

RESOLUTION NO. 6329

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOLEDAD
SUBMITTING TO THE VOTERS AT THE GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION TO
BE CONSOLIDATED WITH THE STATEWIDE GENERAL ELECTION HELD ON
TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 2026, A MEASURE THAT WOULD IMPLEMENT A SPECIAL
PARCEL TAX TO BE LEVIED ON PROPERTIES WITHIN THE CITY BASED ON
LAND USE TO FUND FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES TO BE
PROVIDED BY THE CITY OF SOLEDAD**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Elections Code Section 10002, the governing body of the City of Soledad may by resolution request the Board of Supervisors of the County of Monterey to permit the Monterey County Election official to render specified services to the City relating to the conduct of an election; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Elections Code Section 10002, the City of Soledad shall reimburse the County of Monterey in full for election services performed upon presentation of a bill to the City; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Elections Code Section 10400, whenever two or more elections of any city, county, district or other political subdivision are called to be held on the same day, or in the same territory that is in part the same, they may be consolidated, either completely or partially, upon the order of the governing body or bodies or officer or officers calling the elections; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Elections Code Section 10403, whenever an election called by a city for the submission of any question, proposition or office to be filled is to be consolidated with a statewide election, and the question, proposition, or office to be filled is to appear on the same ballot as that provided for that statewide election, the city shall, at least eighty-eight (88) days prior to the date of the election, file with the board of supervisors, with a copy to the elections official, a resolution of its governing board requesting the consolidation, and setting forth the exact form of any question, proposition, or office to be voted upon at the election, as it is to appear on the ballot, and upon such request, the board of supervisors may order the consolidation; and

WHEREAS, after due consideration, the City Council of the City of Soledad desires to submit to the voters at the June 2, 2026 consolidated general and municipal election a question relating to the imposition of a special parcel tax for fire and emergency medical services, subject to a two-thirds majority voter approval, as required by Cal. Const. art. XIID, Section 3(2) and as allowed by Government Code Sections 53970, et seq.; and, pursuant to Cal. Const. art. XIIC, Section 2(d), Government Code Sections 50077 and 53724, Elections Code Section 9222, and the Soledad Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the tax measure to be submitted to the voters, if approved, would be imposed on an annual basis on real property located within the City of Soledad; and

WHEREAS, the proposed tax measure is based on the City Council’s desire to plan and provide for long-term financial and operational stability for the delivery of fire and emergency medical services to the City of Soledad; and

WHEREAS, the City Council wishes to ensure that the City has financial resources necessary to provide these vital community services in an effort to enhance the public health, safety and welfare of the City’s constituents; and

WHEREAS, without additional financial resources, the City of Soledad will not be able to maintain the provision of effective fire and emergency medical services or purchase equipment vital to public safety services; and

WHEREAS, creating voter-approved funding will serve to address the continuation of adequate fire and emergency medical services; and

WHEREAS, the City will deposit all revenues it receives from the proposed parcel tax into a special fund dedicated to fire and emergency medical services; and

WHEREAS, the new special parcel tax is proposed to be collected until otherwise ended by the voters; and

WHEREAS, based on all of the information presented at the February 18, 2026 regular City Council meeting, both written and oral, including the staff report and other relevant materials, the City Council finds that under California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) Guidelines Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15378, subdivisions (2) and (4) of subdivision (b), the proposed tax does not constitute a project under CEQA and therefore review under CEQA is not required.

NOW THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOLEDAD does hereby resolve, declare, determine and order as follows:

SECTION I. RECITALS AND FINDINGS.

1. All of the foregoing recitals are true and correct and are incorporated herein by reference.
2. The Soledad Fire Department (SFD) currently serves the City of Soledad and the Mission-Soledad Fire Protection District’s approximately 24,000 people as first responders for all 911 emergency calls, including fire and emergency medical calls.
3. SFD answers over 2000 calls for service annually, averaging 5.7 calls for emergency services every day. In the last 10 years, service-call volume has increased by 58%.
4. The City has been fortunate to retain a dedicated group of professional firefighters/ Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) to protect the community and respond to local 911 calls under urgent circumstances where minutes and seconds really matter, like heart attacks,

strokes and car accidents, especially considering the closest emergency room is a half-hour away in Salinas.

