

Ramirez, Angelica Public Comment - Public Safety Group 3

From: Renee O'Neill <chasingstar2701@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, June 4, 2021 4:08 PM
To: sbcob; Nelson, Bob; Hartmann, Joan; Hart, Gregg; Lavagnino, Steve; Williams, Das
Cc: Villalobos, David
Subject: Public Comment, June 8th Budget Hearing
Attachments: BOS re Budget Hearing, June 8, 2021.pdf; Go Fund Our Sheriffs, Please!.pdf

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Good Afternoon,

Attached, please find my second letter for public comment, re Public Safety Budget Hearing on June 8th. I am also attaching the edited version of the first letter that was published, last month.

It is my sincere hope that you receive many letters from your constituents that support our Sheriffs Team.

Respectfully Yours,

Renée O'Neill

June 4, 2021

To: The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
Cc: The Santa Barbara County Planning Commissioners
Re: Funding Sheriff's Cannabis Compliance Team

Dear Supervisors,

On May 12th, I submitted public comment to the Board, re the June 8th budget hearing, listing my concerns and reasons why I believe the Board must fund an additional and complete, Sheriff's Cannabis Compliance Team. Since writing that letter, I have received additional information from your Board, which further support fully funding this essential Team. As per statements made in my previous letter:

"For the past three years, an underfunded and understaffed Cannabis Team, comprised of 1 Lead Detective, 5 Deputy Detectives and 1 Administrative Staff (civilian), have had the prime directive of enforcement for the cannabis industry in SBC. In addition to being assigned enforcement on ALL cannabis growers in the entire County, they have now been assigned the duties of overseeing licensing (without additional funding or staff), previously assigned to the Planning Department. Furthermore, coming down the pipeline, there are multiple, huge and complex cannabis projects that will put even more demands upon the Team."

"In April 2021, at the BOS Budget Workshops, Santa Barbara County Sheriff, Chief Deputy Bonner stated, **"The single, Cannabis Compliance Team that is presently available cannot simultaneously do both enforcement and licensing efficiently or effectively."** It was also reported that there are at least 21 suspected, illegal growers and dozens of illegal delivery services operating in our county that the Team was unable to investigate and/or enforce on. Chief Deputy Bonner also stated, **"...that of the 108 growers, 50 percent claimed no income or did not file at all."**

On June 1st, I attended and spoke at the BOS Special Meeting re the SBC Sheriff's Presentation and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). I learned that there are \$43.3 million in ARPA funds that are available to this county, providing the various proposed projects follow the U.S. Treasury Department's guidelines. As Supervisor Gregg Hart aptly stated, *"This is a once in a generation opportunity, to do something different..."*

In regard to funding, Supervisor Lavagnino stated, "I don't think there's \$8.8 million worth of cannabis revenue available for one-time projects, I think there's considerably more." *"I think for me, I have to get more strategic and efficient in matching up with one-time dollars instead of moving to ongoing..."* *"So, next year when cannabis does another \$20 or \$25 million, you open up that envelope you've got that whole \$25 million to spend outside of enforcement costs, as opposed to if we add on another \$5 or \$6 million worth of ongoing into cannabis next year." You open that (envelope) up, it's \$25 million to take out enforcement..."*

If I am interpreting what was expressed re the ARPA windfall of \$43.3 million, the cannabis tax revenue of \$19-plus million and the one-time cannabis tax revenue of \$8.849-plus million, it appears to me that there are abundant resources to fully fund the Sheriff's Team.

The Board letter for the BOS Special Meeting stated the following: "In advance of the FY 2021-22 Budget adoption hearings (June 8), this Board letter provides ...possible uses of \$43.3 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds which are included ...but not yet allocated to specific projects or services."

With that said, I will conclude with the final statement in the letter I submitted to the Board, on May 12th. "For the last three years, law enforcement and hundreds of residents and businesses have asked you to fully fund the Cannabis Compliance Team and you have refused. If you refuse to adequately fund them for a *fourth year in a row*, the voters of Santa Barbara demand to know **WHY?**"

Respectfully Submitted,

Renée O'Neill

To the Editor,

We would like to submit our Open Letter (edited) to the Board of Supervisors for publication:

Dear Supervisors,

In 2019, when the cannabis tax was approved by voters, the Board of Supervisors promised to “use the majority of cannabis revenue to fund departments and agencies that oversee regulating and enforcing the cannabis industry.” At the cannabis industry’s request, you adopted a revenue standard of “self-declaring” rather than the industry standard of taxing cannabis by acreage or foot.

