

3



Katherine Douglas

Public Comment - Group 3

From: Rosalie Marquez <lokem@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 5:08 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Salary increase

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.

Hi,
I retired from the county over 20 years ago as a court executive for the North County Municipal Courts of 31 years.
It was the protocol to always use the comparisons from the counties of Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Ventura and Kern counties that are similar to the size of Santa Barbara.
There are no comparison using Los Angeles, San Diego, etc counties.
I request the Board of Supervisors to also use the above mentioned counties to verify the salary increases to be awarded in a fair manner. In addition, what are the status of other county departments that lack or freeze any staff positions due budget constraints that are needed.
Thank you for your considerations.
Rosalie (Rosie) S. Marquez
Retired Court Executive

[Sent from AOL on Android](#)

Katherine Douglas

From: Leo DeAmicis <leodeamicis@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 23, 2025 7:53 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: Santa Barbara obviously needs a DOGE

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.

You all should be embarrassed giving yourselves a 48% raise. Can you explain? If not future elections will have consequences.

Katherine Douglas

From: Gregg Weitzman <helogregg@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 23, 2025 3:20 PM
To: sbcob; Roy Lee; Laura Capps; Joan Hartmann; Bob Nelson; Steve Lavagnino
Subject: Pay raise proposal

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.



[Board of Sups letter 2025.docx](#)

Please read the attached letter concerning your pay raise proposal.

Thank you,
Gregg Weitzman

Date: February 23, 2025

To: Sb County Board of Supervisors/County Staff

From: Gregg Weitzman

Subj. Pay Raise

To: County Staff and the Board of Supervisors:

Recently, it was made public that the Board of Supervisors have a proposal before them to increase their yearly pay by 48%. This would be the single highest pay raise for a public servant, at one time, in this County, as well as probably most of the Country.

However, there are a few items that must be considered. I have spent over 35 years as a full time employee of the Sheriff's Office and I have never received a raise over 7%. And during every year that we had contract negotiations, our union was told that the County would NOT accept LA, Orange or San Diego Counties because these Counties were way bigger than our County. Well not the BOS feels that these Counties are OK to use as comparable Counties. So the Deputy Sheriff's can not use these Counties, but its OK for the BOS to now use them? This does not even come close to passing the smell test.

I will now address the 48% pay raise. Our unio fought for years using the argument that our pay was well below that of neighboring Counties and Departments, including SBPD. And the County rejected this argument every time, saying that it's a privilege to work in this County so suck it up or move to another agency. And we did suck it up for many years. Its only in the past 10 years that our pay has started to come up, but its still lower than most other agencies in the State.

This amount of a single pay raise is completely ridiculous. I do understand that this job at the BOS can be worked as much or as little as that member wants, but this alone does not justify this mammoth raise.

The SB County CEO recently came out with a long range forecast that stated that SB County will be in a huge deficit by 2028. This is definitely not the time to be issuing gigantic raises to anyone. I agree with a normal COLA raise of 4-7%, but after witnessing the recent mistakes of the County, this BOARD, and the Retirement Board, I am totally against our public servants getting a single raise of any amount over 7%.

Respectfully,

s/ Gregg Weitzman

Katherine Douglas

From: Carmen Kershaw <carmenkershaw@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 8:48 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: Supervisors Pay Raise Proposal

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.

To: Santa Barbara County Supervisors,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to your request for a pay increase of 48%.

You are elected officials, and you willingly chose to work for the people of Santa Barbara County.

You should either keep your current salary or resign and let someone who makes substantially less than you and let them take your job. I'm sure there will be untold numbers of citizens who would love to have your pay and benefits. You are supposed to be serving the people not profiting from them.

The citizens of Santa Barbara are struggling during these harsh economic times you should lead by example not your bank account.

Maria C. Kershaw
Vandenberg Village

Katherine Douglas

From: Joe Duran <jduranwild3@msn.com>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 11:11 AM
To: sbcob
Cc: Joe Duran
Subject: Fw: Letters to the Editor -Santa Barbara Current

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.

To Clerk of the Board Agenda File 25-00109

From: Joe Duran <jduranwild3@msn.com>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 10:38 AM
To: Bob.Nelson@countyofsb.org <Bob.Nelson@countyofsb.org>; Steve Lavagnino <slavagnino@countyofsb.org>; jhartmann@countyofsb.org <jhartmann@countyofsb.org>; roylee@countyofsb.org <roylee@countyofsb.org>; lcapps@countyofsb.org <lcapps@countyofsb.org>
Cc: mmiyasto@countyofsb.org <mmiyasto@countyofsb.org>; Joe Duran <jduranwild3@msn.com>
Subject: Letters to the Editor -Santa Barbara Current

Final Message to the Five Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors .

From Joe Duran 304 Wilson Drive Orcutt CA.

Public Alert: SBC Taxpayers have voiced their message to you loud and clear with a **NO to the 48.8% raise**. Just in case you may have not noticed the Outrage comments sent to you. The bottom line makes the right decision!

Joe Duran

.....

Regarding the Feb. 13 article, "Santa Barbara County Supervisors to Consider

Giving Themselves \$56,000 Annual Raise," I can think of several places where that money could be used better:

- Pay down the debt on the underfunded county pension responsibilities.

- Repave rural roads that have had no maintenance for more than 10 years. For example, Cold Springs Road near Red Rock, parts of Foxen Canyon Road, Drum Canyon Road between Los Alamos and Betteravia, parts of Noleta, etc.
- Redo the water infrastructure that is at least 40 years old. Yes, I know there are water districts, but the county has the ultimate responsibility.
- Do a better job reducing the brush to reduce the wildfire hazard levels throughout the county.
- Redesign the Board of Supervisors website so that ordinary people can find how to write comments. There is no direct place to comment to the supervisors.

I understand that staff made the pay raise recommendation. However, staff is thinking about feathering their own nest, as once you vote for a pay increase, they will all clammer for a pay raise as well.

I have seen this behavior go forward in the past. Fool me twice ...

On behalf of all of the voters in the county, please vote No

Gretchen Murray Ph.D.

Noleta

• • •

As an employee of Santa Barbara County for more than 32 years, I believe being a competent county supervisor is a full-time job. I also believe, as such, the supervisors should get the salary increase they are now seeking.

If we don't pay supervisors a living wage, they will need to seek additional employment or additional funds. I believe either alternative can lead to them being distracted at best or engaging in bias/unethical behavior at worst.

In offering incoming supervisors a full-time salary, I believe we will also be able to interest the best and the brightest to seek the high honor of becoming a public servant.

Joyce Dudley

Former Santa Barbara County district attorney

• • •

On Feb. 25, the Board of Supervisors will conduct a public hearing on a pay raise they earlier "approved" for themselves.

The proposed salary increase was determined by comparing the proposed rate to 70% of what a Superior Court judge earns. This is like comparing apples to oranges since the job of a judge is substantially different than that of a county supervisor.

The only qualification for a seat on the Board of Supervisors is to be a registered voter and convince enough people to vote for you and you're in — no experience required.

On the other hand, a judge must complete an extensive education in the law, obtain a license to practice, and have substantial experience to compete for the position.

The ordinance the Board of Supervisors will discuss and cast a vote on raises their salary by \$56,000 per year. No one in the entire county has ever seen an increase like that unless they own a very successful business. Many of the supervisors' own constituents don't earn that much in a year.

I urge the Board of Supervisors to vote NO on this outrageous proposal. It is an affront to the constituents who work hard, sometimes at two jobs, every year to pay the taxes that pay their salary.

Ron Fink
Lompoc

• • •

I can already hear the howls of outrage about the proposed pay hike for our Board of Supervisors. What I don't hear is an understanding of how hard they work, and how grossly underpaid they have been for far too long.

Consider this:

According to a recent survey of comparable counties, Santa Barbara County supervisors are paid 32.8% less than the median pay of their counterparts. In fact, they are paid 27.8% less than their own chiefs of staff.

"Their current salary is equal to what an entry- or journey-level professional might earn in the county organization," according to the staff report accompanying the recommendation.

Yet these are the people who are responsible for ALL county programs and departments. They are expected to know about all of them, and to make decisions that affect everything the county does.

If you haven't interacted much with the supervisors, you may not know that they work seven days a week, early and late. They read volumes of material; take endless meetings with constituents and staff; sit on dozens of committees; visit site after site ... and more.

To be paid 32% less for the same work than supervisors elsewhere, while living in a county with incredibly high housing costs, is simply unacceptable.

Just because elected officials are public servants doesn't mean they deserve poor pay. Even with the proposed increase, they will make far less than department heads or executives in the private sector.

If we want talented committed people leading our county, we should pay them a wage that reflects the importance of what they do, and how hard they work doing it.