5. Despite the City's prudent and fiscally responsible funding efforts, the SFD faces growing financial challenges that threaten SFD's ability to continue to provide reliable, effective 911 responses to the community, including the need to meet appropriate staffing levels and provide firefighter/EMTs with safe, modern apparatuses and equipment.

6. Under current fiscal conditions, the City's fire station and fire engines rely on bare minimum staffing of 2 firefighters, which falls below the national recommended standard of 3 firefighters on duty 24 hours a day. Inadequate staffing levels can lower patient survival rates in medical emergencies, put safety for first responders at risk, and impede response times for the next or simultaneous emergencies.

7. In addition to the aforesaid challenges, the City's ability to provide timely and efficient fire and emergency medical services is exacerbated by the growing threat of wildfires, floods and other disasters in our region that have the potential to divert resources from local 911 calls.

8. In order to maintain the availability of rapid 911 responses when an emergency occurs, the City needs to establish a reliable source of local funding that will allow the City to achieve national staffing standards.

9. Without additional funding, the SFD won't be able to improve service and will struggle to maintain its current level of response as costs continue to rise.

10. The City Council is proposing the collection of a parcel tax on properties within the City, levying a tax of \$233.00 annually for single-family residential parcels; \$174.00 per multifamily unit; and additional rates for commercial, industrial and agricultural parcels, adjusted for inflation. It is estimated that a special parcel tax with these rates would generate approximately \$1,000,000 per year.

11. All funds raised by the local parcel tax could only be used for firefighter/EMT staffing, vehicles and equipment including:

- Increase fire department staffing from 2 to 3 personnel, 24 hours a day, to meet recommended national standards for rapid emergency medical and fire 911 response
- Improve response times to medical emergencies, car accidents, wildfires, floods and other natural disasters
- Ensure the SFD has up-to-date working equipment and resources to assist in emergency medical situations and fight wildfires
- Replace old or outdated medical equipment, breathing apparatuses, protective clothing and other equipment used by firefighters/EMTs
- Ensure the City's fire apparatuses are outfitted with important medical incident response equipment and supplies.

12. To guarantee that all parcel tax proceeds would be used responsibly, expenditure of such funds would be restricted to costs related to providing fire protection and emergency medical response, would be subject to independent audits and citizens' committee oversight to confirm funds are spent in accordance with approved uses, and could not be taken by the State or used for any other purpose than fire and emergency services

13. Based on extensive surveying, the City has determined that collection of parcel tax funding for the purpose of maintaining fire and emergency services is considered by the public to be a beneficial and worthwhile endeavor.

SECTION II. CALL FOR ELECTION. PLACEMENT OF MEASURE ON THE BALLOT. Pursuant to California Constitution Article XIIC, Section 2(d) and Article XIID, Section 3(2); Government Code Sections 53724, 53970, and 50077(a); Elections Code Section 9222 and Sections 10400 *et seq.*; and the Soledad Municipal Code, the City Council of the City of Soledad hereby calls an election at which it shall submit to the qualified voters of the City, a question that, if approved, would adopt a parcel tax which would create funding to support ongoing fire and emergency services for the City's residents. This measure shall be designated by letter by the Monterey County Elections Department. Pursuant to Elections Code Section 10400 *et seq.*, the election for this measure shall be consolidated with the Statewide election to be conducted on June 2, 2026.

SECTION III. PROPOSED ORDINANCE. The ordinance authorizing the special tax to be considered for approval by the voters pursuant to Section II is as set forth in **Exhibit A** hereto. The City Council hereby approves the ordinance, the form thereof, and its submission to the voters of the City at the June 2, 2026 consolidated Statewide election, subject to the approval of a two-thirds majority of the voters voting on the measure at the election called by the adoption of this resolution. The entire text of the ordinance attached hereto as Exhibit A shall be printed in the voter information portion of the sample ballot. The ordinance specifies that the City will levy a new annual parcel tax of \$233.00/single family unit, \$174.00/multi-unit, and \$99.00-\$134.00 plus \$.07 per building square foot for non-residential parcels, adjusted annually, providing approximately \$1,000,000 per year. All tax revenues collected by application of the new parcel tax would be used exclusively for 911 emergency medical/fire response, subject to independent audit, and subject to the oversight of the City's Tax Citizen's Oversight Committee. The new parcel tax would remain in place until ended by the voters.

