

Lopez, Maria [COB]

From: Felicity <felicitynf@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 26, 2021 12:34 AM
To: Page, Leon; COB_Response
Cc: Steel, Michelle; Do, Andrew; Wagner, Donald; Chaffee, Doug; Bartlett, Lisa; Fourth District; Kim, Frank (HOA)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT and comments on Items 24 and 29 for BOS meeting on January 26, 2021

Attention: This email originated from outside the County of Orange. Use caution when opening attachments or links.

Dear Mr. Page --

Hope this email finds you healthy.

Because of my age I have been advised by health professionals to shelter at home during the COVID outbreak, which renders me unable to attend the Board meeting in person, especially considering the large numbers of unmasked people who I have seen to congregate outside your recent meetings and sometimes inside as well. Therefore, I am submitting a public comment and other comments on a few of the items on the agenda, and I ask that you read these comments into the record at the appropriate time.

Item 24: One very important budget item is funding for mental health, especially for the many unhoused members of our community that struggle with some form of mental illness and need a stable home situation with wrap-around services to help them deal with their infirmity. So why is it that, instead of earmarking funds to build appropriate housing for them, the Board of Supervisors, in all their wisdom, is spending over \$300 million to expand the James A. Musick facility into a "mental health jail"? Why not use this money to develop treatment facilities or more stable housing environments so community members won't continue to be criminalized for being on the streets in the first place? If you care about helping those who suffer from mental illness, then stop wasting our tax dollars on boondoggles like a "mental health jail", that benefit no one. Sheriff Barnes himself has said (and I quote), "We don't want to be mental health clinicians, it's not our goal for law enforcement to deal with mental health issues". And yet, that is precisely what law enforcement will be doing if the Musick jail expansion is allowed to proceed. As Sheriff Barnes rightly observes: "Every dollar spent is a dollar not spent somewhere else." Let's follow his advice, take the \$350 million earmarked for that misbegotten jail project, and use it to build a state-of-the-art facility, staffed with mental health professionals, that can successfully help individuals suffering from mental health issues have the hope of a healthier and happier life. That would be real leadership.

Item 29: Just when we think news about the OC Sheriff's Department can't get any more outrageous, we are once again proven wrong. Today, it's the revelation that, of the federal CARES Act funding that the county received, the Sheriff's Department got almost TWICE AS MUCH AS THE COUNTY HEALTH CARE AGENCY!! \$93 million, to a department that has consistently and publicly refused to obey the law and endorse state mandates regarding mask-wearing, whose own officers have been photographed multiple times responding to calls bare-faced and with absolutely no social distancing protocol, and whose county jails have been the scene of egregious health and safety abuses of the people incarcerated there. Not only that: when a judge demanded that the Sheriff remove half of those detained individuals – most of whom have not been convicted of any crime and are therefore legally innocent – from what has become a hotbed of potentially deadly COVID infections, Sheriff Barnes, instead of complying, has spent the last three weeks trying to weasel out of

the court order by bringing appeals and manipulating public opinion, all while the virus has now infected over 2250 people under his watch. This is what our CARES money is being spent on, instead of going to the healthcare workers who could actually alleviate people's illnesses. It's a countywide disgrace.

PUBLIC COMMENT: One question we should all be asking ourselves: just who is policing the police? It's more than disturbing to witness what has been going on in the OC Sheriff's Department regarding the double standard when it comes to racism and far-right leanings. Let's just compare for a moment: at numerous Black Lives Matter demonstrations over the summer, sheriff's deputies showed up in full riot gear to push back against nonviolent protesters; and yet, when hundreds of mostly white Trump supporters shut down Imperial Highway in Yorba Linda to attack a peaceful group of demonstrators, the deputies helped them out by redirecting traffic. On another occasion, a sheriff's deputy was found to be wearing a patch on his official uniform for the Three-Percenters, a group that is defined on Wikipedia as a far-right, anti-government militia movement, one that even an ex neo-Nazi calls the "most dangerous extremist group". But according to Sheriff Barnes it's fine for that deputy to remain on the force because the sheriff spoke to him and determined that he didn't have extremist views. Right. And now we find that one of the sheriff's deputies actually participated in the insurrection and attempted coup in Washington, DC, on January 6. But I'm sure she didn't have extremist views either, right, Sheriff Barnes? Again, I ask: just who is policing the police? Because someone better start.

Thank you once again for reading my comments. Stay safe and don't forget to wear your mask --

Felicity Figueroa
Irvine, CA