Lee Heller
Santa Barbara

• • •

Regarding [the Feb. 16 article](#), "Public Gets First Look at 443-Unit Apartment Project to Replace Sears Building, Parking Lot," I reside in the Upper State Street area where 1,119 new apartments are proposed to be built.

My questions are where is the parking and what are the proposed traffic impacts? Also, where's the water?

And since there is a proposal for all new construction to be ELECTRIC, where's the power coming from?

The fact that must be realized is not everyone who wants or chooses to reside in Santa Barbara maybe just can't.

I can't afford to live in Hawai'i although it would be great, but I know it's not affordable and they won't build affordable housing for me.

John Sween
Santa Barbara

• • •

Regarding [the Feb. 19 article](#), "Passengers Clear About Unhappiness Over Fog Diversions at Santa Barbara Airport," thank you for bringing up another issue with the airport other than noise.

I can count on both hands personally, friends or residents who have experienced this type of delay while flying into Santa Barbara.

It seems that safety, customer satisfaction and convenience would be at the top of Santa Barbara Airport management's agenda for future operations.

I read about plans to add more terminal and parking space in future investments, costing more millions of taxpayer dollars, but why would that be more important than investing in an upgraded Instrument Landing System so pilots can safely land in inclement weather?

I believe that prioritizing this before any new brick-and-mortar projects would be paramount to serving our community better.

Gary Smythe
Santa Barbara

• • •

I enjoyed reading [Mark Patton's Feb. 16 column](#), "UCSB's Basketball Family Loses Legacy Coach with Death of Ralph Barkey."

I lived down the street from the Barkeys when my family first moved to Goleta in the early 1960s and was friends with Leslye Barkey until we moved to a different part of town. I haven't thought about her in ages.

At that young age I only knew that Mr. Barkey was a basketball coach. It was very interesting learning about the scope of his career.

Thanks for all you do for the sports scene in our community.

Heidi Bratt
Goleta

• • •

[Art Thomas' Feb. 14 letter to the editor](#) about the Santa Barbara Housing Authority's Bella Vista Apartments at 220 N. La Cumbre Road did a great job of pointing out some of the problems and concerns related to this project.

While the addition of 48 Section 8-voucher apartments dedicated exclusively to low- and very low-income families is laudable and a major step forward in creating additional affordable housing, it demonstrates that this kind of project is neither sustainable nor scalable.

With a total cost of \$51.2 million, these 48 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments have an average unit cost of \$1.1 million. These apartments range in size from 627 square feet (one bedroom) to 1,050 square feet (three bedroom).

These apartments are comparable in size to most auxiliary dwelling units, which cost between \$150 to \$300 per square foot to build (a luxury ADU might cost up to \$500 per square foot).

This means that, on average, ADUs cost much less than 50% of these 48 apartments.

Even after eliminating the \$5.9 million for land cost, the average cost of these apartments is nearly \$950,000 per unit. The math underscores that building this kind of affordable low income and very low income housing in Santa Barbara is simply unaffordable.

The Santa Barbara Housing Authority needs to look for a different model, a different approach, a different standard if it wants to continue to add affordable housing for a rational and reasonable price.

Kelly Rose
Los Olivos

• • •

At 5 p.m. Feb. 21, I saw a KEYT News report by John Palminteri with the original video of his encounter with an “E-bike” rider on State Street.

I saw his original post three days ago and have engaged with others, including former Santa Barbara City Councilman Jason Dominguez, about my feeling that Palminteri had a good point.

Yes, Palminteri was in a painted bike lane on the street. He could have moved a few feet away, but he didn’t, and now, a thousand comments later on social media, I believe he was just doing his job — while an out-of-his-mind e-biker/criminal popped a wheelie and messed with him. And this is the state of State Street!

I think it’s time for City Administrator Kelly McAdoo to support the plan offered by Councilman Eric Friedman to, as a trial, close the 500 block and maybe the 600 block, and open up all the rest of State Street to cars, buses, trucks, bikes, e-bikes, etc.

Dan Seibert
Santa Barbara

• • •

I had the opportunity to sit in on the Feb. 4 Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors meeting (["County OKs Changes to Cell Towers Ordinance Despite Public Concerns"](#)) and listen to more than an hour of high-level bureaucratic discussion about a 5G company that will be putting up cell towers throughout the county in the coming years.

The committee — chaired by Supervisor Laura Capps — listened to the county's deputy director of planning and development discuss installing and maintaining these towers over time.