SECTION IV. BALLOT LANGUAGE. The official ballot to be used at said election shall conform to the laws of the State of California with relation thereto. The proposed parcel tax shall be submitted to the voters on the ballot at the General Municipal Election to be held and consolidated with the Statewide general election on Tuesday, June 2, 2026, in the form of the following question:

To ensure fire/emergency medical 911 response, including improved 24-hour staffing, lifesaving equipment/training, and disaster preparedness, shall the City of Soledad's measure, levying an annual parcel tax of \$233.00/single family unit, \$174.00/multi-unit, \$99.00-\$134.00 plus \$.07 per building square foot for non-residential parcels, adjusted annually, providing approximately \$1,000,000 per year until ended by voters, with funds

dedicated exclusively to reliable 911 emergency medical/fire response and requiring local control/oversight, be adopted?

The words “Yes” and “No” shall be printed on the ballots so the qualified electors may express their choice.

This measure shall be designated by letter by the Monterey County Elections Department.

SECTION V. IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS AND SUBMISSION OF BALLOT

ARGUMENTS. The City Attorney is hereby authorized to prepare an impartial analysis of the proposed measure. The City Attorney’s impartial analysis of the ballot measure shall not exceed five hundred (500) words in length showing the effect of the measure on the existing law and the operation of the measure. The City Attorney shall transmit such impartial analysis to the City Clerk by the close of business on March 10, 2026. Written arguments in favor or opposed to the measure may be prepared by the City Council, any member or members of the City Council so authorized by Council action, or any individual voter who is eligible to vote on the measure, or any bona fide association of citizens, or any combination of voters and associations. All arguments must be submitted to the City Clerk by 5:00 p.m. on March 10, 2026. No argument shall exceed three hundred (300) words in length. A ballot argument may not be accepted unless accompanied by the printed name and signature or printed names and signatures of the author or authors submitting it, or if submitted on behalf of an organization, the name of the organization and the printed name and signature of at least one of its principal officers who is the author of the argument. No more than five signatures shall appear on any argument. If more than one argument is submitted for or against the measure, the City Clerk shall select the argument for printing and distribution in accordance with the provisions of Elections Code Section 9287. Pursuant to Section 9285 of the California Elections Code, when the City Clerk has selected the arguments for and against the measure, which will be printed and distributed to the voters, the City Clerk shall send copies of the argument in favor of the measure to the authors of the argument against, and copies of the argument against to the authors of the argument in favor. Rebuttal arguments may thereafter be prepared in a length not exceeding two hundred and fifty (250) words and shall be filed with the City Clerk by no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 18, 2026. Rebuttal arguments shall be printed in the same manner as the direct arguments. Each rebuttal argument shall immediately follow the direct argument which it seeks to rebut.

SECTION VI. CEQA. The City Council finds that under CEQA Guidelines 15060(c) (2) and 15378, subdivisions (2) and (4) of subdivision (b), this tax does not constitute a project under CEQA because it creates a government funding mechanism that does not involve any commitment to any specific project that may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment, and therefore, review under CEQA is not required.