For the past three years, an underfunded and understaffed Cannabis Team, comprised of 1 Lead Detective, 5 Deputy Detectives and 1 Administrative Staff (civilian), have had the prime directive of enforcement for the cannabis industry in SBC. In addition to being assigned enforcement on ALL cannabis growers in the entire County, they have now been assigned the duties of overseeing licensing (without additional funding or staff), previously assigned to the Planning Department. Furthermore, coming down the pipeline, there are multiple, huge and complex cannabis projects that will put even more demands upon the Team.

In April 2021, at the BOS Budget Workshops, Santa Barbara County Sheriff, Chief Deputy Bonner stated, **“The single, Cannabis Compliance Team that is presently available cannot simultaneously do both enforcement and licensing efficiently or effectively.”** *It was also reported that there are at least 21 suspected, illegal growers and dozens of illegal delivery services operating in our county that the Team was unable to investigate and/or enforce on.* Chief Deputy Bonner also stated, **“...that of the 108 growers, 50 percent claimed no income or did not file at all.”**

When a sufficiently funded and staffed Team is able to enforce the required tagging of plants then, they will have the data, necessary to compute growers’ income and discover who and how much revenue is being denied the County.

The tagging of plants provides the number of plants, which along with the going price of cannabis, at time of sale, will provide the income that the grower should report. By continuing to underfund the Team, SBC will never receive the revenue that these growers actually owe because you will never know what they are actually producing..., *unless* that is the intention. We strongly recommend that you provide the necessary funding for the Team to do the job you assigned them, which will ensure that growers are paying their full, fair share and therefore, provide the necessary funding to reimburse the county.

For the last three years, law enforcement and hundreds of residents and businesses have asked you to fully fund the Cannabis Compliance Team and you have refused. If you refuse to adequately fund them for a *fourth year in a row*, the voters of Santa Barbara demand to know **WHY?**

Respectfully,

Renée O’Neill
Linda Tunnell

Ramirez, Angelica

From: Lillian Clary <mzlil2988@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 6, 2021 7:36 PM
To: sbcob
Cc: Lil Clary; Dave Clary
Subject: Sheriff's Department Funding Budget Hearing June 8, 2021

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We would appreciate it if you would add this letter to Public Comment.

Thank you

Dave & Lil Clary

As residents of Tepusquet Canyon, we strongly support allocation of funding for an additional cannabis enforcement team within the Sheriff's Department.

What is the necessary funding? Whatever it takes to eliminate illegal cultivation and other illegal cannabis operations. Based on testimony at these budget hearings, the Sheriff's Cannabis Enforcement team has had additional duties imposed and yet was already in the position of lacking enough funding to shut down the large number of illegal operators.

The recent discovery that a 'platinum standard' cultivator was illegally using diesel generators clearly demonstrates the critical need for allocating cannabis funds to enforcement. There are serious problems within the Planning Department—notified repeatedly of this violation—yet the individual continued to operate until the Air Pollution Control District acted.

The problems with illegal operations in all aspects of cannabis activities are not going away. At the outset we believe that most in county government felt that once the most egregious activities were dealt with that there would be a well regulated and controlled cannabis industry locally.

Sadly, the economic incentive to flout the law wins out. Greedy operators, whether involved in cultivation, delivery service, tax avoidance or dispensary sales are not going away. In order to have an impact, the Sheriff's Department must have staffing to shut these folk down permanently.

For as long as operators slip through there will be illegal operations. Strong enforcement is the dis-incentive needed. Here's a timely example: in April, the county's enforcement team raided an illegal grow here in Tepusquet Canyon. This action resulted in the destruction of nearly 8,000 plants and 300 pounds of processed flower. Who can say what the tax revenue from this site could have been if the grower had been convinced at the outset that going the legal route was the right way. **Strong enforcement acts as a dis-incentive to illegal operators.**

STOP giving away cannabis tax revenue until enforcement is fully funded.