It was quite daunting to hear the scope of the many components needed to plan for installation of what may be thousands of towers.

Had I had the opportunity to get to the microphone, I would have taken a different tact than most of the opponents. I would have asked the board the following questions:

- Will the manufacturers and the county declare eminent domain on any piece of land owned by a corporation or a private residence as it prepares to install these towers?
- The county (or any governmental agency) has the right to refuse a contract based on public health and safety issues. So, has the 5G manufacturing company ever had any fire problems, sparking or energy pulses throughout any of its systems that already are installed that may fall into this safety category?
- Has the 5G manufacturer ever been involved in any previous litigation with any other municipality with which it has contracted to install towers?

The supervisors did a masterful job of deflecting concerns based on previous codes, mandates and contracts. What they did not do was discuss any element of concern for public health regarding radio frequency emissions from 5G towers, which are known to impact biological health and may increase the risk of health issues over time (Scientific Reports, July 2012; Oncology Letters, July 2020).

Of course, it seemed that the supervisors would vote for the proposal from the onset, which they did.

One of the community members stated that if anything does go wrong, it would be more than 30 years before any contractual changes could be made, based on previous agreements with communities such as Malibu.

One of the other community comments was on legal liability. If anything does go south (and it probably will), lawsuits will certainly ensue.

The resident stated correctly that while there may not be any direct liability to the county, each member bears personal liability, and of course a savvy law firm would certainly exploit the personal Notice of Liability here.

Just food for thought.

Eric Durak
Santa Barbara

• • •

Imagine waking up tomorrow with a powerful wireless facility antenna array 20 feet from your bedroom window.

On Feb. 4, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors voted 5-0 for the worst of a series of county telecom ordinances since 2019. The board ignored, dismissed and discredited SafeTechSBC's fire and legal expert and public comments.

This flawed telecom ordinance exempted all environmental protection laws and coastal permit hearings from so-called small cell antennas. There are no reasonable setbacks, notification, opportunity to oppose and appeal, inspections by professional electrical engineers, nor monitoring of radiation.

These facilities will be rubber stamped despite predictable false information on applications. Decreased property values and increased wildfires will be the result of this continued deregulation of the multitrillion-dollar industry.

The behavior of Supervisors Laura Capps and Steve Lavagnino during the meeting showed a disregard and lack of respect for the 40-50 people live and on Zoom who were there to oppose this ordinance. The majority of people in the room did not get a chance to make their public comments.

The supervisors made an unsound, UNBALANCED and unacceptable decision that needs to be changed. A continued effort is needed to improve this ordinance.

Lesley Weinstock
Santa Barbara

• • •

In [Capt. David Bacon's Feb. 20 column](#), "Fire Debris Are Real Stressors to Nearshore Ocean Life," he states that "Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) should in my opinion strive to protect against inflow of this deadly stuff."

But in the previous paragraph, he writes that "National Marine Sanctuaries are limited in what protections they can implement and enforce. The reality is they cannot prevent it or clean it up either ..."

Which is it? We're screwed or maybe not?

Either we can't do anything about all the crud the Los Angeles wildfires produced washing into the ocean, being brought here by the current and then circling indefinitely like a log in an eddy until it sinks, if that's possible. A lot of it is probably small particles or water soluble and will hang in the water.

Or is there something we can do to at least keep it out of the Santa Barbara Channel or rush it through?

If the second, then what? Anything at all?

I'm no expert, but it seems like there's enough poisonous crud from LA's fires to poison our marine life, water, the ocean bottom for at least a foot, and for decades.

That's if nothing else happens on their overbuilt, home-with-a-view hillsides. We already get LA smog periodically.

I'm not unsympathetic to those who lost everything they owned, but if there's some way to keep a lot of it from migrating here, how?

Linda Melsher
Santa Barbara

• • •

Regarding the Feb. 17 article, "Hundreds of Marchers in Santa Barbara Join National Protest Against Donald Trump, Elon Musk," about President Donald Trump's administration's ongoing and relentless exposure of the federal government's financial fraud perpetrated on the American people, I say THREE CHEERS.

Finally. This slicing and dicing was bound to occur sooner or later. And it didn't look like the left was interested in having any part of it.

And, make no mistake, both parties will be caught up in it. Yes, both. And, I say this as a registered conservative Republican formally residing in Santa Barbara.

Sunlight is an equal-opportunity sanitizer. And, under Trump, we're finally getting to it, ready or not. Let the chips fall where they may.

