town if users move to other lower-cost alternatives. We have already seen it happen because we have not adequately addressed the parking issue at Rossotti's Field. We have strong relationships with the Leagues/Clubs that use our fields/courts, and we are currently reaching out to them to get competitive data.

- **Court Fees:** We don't see an analysis of Court fees. Why was this not addressed?
- **Special Event Fees:** What is the definition of a Special Event? Is the Town Picnic a special event? This is just an example of certain fees, line items, etc that need to have clearer definition so that they are not left to interpretation and/or applied inconsistently.
- **Per-Person Fees:** Charging per-person fees on events like picnics, special events, etc. does not make sense. Are people really supposed to estimate their attendance ahead of time, what if there are more or fewer people? It appears other towns charge by the hour, which seems more efficient.

We urge the Council to allow the Parks and Recreation Committee additional time to work w/ the Town to arrive at a fee structure that is reasonable and competitive. We are certainly aware of the Town's financial situation and believe that Portola Valley should charge fees that allow us to adequately recover justifiable costs. But we also do not want to run the risk of driving users away from our incredible recreational facilities. We believe that we can reach a well-grounded middle ground.

Thank you for your consideration.

Patty Dewes, Chair PV Parks and Recreation Committee and members: Karen Askey, David Bailey, Jon Myers, Steve Ericksen, Cindy Rowe, Lindsay Bowen.