

de la Guerra, Sheila **Public Comment**

From: Pamela Flynt Tambo <pambotambo@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 31, 2021 4:11 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Fwd: Letter to SB County Board of Supervisors
Attachments: 2021 6-1 County Budget .docx



Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

The attached letter to the Board of Supervisors is public comment for Agenda Item 21-00475 Inmate Population Management. Thank you for including this in the record.

Pam Flynt Tambo
805.451.4340
pambotambo@gmail.com

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Pamela Flynt Tambo <pambotambo@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, May 31, 2021 at 3:46 PM
Subject: Letter to SB County Board of Supervisors
To: <dwilliams@countyofsb.org>, <ghart@countyofsb.org>, <jhartmann@countyofsb.org>, <bob.nelson@countyofsb.org>, <steve.lavagnino@countyofsb.org>
Cc: <info@co.sheriff.org>, <dainfo@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>, <tmacuga@publicdefender.org>, <cao@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>

Please see attached letter from the League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara.

Best,
Pam

Pam Flynt Tambo
805.451.4340
pambotambo@gmail.com

We have a moral imperative to be hopeful.
- Mohsin Hamid
from an interview with Pico Iyer



May 31, 2021

TO: Das Williams, First District
Gregg Hart, Second District
Joan Hartmann, Third District
Bob Nelson, Fourth District and Chair
Steve Lavagnino, Fifth District

Re: Jail Facilities and Public Safety – Sheriff Department

Chair Nelson and Supervisors:

The League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara has selected criminal justice reform as one of our top three focal issues this year. Our League supports a corrections system which has as its primary goal rehabilitation, that is, the prevention of recidivism, with emphasis on alternatives to incarceration, and on compliance with state standards for facilities and staffing.

We have all recently lived through a very different year due to the COVID 19 Pandemic. During that year our Sheriff Department reduced the number of incarcerated persons held in the South County Jail due to the dangers of spreading infections. The reduced number of beds appears to be adequate, yet we are planning to open the new jail in North County and then rehabilitate the old jail adding even more total beds than we had before the Pandemic started. We are wondering why.

We appreciate the information provided by the Sheriff for the June 1 hearing that documents the downward trend in Jail Average Daily Population (ADP). Unfortunately, the power point presentation was released after working hours on Friday of a 3-day holiday weekend, giving us little time to review it and respond. We had anticipated receiving a plan for holding and reducing the jail population to or below pandemic levels of 550, especially as the North County Jail (built to house 376 people) comes online. Instead we received a report focused on staffing, eliminating overtime, and a rolling housing reduction plan that anticipates 10 phases but has no timeline for reaching Phase X (472 ADP).

We hope that at the June 1 morning hearing the Sheriff will address what he is doing to adopt training models for custody deputies to fill mentoring roles, improve recruiting and retention, and support alternatives to arrest and incarceration including, but not limited to, those in the Public Defenders Office.

We were also dismayed to learn, after the fact, that a request for bids for redesign of the South County jail was issued on March 10 with a due date of May 24. The call for bids contained no mention of reorienting the facilities to uses that are documented to reduce recidivism and return jail residents to the community. The request for bids for architectural redesign appears instead to anticipate refilling the old jail. Other uses suggested in the KPMG study and by the community include: new models of prison housing such as the Norwegian Halden model, transitional housing to ease reentry and reduce recidivism, an intake center

separate from the jail to enable 24/7 diversion by law enforcement to emergency medical services for individuals experiencing addiction and/or behavioral health distress.

The public must be included in hearings regarding use and repurposing of the South County facility before your Board approves funds for architectural designs.

As written in our letter to the Supervisors, dated April 9, 2021, we supported reductions in the proposed Sheriff Department budget. It appears, however, that few or no adjustments in that budget were made after the April Budget Workshops. It seems reasonable for the Board of Supervisors to address changes to this budget where possible. There can be no progress in providing a more rehabilitative experience to our incarcerated or criminally charged residents if we do not change how people are treated in our criminal justice system. The Sheriff Department is one of the keys to that change.

Last fall the County received an extensive review by KPMG of all departments. At the April budget hearing, the League and other groups highlighted KPMG's recommendations. We called for reductions in our Sheriff Department based on comparisons with 8 other California counties of similar size to Santa Barbara County and reallocation of those funds for programs and facilities that shift our approach to public safety away from prisons and toward rehabilitation. We should be funding programs that increase mental health, reduce addiction, provide housing and offer social services that increase opportunities for living productive lives.

Our recent year has led to the beginnings of a reconciliation for all in this country leading us to ask: what will we learn from 2020 and how will we change our communities moving forward. This includes how we treat people in our criminal justice system. We can continue locking up people as we have in the past, or we can change how we are treating our fellow residents, especially those of color, those who have not had opportunities to thrive. We can provide them the opportunities they need to improve their lives and their families' lives. It will take time to make and monitor our progress, but we have much to gain from making our community a healthy place for all to live.

Lastly, as stated before in April, we believe that the creation of a Civilian Oversight Commission for the Sheriff Department would involve the community in understanding and contributing to public safety in the county. Both the community and the Sheriff Department members would have the opportunity to learn from one another. A Civilian Oversight Commission would also improve accountability and transparency, deter police misconduct, and reduce costly lawsuits.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations. We are available to meet with any of you regarding ways to reform the criminal justice system to be more humane both to those who are incarcerated and to the officers charged with maintaining safety in our community. Please contact Pam Flynt Tambo, LWVSB Social Policy Committee Chair if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Vijaya Jammalamadaka, President

Cc: B. Brown, Sheriff
J. Dudley, District Attorney

T. Macuga, Public Defender
M. Miyasato, County Executive Officer