In the interest of impartial journalism, I certainly hope Noozhawk entertains eventually providing conservative narratives alongside the usual liberal ones.

There must be more than a few conservative types in the neighborhood who have cogent thoughts relating to the political spectrum to offer to readers as food for thought. Everyone gains from multiple points of view.

I look forward to Noozhawk posting such local voices in future editions.

Otherwise, perhaps the masthead above might be reworded as “The Freshest Left-Leaning News in Santa Barbara County.”

Stephen Slomski
Mesa, Arizona

• • •

Regarding the Feb. 14 letters to the editor from Roy Belluz, R. Miller and Ron Fink, Rep. Salud Carbajal, D-Santa Barbara, did not “hold” this event, I did — along with my Steering Committee for Indivisible Santa Barbara. We invited Carbajal to participate because he works for all of the Central Coast.

Regarding the immigration claim, President Donald Trump, a twice-impeached and 34 times-convicted felon is using his mandate to simply kick everyone out.

You should remember the proposed comprehensive and conservative bipartisan immigration bill on the table last fall, which was trashed by Trump fearing negative impact on his election chances.

Regarding Miller’s wish to reduce the size of government, in an effort to do just that, this nation has witnessed the hollowing out of the Justice and Veterans Affairs departments, the Federal Aviation Administration, the United States Agency for International Development, the Food & Drug Administration, the FBI, the CIA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NASA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Environmental Protection Agency (I hope your house doesn’t burn down in a wildfire resulting from climate change as you live in California).

Employees of these agencies have lost their jobs and their livelihoods, and the ripple effect may even include suicide. Hence, their lives.

Perhaps we should talk about the \$18 billion in federal funds that Elon Musk has received in the past 10 years. Think about \$400 million to make armored Tesla trucks.

Regarding Fink, we don’t get it? Did you get it when Trump lost in 2020, claimed the election was stolen, led an insurrection at the capitol where people died?

Did you think that was a lovefest or fake news? We all saw that on TV.

Katherine Douglas

From: Joe Duran <jduranwild3@msn.com>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 1:04 PM
To: sbcob
Cc: Joe Duran
Subject: Fw: Letters to the Editor

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.

Clerk of the Board
Comment made for the File 25-00109

Quote of the Day in case you missed it Business as Usual within the 5 Board Members of Santa Barbara County.

A better Financial Decision will be made among the following Five Board members.

AT the ending of the day and agenda item ,Unquestionably economic impact is pending with the conflicts of Interest.

Joe Duran 304 Wilson Drive Orcutt CA

From: Joe Duran <jduranwild3@msn.com>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 10:11 AM
To: Joe Duran <jduranwild3@msn.com>
Subject: Fwd: Letters to the Editor

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Santa Barbara Current <thesantabarbaracurrent+letter@substack.com>
Date: February 22, 2025 at 6:31:38 AM PST
To: jduranwild3@msn.com
Subject: Letters to the Editor
Reply-To: Santa Barbara Current
<reply+2lv9sp&3h0e2j&&7bcb1feb8c272e715012f4ea3c6e737beb0b2fb243d11f6ba5804f81e7e526ec@mg1.substack.com>

