

Business Person of the Year selection hits a high note with Lamorinda Music co-owner John McCormick



Photo Colleen McCormick

John McCormick at Lamorinda Music in downtown Lafayette.

By Diane Claytor

Last year was a good year for Lafayette's John McCormick. The co-owner of Lamorinda Music completed his second term as president of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. His popular store was selected by Diablo Magazine readers as the East Bay's 2021 Best Musical Instrument Store. And he ended the year by being named the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Business Person of the Year, an honor McCormick says was both surprising and extremely gratifying.

Music has always played an important role in McCormick's life. He met his wife (and business co-owner), Colleen, while both played alto saxophone in

the Cal Marching Band. He still plays with both the Cal Alumni Band and the California Repercussions.

In 2009, music took on even more significance to McCormick. Colleen McCormick, who had been a science instructor, decided to change careers. After contemplating various options, the couple elected to open a music store. "We thought about what we know and like and music was the clear answer," John McCormick said.

Acknowledging they had no experience with small business ownership, the McCormicks did their due diligence, visiting various music stores for ideas and to learn what worked and what didn't.

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ARPA funds distribution comes into greater focus for Lafayette

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\$200,000 to local restaurants to support outdoor dining; \$90,000 in assistance to ensure the long-term viability of the Veterans Memorial building, a nonprofit that due to decreased rentals during the pandemic is experiencing significant revenue declines; and \$270,000 in HVAC and ventilation improvements at the Community Center. Foster noted the new allocations are \$920,000 in total.

Foster said he was still reviewing the United States Treasury's 437-page document that was released last week with more ARPA rules. He indicated it will provide more flexibility in the use of funds, especially for small cities. In the case of Lafayette, adjustments to the standard revenue loss (up to \$10 million) can be made and the new rules will allow ARPA allocations to be used for general city services and recovery from the pandemic.

Council Member Dawson note that the subcommittee's "immediate needs" recommendations are based on helping Lafayette households and families as well as on addressing the needs of small businesses in the community.

Council Member Wei-Tai Kwok asked about the Veterans building and if the \$90,000 allocation would only allow the nonprofit to meet funding needs through June, but might cause them to "collapse" shortly thereafter. Foster said more ARPA funds coming in the summer months will be applied to meet the subcommittee's goal to provide more

funding in the future, although funding parameters that shift continually, he said, leave the final determination unknown. Vice Mayor Anduri said the organization with this immediate need funding can get to the end of their fiscal year and deferred maintenance projects will allow them to stay stable, assuming events resume by the summer.

The council then discussed the LPIE funding for mental health services delivered to students. Council Member Susan Candell expressed concern that the benefits were distributed equitably to all schools in the district. Dawson said LPIE will be active in facilitation the money being distributed to the district; after which the district makes sure funds are dispensed equitably to all schools in its jurisdiction.

In a brief discussion about the \$500,000 drawn from general funds to purchase the Park Theater and how those funds might be replaced, Foster said, "You have to do these things without knowing if ARPA rules will allow the city to offset the costs." While awaiting the arrival of new ARPA ruling on city funds allocations, Foster reiterated that when approved by council in November 2021, the timing necessary to purchase the theater meant making the decision to take the money out of the general fund and then deal with the resolution of it later.

Council voted unanimously to approve the recommendations for "immediate needs" funding as presented in the staff report.



Lafayette Public Meetings

City Council

Regular Meeting
Monday, Jan. 24, 7 p.m.
Teleconference via City of Lafayette's YouTube Channel:
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Planning Commission Meeting

Monday, Feb. 7, 7 p.m.
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>

Design Review

Wednesday, Jan. 26, 7 p.m. Zoom
Teleconference Meeting via Love Lafayette YouTube
<http://bit.ly/LoveLafayetteYouTube>



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