David Clary & Lil Clary

Tepusquet Canyon

Ramirez, Angelica

From: maureen earls <maurenearls00@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 6, 2021 8:49 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Severance/Earls Criminal Justice Budget Recommendations
Attachments: Earls & Severance Public Comment.2021.06.07.docx

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To: Clerk of the Board
From: Maureen Earls, Larry Severance
Re: June Update:Criminal Justice Budget 2021-22 Recommendations
For Distribution: June 8, 2021 Board of Supervisors Meeting

Thank you,
Maureen Earls
805 4506111

June 7, 2021

Dear Chair Nelson and Supervisors,

Re: June Update: Criminal Justice Budget for 2021-2022;
and proposed South County Jail Remodel

In the past two weeks, we have had the opportunity to meet with Chief Wasilewski (Sheriff's Department), attend public hearings, and listen to the perspectives of Supervisors, Sheriff Brown, Chief Vincent Wasilewski, Tracy Macuga (Public Defender Department). One of us has met with Chief Tanja Heitman (Probation Department). We are also cognizant of and attentive to racial justice advocates, our own faith communities, and other local stakeholders and organizations.

We strongly support goals to permanently decrease our County jail's long-term Average Daily Population (ADP) and increase community-based alternative resources. Achieving these core goals will improve systemic racial and economic inequities, reduce recidivism, and better secure public safety. Based on our conversations and observations, we are encouraged to find solutions that can meet the expressed needs of all.

Background.

The Sheriff's presentation on June 1 did not address any ways to reduce the ADP or to reduce the ever-increasing Sheriff Department budget. Instead, he expects the ADP to rise as the courts deal with backlogs, and due to decisions out of his control. The Sheriff's budget assumes that the numbers of the incarcerated population will return to pre-pandemic levels.

We do not call upon you to "defund the police" as the Sheriff claimed at the June 1 hearing. We do ask you to look closely at the Sheriff Department's budget request seeking an increase of nearly \$10 million dollars for the coming fiscal year, after also receiving a \$9.7 million increase for 2019-2020. There are broad-based community challenges to these escalating expenditures. We request that you take concrete budget-tied steps now to transform our County's criminal justice system from one that is punitive to one that is restorative and does not perpetuate structural racism.

Solutions. The most critical solutions we see are these:

(1) Budget **enough** alternative community resources for assessment, placement and treatment of addictions and mental illness. This priority was identified by officers, Chief Wasilewski, and all community advocates.

(2) Immediately increase holistic advocacy through the Public Defender to identify alternatives to incarceration that address underlying social/economic causes of justice-involvement. CLUE-SB's Board-endorsed recommendation ask you to budget \$2.43 million now for this purpose.

(3) Ask the Sheriff's Department to clarify specific minimum jail staffing standards. Chief Wasilewski has agreed to clarify these standards as applied to the South County jail.

(4) Temporarily pause the current South County jail remodel plan. Provide an opportunity for public/stakeholder and expert input on contemporary design innovations that can improve jail conditions for residents and staff, including direct supervision, and to take into account diversion goals for those with mental health or addiction disabilities that would sustainably reduce the jail ADP.

Based on our meeting with Chief Wasilewski on June 2, the following programs would not cost the Sheriff any additional funds but would lead to a reduction in the jail population. These solutions could come through an on-site remodel/repurposing of the south campus and/or increased funding for off-campus options:

- **Add a sobering center** pre-booking to reduce custody officers and jail beds currently used for 1 day in and out. (In 2019, there were 3,515 one day stays.)
- **Add a holistic assessment team 24/7** to screen pre-booking and divert when possible. This could be staffed from the Public Defender by adding additional holistic advocacy positions to its budget.
- **Add short stay non-jail beds** for mental health or other immediate intake needs
- **Add a re-entry holistic management team 24/7** to support the Sheriff's 5 point reentry priority needs (housing, treatment, job, means for a living income, anger management). This team could be funded through proposed additions to the Public Defender's holistic advocates.
- **Obtain agreement from the Sheriff to pause the pending Request for Qualifications (RFQ)** founded on outdated architectural concepts for remodeling the main jail. Designate a definite time period and transparent public process for community and expert input for renovation and repurposing of the South County facility.
- **Upgrade Internet and other technology at the jails** for purposes of rehabilitation and education. Participant surveys document the need for access to online programs.
- **Provide access for Freedom to Choose programs in the jail.** Chief Wasilewski welcomes this or other programs that provide emotional training and support for jail residents with no added cost to the Sheriff.