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Letters to the Editor

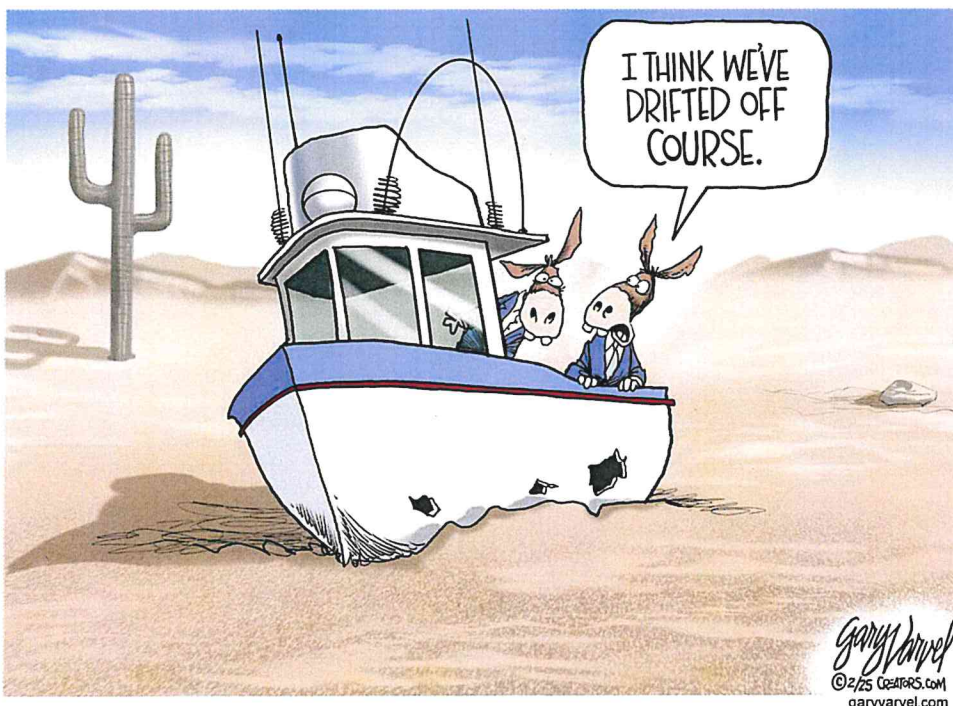
Edited by Jim Buckley

SANTA BARBARA CURRENT

FEB 22



READ IN APP ↗



(The following is just a trickle of some of the many comments, observations, claims, and suggestions received by Santa Barbara Current, a publication that receives no direct or indirect USAID or nonprofit funding. To enhance your reading experience, please follow the Comment thread that appears immediately after each column. If you'd like to contribute a letter to the editor, please send separately to jim@sbccurrent.com, and add your city/town in your comment.)

Meet The Next President of the United States

May I present to you the next POTUS (in January 2029): **James David Vance**? He walks courageously into a den of vipers and delivers a diplomatically blistering indictment of Europe's declining commitment to Western values. This is the hallmark of a leader. In speeches such as this, there are usually three occasions for perfunctory standing ovations. That day, the newly minted VPOTUS was greeted with one spate of spontaneously polite applause midway through the relatively short address. On two other occasions, Vance's entourage standing in the back of the hall tried to lead the official guests into insincere applause... unsuccessfully.

President Trump will use his brilliant Vice-President to be his intellectual battering ram before audiences like this over the next four years. Agree or disagree (most participants were stunned and made wordless), everybody present was fully aware the U.S.A. is back on top and leading from a position of strength and wisdom. The adults have returned and taken over. They may not like the fact that Europe is definitely in second place vis a vis the U.S.A., but subconsciously they are secure in the knowledge that push comes to shove the U.S.A. has Europe's back. But Europe must restore its obedience to Western civilization to lay claim to America's security umbrella.

J.D. is learning the art of the deal!

David Samuel McCalmont

Santa Barbara

Keep Talking

I'm just going to keep saying it: Santa Barbara needs a conservative viewpoint on *local* news and issues, investigative reporting on the crooks that are robbing us blind. We lost the *News-Press*, I was hoping *Santa Barbara Current* would fill this gap. but no just local conservatives talking about national issues. Who needs that? Yet another National commentary (everyone has an opinion) while Santa Barbara and Goleta and California corruption drive us into the mud. What a missed opportunity. Sad.

*(Editor's note: Ah well, **Bonnie Donovan, Brian Campbell, Peter Adam, and many others who regularly keep watch on Santa Barbara goings-on will be unhappy to hear that! – J.B.)***

Randall Forsyth

Santa Barbara

Note to Supervisor Lee

I am a resident of the First District in Santa Barbara County. I am registering with you my opinion that a 48% salary increase for your part-time job is not justified. Frankly, it is just not right. Using a timely vernacular, it is not common sense. You cannot compare your salaries to those of the largest counties in the nation. Please vote NO to this inappropriate increase. Thank you for your consideration.

Harold J. Baer M.D.

Santa Barbara

(Editor's note: You'll be pleased to read that former Supervisor Peter Adam agrees with you, as do probably most Santa Barbara County residents. – J.B.)

Is 5G Here to Stay?

I had the opportunity to sit in on the Santa Barbara County Supervisors meeting on February 4h and listen to over an hour of high-level bureaucratic discussion by a 5G company that will be putting up cell towers throughout Santa Barbara County in the coming years.

The committee – chaired by **Laura Capps**, listened to Santa Barbara County Deputy Director of planning and development discuss elements installing and maintaining these towers over time. It was quite daunting to hear the scope of the many components needed to plan for installation of what may be thousands of towers in Santa Barbara and outlying areas.