SECTION VII. REQUEST TO CONSOLIDATE AND CANVAS RETURNS. The City requests and authorizes the Registrar of Voters to consolidate this election with the established election on June 2, 2026 for the ease and convenience of the registered voters and to take advantage of any cost savings possible by such consolidation. The election on the measure set forth in Section IV shall be held and conducted, the votes canvassed and the returns made, and the results ascertained and determined as provided for herein. The election shall be held in

accordance with the Elections Code of the State of California. The Board of Supervisors of the County of Monterey is authorized to canvas the returns of that election with respect to the votes cast in the City of Soledad and to certify the results to the City Council of the City of Soledad. At the next regular meeting of the City Council occurring after the returns of the election have been canvassed and the certification of the results to the City Council, the City Council shall cause to be entered in its minutes a statement of the results of the election. The City Clerk may request the assistance of the County of Monterey Elections Department in regard to said Consolidated Statewide Primary Election, as the City Clerk deems necessary, and in recognition of the fact that additional costs will be incurred by the County in providing assistance, the City agrees that it shall pay the incurred cost of such assistance pursuant to a "Service Agreement for the Provisions of Election Services between the City of Soledad and the Monterey County Registrar of Voters," in substantially the form attached hereto as **Exhibit B**. The City Manager is hereby authorized to enter into or modify any written agreement for such services with the County of Monterey Elections Department.

SECTION VIII. PUBLICATION OF MEASURE. In accordance with Section 12111 of the Elections Code and Section 6061 of the Government Code, the City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to cause notice of the measure to be published once in the Salinas Valley Tribune, a weekly newspaper of general circulation, printed, published, and circulated in the City of Soledad and hereby designated for that purpose by the City Council of Soledad, at least one time not later than one week before the election.

SECTION IX. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its passage and forthwith entered upon the minutes of this Council and kept and maintained by the City Clerk of the City of Soledad.

SECTION X. The City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to certify the due adoption of this Resolution and to transmit a copy hereof so certified to the Board of Supervisors and the Registrar of Voters of Monterey County.

SECTION XI. The City Clerk and City Attorney are authorized to make any typographical, clerical, non-substantive corrections to this resolution and to the ballot measure as may be deemed necessary by the Monterey County Clerk/Registrar of Voters.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Soledad at a regular meeting duly held on the 18th day of February, 2026 by the following vote:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS:

NOES: COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ABSTAIN: COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ABSENT: COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Anna Velazquez, The Honorable Mayor

ATTEST:

Megan Hunter, City Clerk

EXHIBIT A

ORDINANCE NO. 780

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SOLEDAD ADDING CHAPTER 3.60 TO TITLE 3-
REVENUE AND FINANCE OF THE CITY OF SOLEDAD MUNICIPAL CODE
ESTABLISHING A SPECIAL PARCEL TAX FOR FIRE AND EMERGENCY
MEDICAL SERVICES**

**THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOLEDAD DOES HEREBY ORDAIN AS
FOLLOWS:**

SECTION 1. NEW CHAPTER ADDED. Chapter 3.60 is added to Title 3 of the Soledad Municipal Code to read as follows:

**CHAPTER 3.60
FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PARCEL TAX**

- 3.60.010 **IMPOSITION OF SPECIAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL
SERVICE PARCEL TAX**
- 3.60.020 **MAXIMUM TAX AMOUNTS**
- 3.60.030 **ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES**
- 3.60.040 **COLLECTION WITH PROPERTY TAXES**

**Section 3.60.010 IMPOSITION OF SPECIAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL
SERVICES PARCEL TAX.**

A special tax to fund fire and emergency medical services is hereby imposed on every parcel of land in the City of Soledad. The tax shall be imposed each fiscal year in the amounts permitted by this Chapter. The tax imposed by this Chapter shall be a tax upon each parcel of property within the City and the tax shall not be measured by the value of the property.

Section 3.60.020 MAXIMUM TAX AMOUNTS.

The maximum annual amount of the tax imposed on each parcel pursuant to this Chapter shall be determined as follows:

- A. A tax of Two Hundred and Thirty-Three Dollars (\$233.00) shall be imposed on each single-family residential parcel within the City, subject to and including an annual increase equal to the inflation index as established each year by the City Council. A “single-family residential parcel” shall mean a parcel zoned to accommodate single family residences.

