

May 18, 2009

Dear Board of Supervisors,

I was shocked and dismayed when I read in today's Santa Barbara News Press the news regarding some of your top agenda items. While it was a poorly written article that did not give much information, I feel I must speak out for what I perceive as wrong.

I find it very poor timing in the wake of another multi-million dollar fire and a dismal economy that you are considering large pay raises for some already overpaid public officials. I could understand a small cost of living increase if one hasn't been given in a while, but many workers are not even receiving that. I do not think it is the taxpayers' responsibility to bump up someone's pension to a truly exorbitant amount. Is it an emergency because the person is getting ready to retire? If it appears that they are getting a pension of 100% of their highest salary, they are more than lucky. Why can't these raises be put on the table for a while? Where will the money come from to pay for the fire related costs? I do not know how these raises can be justified in any way when basic services such as libraries are being cut. I think you have lost touch with reality and do not realize how many people are looking for jobs. Believe me the jobs that are out there, are very low paying. In addition, graffiti and defacement of public and private property are everywhere and it seems like nothing is being done to stop it.

On another note, during the fire press coverage, a number of Santa Barbara public officials were present at what seemed like photo opportunities. I think it would have meant more if some of our representatives were out at the Red Cross Shelters or Valle Verde comforting and supporting some of the frail and distraught. (Maybe some of you did, I had to stay at DP on Thursday night and didn't see anyone.)

I urge you not to grant any of the proposed pay increases at this time. Please rethink your priorities for what is best for the public.

Sincerely,

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