Had I had the opportunity to get to the microphone, I would have taken a different tact than most of the opposers; I would have confronted the board with the following questions: 1) Will the manufacturers and the County of Santa Barbara declare eminent domain on any piece of land owned by a corporation or a private residence as you prepare to install these towers? 2) The County of Santa Barbara (or any governmental agency) has the right to refuse a contract based upon public health and safety issues. So, my second question is: Has the 5G manufacturing company ever had any fire problems, sparking or energy pulses throughout any of their systems that are already installed which may fall into this safety category? 3) Has the 5G manufacturer ever been involved in any previous litigation with any other municipality that they have contracted to install their towers?

The board did a masterful job of deflecting concerns based on previous codes, mandates, and contracts. What they did not do was discuss any element of concern for public health regarding RF emissions from 5G towers, which are known to impact biological health and may increase the risk of health issues over time (*Scientific Reports*, July 2012; *Oncology Letters*, July 2020). Of course, it seemed that the county supervisors would vote ‘yes’ on the proposal from the onset, which they did. A community member stated that if anything does go wrong, it would be over 30 years before any contractual changes could be made, based on previous agreements with communities such as Malibu.

One of the other community comments was on legal liability. If anything does go south (and probably will) lawsuits will certainly ensue. The resident stated correctly that while there may not be any direct liability to the county, each member bears personal liability, and of course a savvy law firm would certainly exploit the personal Notice of Liability here.

Just food for thought.

Eric Durak, MSc

President and Founder

Medical Health and Fitness

(Editor's note: Perhaps our new Secretary of Health & Human Services [Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.] will have something to say along these lines! – J.B.)

Open Letter from Former Supervisor Mike Stoker to Current Supervisors

I am writing to you in my capacity as the President & CEO of the Santa Barbara County Taxpayer Advocacy Center. Your board is considering a pay raise of 48% to make your annual salaries roughly \$171,000 per year.

In considering the pay raise your staff has given you counties like LA, Orange, San Diego, and Santa Clara counties to use for comparisons in salary. Back in 1991 when I served on the Board of Supervisors, I used 'comparable counties' in advocating for safety retirement and salary increases for county fire and deputy sheriffs. The 'comparable counties' measurement has been used ever since for salary considerations. Initially, those counties included Monterey, SLO, Kern, and Ventura counties with an understanding that Ventura County was a much larger county with a much larger budget. I strongly urge your board to not set the precedent of using counties like LA, Orange, San Diego, or Santa Clara counties for any salary comparisons, including your own.

Additionally, as the story of the proposed salary increase evolved publicly over the last couple of weeks, the question has come up whether the job of a county supervisor is a full or part-time job. I have publicly stated the answer to that question depends on what any supervisor wants to make it. When I served on the Board of Supervisors I certainly made it a full-time job. However, one of my colleagues, Bill Wallace was a veterinarian and he continued to work as a veterinarian 2 to 3 days a week. The bottom line is every elected County Supervisor makes their own decision as to how much time they will allocate to the job. From everything I know, all five of you treat your position as a full-time job. While I personally oppose this pay raise, to the extent you do increase your salaries as proposed, I would encourage you to include a provision with the pay

raise that expressly states that County Supervisors shall be prohibited from receiving any outside compensation. I had a statutory prohibition from receiving outside compensation when I served as Chairman of the CA Agricultural Labor Relations Board. There are countless state and federal positions that have the restriction of no compensation other than the compensation received for the specific job. You very well may have a contractual prohibition for your department heads prohibiting them from receiving outside compensation. If you don't you should probably do so going forward.

The bottom line is your board has an opportunity to put aside the question of whether your position is full or part-time by tying your salary into the restriction that you will not receive outside compensation.

Sincerely,

Mike Stoker

President & CEO, SBCTAC

Former Supervisor Peter Adam Also Weights In Salary Increase

Lately, there has been a lot of digital ink spilled on the proposal to increase salaries for the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors. As a recent participant in the County Supervisor business, I think I should weigh in on the subject.

Much to the displeasure of my colleagues at the time, I voted against each attempt to raise our own pay. This was because, as I routinely pointed out, we had tremendous unfunded liability and deferred maintenance issues. I told them repeatedly that if they were the Board of Directors of a very successful billion-dollar, publicly traded company, they would certainly deserve the raise. Maybe they'd be cheap at twice the price. But as it was, with over \$2 billion of deferred maintenance and unfunded liability, they didn't deserve *any* raise at all. Then, when they went ahead despite my objections and approved the raise, they suggested that I not take it if I didn't vote for it. I declined to take them up on that offer on the theory that if they were going to take it and run the county into the ground, I sure as hell wasn't going to take less than them for insisting they ran it better.

