

P.G. COUNCILMEMBERS POISED TO PUT THEIR OWN PAY HIKE ON BALLOT

By KELLY NIX

SEVERAL MONTHS after the Pacific Grove City Council voted to give themselves a 130 percent pay raise, councilmembers last week canceled the increase and took steps toward allowing voters to decide whether they should be paid more for the part-time, elected positions.

The council on Aug. 20 voted unanimously to repeal the raise it gave itself in May and to return Sept. 3 to discuss placing a measure on either the 2026 June primary or November general election ballots. The council’s decision follows a successful effort by Transparent Pacific Grove — which opposed the council pay increase without voter approval — to collect enough signatures to allow residents to decide on the matter.

While some backers of the increase say it would

encourage more residents to run for office, others point to the city’s dire financial situation and say voters should decide on any raise.

‘Big job’

“I think when you all ran for office, you knew what the stipend was,” one woman told the council during the public comment period. “And if this wasn’t enough for you, you shouldn’t have run. And if it’s not enough for you now, you should just resign.”

Former Mayor Bill Kampe advocated for the taxpayer-funded raises.

“The job is probably far more than people realize,” Kampe said. “It’s not just these meetings, it’s all the prep time, it’s the council liaison roles, it’s the regional and state level meetings and engagements and the prep time

that goes along with that. And you’re always on duty when you’re walking on the street.”

The council, which hasn’t had a stipend increase in 26 years, proposed raising the pay from \$420 to \$966 monthly for the six councilmembers and from \$700 to \$1,610 for the mayor. The raise would cost P.G. taxpayers an extra \$50,232 annually.

Councilmembers Lori McDonnell and Paul Walkingstick, who at the time voted against the pay raise, arguing it should go before voters, voted alongside their colleagues last week.

Former P.G. city councilmember and Transparent Pacific Grove head Luke Coletti, who spearheaded the referendum effort, urged it be placed on the November general election ballot for maximum voter participation, since primary elections typically draw fewer voters to the polls.

Some citizens have criticized the council for requesting a pay hike after deciding in March to reduce by four its number of annual meetings.



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Darnell’s 60-month lease of a 2022 Mercedes EQS 450+. Mercedes is suing for breach of contract for Darnell’s failure to pay the lease.

“As a result of defendants’ breach, the lease was terminated and the vehicle was repossessed,” it says.

Darnell had traded in his 2021 Mercedes Benz GLE 350S for the car and would have paid a total of \$100,208.07 had the lease run its term, according to court documents.

On Aug. 19, Darnell filed a response denying the complaint and saying that Mercedes “failed to provide a legally compliant notice of intent to dispose of motor vehicle after repossession and upon filing of the complaint,” as required by the Civil Code, and therefore is “barred from collecting” funds from him.

“The alleged balance includes improper and unauthorized fees or calculations [improper remaining payments, repossession, storage, interest and/or collection charges] not permitted by contract or law,” he argues.

According to Darnell’s LinkedIn profile, he worked as general sales manager for Mercedes-Benz Monterey from 2019 to 2023.

The case is set for an Oct. 21 court hearing.

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JEFFREY TALBOT BRADY

June 14, 1963 – Aug. 21, 2025

Jeffrey Talbot Brady, 62, died on Aug. 20 at the Carmel home of his parents, James and Suzanne Brady. Jeff was born in Oakland, California on June 14, 1963, while his father was a student in the College of Architecture at University of California, Berkeley.

The youngest of four children, Jeff came to Carmel with his family as a toddler and with his siblings started life as a Carmelite at Bay School with Rosa Doner. Then on to Carmel River School, Carmel Middle School, and because of illness, a short time at Carmel High, then Palma High, then graduation in 1981 from Carmel Valley High.

Except for his time in Little League, Jeff’s sports activities centered around hiking in Big Sur, fishing, the beach, also cooking, and he worked in several local restaurants. During these late teen years he discovered the world of horses which became the abiding love of his life. Much too large to be a jockey, being around racehorses led to J. T. Brady Transportation venture with his uncle, Jim O’Brien, where he provided custom care in equine transportation all over the country.

His other love was big machines, so he settled down at Shasta College in Redding to earn an AA degree in industrial technologies. That led to large construction projects on local highways and the Monterey Peninsula Airport.

But his first love was a kinship with horses and the most satisfying time in his life was as overseer of a horse sanctuary in Novato. He was there with the alive big machines resting comfortably in his care. And there he lived until coming back to his loving family in Carmel and Hospice.

Jeff was a patient, kind and gentle man, appreciated for his delicious meals, the strum of his guitar, the little people he made of collected stones for our potted plants, help to build a fence, help with any thing to make our lives better. He is survived by his parents, James and Suzanne Brady; his siblings and their spouses, Keren Haedrich (Gary), Kristopher Brady (Jona), and Jonathan Brady. He was Uncle Jeff to Kiara Kennedy, Jacob, Ryan and Kristine Brady, Leslie and Hayley Haedrich; great uncle to Emmalyn, Conor, Liesel, Aoife, Avery and Liam; along with uncles John O’Brien and Larry Boehle; aunts Elisa Brady and Hilary O’Brien; many dear cousins and extended family.

Jeff was predeceased by his grandparents, Jim and Peg O’Brien of San Bruno, Dudley and Harryette Brady of Oakland; Uncle Jim and Aunt Gay O’Brien, Aunt Jane Boehle and Cousin Erica Levine.

The family would like to thank caregiver Wendy Adler and the VNA Hospice team for their outstanding care.

A celebration of life Mass will begin at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 9, at Carmel Mission Basilica. A reception will follow at Crespi Hall. In lieu of flowers, please consider contributing to the restoration of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel at the Mission or to Central Coast VNA Hospice, Inc., 5 Lower Ragsdale Drive, Monterey, CA 93940.