A model already embodying many of these suggestions is San Antonio's Bexar Co Texas program which has provided treatment and supportive services to 60,000 people who would otherwise have been in jail. (See Santa Barbara Independent, May 13-20,

2021 at page12.) In California, Orange County has replicated this model. As you consider budget priorities for 2021-2022, we ask you to weave these recommendations into your thinking, discernment and budgeting decisions.

Very sincerely yours,

Maureen Earls,
Santa Barbara resident and
Co-Chair of CLUE-Santa Barbara's Criminal Justice Workgroup

Laurence Severance
Santa Barbara resident and
Co-Chair of CLUE-Santa Barbara's Criminal Justice Workgroup

Ramirez, Angelica

From: Kelsey Maloney <kelsey@thewriteteam.net>
Sent: Monday, June 7, 2021 12:06 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Comments for 6/8 Board Meeting

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.

Good morning,

My name is Kelsey and I am a small business owner and resident of Santa Barbara for 15 years. I am writing to show my support for divesting from the Sheriff's Office, and investing in true community safety and equity. Our county disproportionately incarcerates Black and Brown community members, who are already socio-economically marginalized. People of color are disproportionately met with discrimination, violence, and other harm from local law enforcement, leading to lasting negative impacts on lives and opportunities. This is unjust and unacceptable.

I support investing in community-centered programs that address the root causes of crime and constitute true social justice reform. Specifically, I would like to echo the community's call for \$26.7 million in funding to be diverted from the Sheriff's Office and invested into the following four areas:

- 1.
2. Community-based
3. initiatives that support alternatives to incarceration, diversion programs that are entirely independent of law enforcement, and practical and effective transitional services for individuals in custody
- 4.
- 5.
6. Affordable
7. housing initiatives
- 8.
- 9.
10. Public
11. Defender's Office
- 12.
- 13.
14. Behavioral
15. Wellness
- 16.

Our communities have an urgent need to invest in public health, mental wellness and affordable housing. Please prioritize community wellness over the police department.

Thank you,
Kelsey Maloney
93109

Ramirez, Angelica

From: Heather Ayer <heathermichelle3@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 7, 2021 12:30 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Budget Hearing Comment

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.

Hello,

As a sibling to someone who has battled mental illness for 20+ years I have seen the immense impact of affordable housing and behavioral wellness. Through local resources, my sister has been able to live independently keeping her off the streets and in a safe place to focus on her mental stability.

Unfortunately along with the incredible resources we have received, we have also experienced several instances with local law enforcement that were less than helpful and left us in compromising situations. Oftentimes with nobody else to call, my sister and family are reliant upon local law authority to respond to mental health crises. Most of these situations can be avoided through proper de-escalation and/or involvement of mental health professionals.

I believe we have an opportunity in our community to place the right resources in the right situations. This is why I am asking for funds to be diverted from our Sheriff's office to invest in alternatives to incarceration, create effective transitional services for those in custody, improve affordable housing to those in need, and provide more access to critical behavior wellness resources.

Thank you for your time and for providing the space to join the conversation.

Sincerely,
Heather Ayer

Ramirez, Angelica

From: Kathryn Donovan <kdonovan1@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, June 7, 2021 2:59 PM
To: Lavagnino, Steve; sbcob
Subject: RE: Funding for Sheriff's Department of Funding Budget Hearing June 8, 2021

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Steve Lavagnino, District Five, and sbcob@countyof sb.org.

RE: BUDGET HEARING: RE: EXTRA FUNDING FOR ENFORCEMENT IN TEPUSQUET CANYON

I am Kathryn Donovan and I live in Tepusquet Canyon. I am concerned for our family and our neighbors that have had illegal marijuana grows, not only in our Tepusquet Canyon, but in the Los Padres National Forest.

I have personally witnessed the continued nuisance of equipment, laborers, and supplies being delivered to illegal grows for over 5 years and in the past several years.

We need more Enforcement in our Canyon and would appreciate Added Sheriffs in our area, to help control and finally eradicate the illegal marijuana grows in our Mountainous Area.

We have had little rain! (At my place only 7 inches of rain in 2020-2021)) It is hot and dry and we have high winds in the afternoons.

I wrote before for Additional Funding for Extra Sheriffs' Funding (April 2021) for the rural area of Santa Barbara County with focus of complete eradication of the illegal grows

Tepusquet Landowners need The Board of Supervisors of Santa Barbara County support to provide funding in our rural area at the Budget Hearing to be held June 8, 2021.

Thank you,

Kathryn C. Donovan
Kdonovan1@aol.com