- B. A tax of One Hundred and Seventy-Four Dollars (\$174.00) per residential unit shall be imposed on each multi-family residential parcel within the City, subject to and including an annual increase equal to the inflation index as established each year by the City Council. A “multi-family residential parcel” shall mean a parcel zoned for a building or those portions thereof that accommodate or is intended to accommodate two or more residential units.
- C. A tax of Ninety-Nine Dollars-One Hundred and Thirty-Four Dollars (\$99.00-\$134.00) per building square foot for non-residential parcels shall be imposed on each non-residential parcel within the City, subject to and including an annual increase equal to the inflation index as established each year by the City Council.

Section 3.60.030 ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES.

- A. **Special Fund: Use of Proceeds.** In accordance with Government Code Section 53978, the proceeds of the tax imposed by this Chapter shall be placed in a special fund and shall be dedicated and used only for approved fire and emergency protection services as authorized by majority vote of the City Council.
- B. **Annual Review Report.** An Annual Review Report shall be prepared by the City Manager or her/his designee, setting forth the amount of revenue received under the Special Tax and the amount and purpose of disbursements. The purpose of this requirement is to assure accountability and the proper disbursement of the proceeds of the Special Tax. The Annual Review Report shall be presented to the City Council not later than January 31 following each fiscal year in which the tax is collected. The Annual Review Report shall be filled with and maintained in the City Clerk’s office. Additionally, the use of all revenues received from the tax enacted by this article shall be subject to review and recommendation of the Soledad Tax Citizen Oversight Committee. The City Manager shall provide staff for the committee, and the Finance Director shall provide all relevant data regarding revenue from the tax and expenditure thereof.

Section 3.60.040 COLLECTION WITH PROPERTY TAXES.

The special tax imposed by this Chapter shall be due in the same manner, on the same dates, and subject to the same collection penalties and interest as established by law for other charges and taxes fixed and collected by this County of Monterey on behalf of the City of Soledad. The special tax imposed by this Chapter, together with all penalties and interest thereon, shall constitute a lien upon the parcel upon which it is levied until it has been paid, and shall constitute a personal obligation of the owners of the parcel on the date the tax is due.

SECTION 2. SEVERABILITY. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining sections, subsections, sentences, clauses, phrases, or portions of this ordinance shall nonetheless remain in full force and effect. The people of the City of Soledad hereby declare that they would have adopted each section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portions of this ordinance declared invalid or unenforceable.

SECTION 3. TWO-THIRDS APPROVAL EFFECTIVE AND OPERATIVE DATES. The tax imposed by this ordinance is a special tax. This ordinance shall be effective only if approved by two-thirds of the City’s voters voting thereon on June 2, 2026, at a consolidated municipal and general election and shall go into effect immediately after the result of the vote is declared by the City Council. If approved, the tax shall become operative on July 1, 2026. The City Manager is directed to convey to the County information as necessary to ensure the measure is effective on the next available tax roll.

SECTION 4. CODIFICATION. Upon adoption of this ordinance pursuant to the voter approval referenced in Section 3, the City Clerk, in consultation with the City Attorney, is hereby authorized and directed to codify this ordinance in the Soledad Municipal Code.

SECTION 5. PUBLICATION. The Clerk of the City of Soledad is hereby directed to cause the following summary of the ordinance to be published by one (1) insertion in The Salinas Valley Tribune, a newspaper of general circulation published and circulated in the City of Soledad:

Contingent upon two-thirds majority voter approval, this ordinance adopts a new annual parcel tax imposed on properties in the City at the rate of \$233 per single-family unit, \$174 per multi-family unit, and between \$96-\$126 plus \$.07 per building square foot for nonresidential parcels, subject to annual adjustment for inflation, with all tax revenues dedicated exclusively to staffing and updated lifesaving equipment for 911 emergency fire and medical response. The ordinance requires independent annual audits, annual public expenditure reports and review and recommendation on use of revenue by a citizens’ oversight committee. Once approved, the tax would remain in place until extinguished by the voters.

APPROVED by the following vote of the Voters of the City of Soledad on June 2, 2026.

ADOPTED by Declaration of the vote by the City Council of the City of Soledad on _____, 2026:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAINED:

Anna Velazquez, Mayor

Megan Hunter, City Clerk