

Report to City Council from the Public Safety Services Proposal Review Committee

Date: October 26, 2015

Members

The Public Safety Services Proposal Review Committee is made up of Glenn Lambdin, Chair; Bill Coburn, Vice-Chair, Rosemary Burnett, retired Police Chief Marilyn Diaz, Mayor Pro-Tem Gene Goss and Donald Handley.

Background

In light of the decrease in revenue (shortfall of \$529,527 in the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 budget and shortfall of \$994, 474 for Fiscal Year 2016-2017) due to the sun-setting of the UUT on July 1, 2015, the City Council created three committees to explore (1) contracting out Police services, (2) contracting out library services, and (3) new revenue possibilities.

The task of the Public Safety Services Proposal Review Committee (the Committee) was to review the “City of Sierra Madre Municipal Law Enforcement Proposal, May 2015” from Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Dept., and to make a recommendation to the City. The proposal includes Plan A, which would have the existing SMPD station open 16 hours a day at an annual cost of \$3,363,684, and Plan B at an annual cost of \$3,874,097, which would have the existing station open 24 hours a day. Additionally, we requested and received from Chief Giannone a cost if LASD were to close the station entirely, which we refer to as Plan C, which amounted to \$2,999,975.

Through discussion, the Committee came to a consensus that its recommendation should not be based entirely on finances, but overall, what is best for the City. In addition, the consensus was that no one on the Committee wanted to see a reduction in services, so the Committee, while still considering all Plans, would concentrate its efforts on Plan B.

Meetings

The Committee met on 5 occasions, July 9, August 17, September 28, October 5 and October 26. Committee Agendas were posted on the City’s website and the meetings were open to the public. There was very little public participation except for the October 5th and October 26th meetings, at which City Hall was nearly filled.

Items Considered by the Committee

In addition to the Proposal, the Committee also requested and received documents from staff. The documents requested and provided include but are not limited to:

- Report detailing Cost of Humane Society Services
- Report on Parking Enforcement and Parking Citation Processing and associated costs and revenue
- Report on Costs to Provide Policing Services for Special Events
- Report on Estimated Human Resources Impacts

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- Report on Cost Savings Proposals from SMPD; Levels 1, 2 and 3
- Report of Start-Up Costs to Re-Establish the Police Department (if the City contracted with LASD and it did not work out)
- SMPD Line Item Budget
- Contract vs. In-House Cost Comparison Spreadsheet for Years 1 through 8, including a 3% CPI increase and with and without a 5% projected increase in Personnel Costs
- Report with answers to questions prepared by the Committee Members and the Public to which LASD was asked to respond

In addition to the referenced documents, the Committee considered input from the public, which consisted of many e-mails from residents, attached to this report, as well as comments from residents at both the October 5th and 26th meetings.

Public Input

E-mails previously mentioned are available as an attachment to this report. This section concentrates on the input received from residents at the meetings of October 5th and October 26th. At the October 5th meeting, a total of 23 residents spoke to the Committee during public comment, ranging from recent arrivals to lifetime residents. Of the 23, 22 spoke in favor of keeping the department. The 23rd did not recommend either way, see below. Comments made by some of the residents (in no particular order) included but are not limited to:

- Concerns by several regarding response times
- Concerns by several regarding property values
- Several people stated their willingness to pay
- Multiple people offered to volunteer time
- Concerned parents have to make sure their children are safe in their school
- Comments by several residents that they moved here for a sense of security provided by the fact the City has its own PD
- Concerns by several that personal service would be diminished, particularly as regards “nuisance calls” such as dogs barking, cars parked more than 3 days, etc.
- One resident spoke of concerns regarding unintended consequences, i.e., people feeling less safe more likely to arm themselves with negative impacts, followed shortly thereafter by a speaker who stated that she would in fact feel a need to arm herself if the LASD were brought in.
- Concerns that level of force used by LASD is too much for this town
- Concern was mentioned about liability to the City with LASD vs. SMPD
- 25 year resident and former Sheriff stated he was opposed to bringing in the Sheriff’s, saying that they are “not a good fit for this town

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- The 23rd person stated that an advantage to the LASD is that if there's a "bad apple" you can have them transferred to another jurisdiction, not so with SMPD. Stated that he was not going to recommend to the committee which direction it should go, but that if it was decided to keep the SMPD, changes needed to be made including a clean sweep of personnel.

At the October 26th meeting, a total of 30 residents spoke to the Committee during public comment. Concerns and issues brought up by some of the residents (In no particular order) included but are not limited to:

- status of Public Safety Director
- dealing with complaints and other personnel issues
- future of existing SMPD officers
- response times during transition period
- provision for community feedback
- access to dispatch services
- deployment numbers
- physical condition of deputies
- waiting time for crime scene fingerprinting
- deputies in residence
- contract rate increases
- fate of community volunteer groups
- incidents of misconduct by deputies
- continuing use of current police facility
- "paramilitary" nature of sheriff's personnel
- stability of assigned personnel
- availability of deputies for special events and costs
- community based nature of policing model

Recommendation

It is the recommendation of the Committee to the Council that they reject the contract proposal from the Sheriff's Department; that there be no additional cuts to the Police Department; and if and when funds become available that the Police Department be given sufficient budget resources to provide a minimum field deployment of two police officers and one supervisor at all times.