That was then and this is now.

I can argue both sides of this issue. First, despite what some gadflies say, done properly, being Supervisor is indeed a full-time job. In fact, many of my best ideas came in the middle of the night or in the shower, first thing in the morning. This is not an assembly-line job. Much of the job consists of thinking about how you view the workings of government and its employees and how they should be interacting among themselves and with the public.

As a supervisor, you “work”, i.e., think, involuntarily, most of your waking and some of your sleeping hours each day. Including holidays and weekends. Just because there are no televised meetings on Tuesday does not mean that scheming (in the least pejorative context possible) and planning has been stopped. There are rare but very important events that we are required by convention, if not necessity, to attend to, such as mudslides, fires, and failures of major roads during storms causing human suffering. These, like babies, come on their own schedule and wait for no one. And it *does not* include campaigning for reelection. That is specifically prohibited on county property with public resources.

The fact is that it is a hard job that takes a lot of energy. We do want the people who serve to be of a high ethical and intellectual caliber. I would think most of us would rather not have someone representing us for whom this would be the highest paying job they could ever expect to attain.

So, on one hand, if not now, when? If they don’t give themselves a raise now, who will run for the office in the future? Only the independently wealthy? It is indeed an act of service. If most people think it should be on a volunteer basis, someone could put an initiative on the ballot and take away *all* their salary. Who will that attract? That would certainly change the landscape. Perhaps not in a good way.

The optics will always be horrible for Supervisors to raise their own salaries. Yet, at the moment, that is what the system requires. I am not necessarily defending the 48% number. I have always objected to the methodology by which County HR staff suggests such increases. Supervisors do not make this stuff up themselves. The fact is, that system is a ratchet-like system in use for all

classifications of county employees. If county X and county Y “comparable counties” pay more for a particular position, then we are expected to increase too. A government version of Monkey See, Monkey Do. And a convenient excuse for an ever-increasing spiral of employee pay. I considered it invalid when I was there, and I still despise it.

I tell you what I would support. That is a less significant raise predicated on the following: that all the supervisors who vote for the ordinance also agree to: 1) Demand transparency from our Behavioral Wellness (BW) department. Make them produce an anonymized report (at least) annually that discloses what the number of distinct individuals who interact with BW is, what level of care they are requiring, and how many of those people become self-sufficient and graduate from the system. In other words, how many people are we actually helping? I asked for this information for most of my eight years and never received any good faith answer at all. This should be unacceptable for staff to stonewall the elected officials until they leave. The elected should be able to have access to legitimate information with which to analyze whether a(ny) county department is being successful. And 2) Commit to reducing the number of funded and filled positions. When I left the county, there were approximately 4300 employees. Now there are 4700. According to the assistant in my iPhone, the population has *decreased* from 448,229 in 2020 to 438,599 in 2024. If that’s the case, we should be shedding employees rather than gathering them.

These are a couple of difficult things that Supervisors could propose to prove that they are the worthy, responsible, stewards of a 1.6 Billion-dollar company and should be worth a commensurate salary.

The fact is that the situation is different than when I was there. The budget has grown. Costs have risen. Right or wrong, county employees’ salaries have risen. Maybe, in the interest of not having to double or triple the salary at some point in the future, we should allow Supervisors to increase their salaries a reasonable amount, in exchange for a commitment to run the “company” properly, without throwing too many rocks at them? Both paths into the future contain risk.

Peter Adam

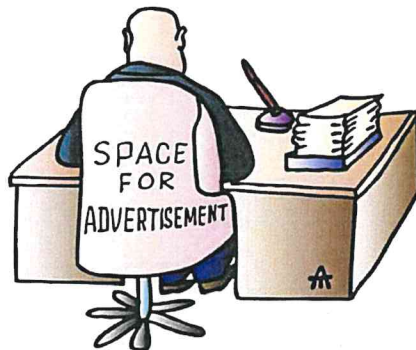
Former Fourth District Supervisor

(Editor's note: The first thing I would do if in your former position as Supervisor is determine how many employees are required to do the work the public expects county employees to do. I'll bet the answer would be considerably less people than there are now. – J.B.)

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