

Ebejer: Siskiyou County Jail Funds Hinge on Measure S

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Danielle Jester
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Auditor-Controller Jennie Ebejer and her assistant, Annemarie Zediker, came before the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday to discuss research they had done on possible financing options for the new Siskiyou County Jail.

Included in the documents which accompanied Ebejer and Zediker's presentation was an estimation of revenue they hope to realize if Measure S is passed by voters. The figures that were presented are subject to numerous variables, but Ebejer's office estimated approximately \$1.5-1.9 million could be generated annually if Measure S – which would institute a county-wide half cent sales tax – goes forward.

Ebejer and Zediker detailed two primary avenues for obtaining revenue for the new jail: an IBank loan and a Certificate of Participation bond.

IBank is the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank; the bank has a loan program which “provides financing to public agencies and non-profit corporations for a wide variety of infrastructure and economic development projects ... ranging from \$50,000 to \$25,000,000, with loan terms of up to 30 years,” according to the IBank government website.

All pertinent information has been submitted to IBank for the loan's pre-qualification process, according to the documents provided to the board. IBank estimated 90-120 days to approve the loan, contingent on the passing of Measure S, and an additional 60-90 days to fund the loan.

The Certificate of Participation, which provides financing through the purchase of a share of lease revenues, requires collateral, “specifically unencumbered buildings” with value equal to the \$10 million being financed and “with a remaining useful life at least equal to the terms of the Cops.” The document stated that the COP term could be “12 to 20 years, but based on the uncertainty of the revenue stream, it would be prudent to consider ... the longer term, 15 to 20 years, and pay the bonds off early” if the transaction tax revenues come in as strong as hoped.

Board chair Grace Bennett asked Ebejer to continue looking into any other possible revenue options for the new jail project, specifically mentioning financing that was “lower interest or not as complicated.”

A letter to Ebejer's office from the Rural County Representatives of California stated that RCRC staff can act as liaison to “help educate and assist rural businesses and

individuals with the various financial tools and incentives available through federal, state, non-profit and private entities.”

Both Ebejer and the board expressed awareness that financing options going forward are largely dependent on whether or not Measure S passes.

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