

**Martinez, Ruben**

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**From:** Carol Daley <  
**Sent:** Friday, June 18, 2021 6:02 PM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse

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Thanks for the additional funding for homeless services that you have allocated to the various groups in Pasadena. Our hats off to you!  
God bless you!  
Carol Daley, co-founder Foothills Kitchen

06/21/2021  
Item 11

RECEIVED

2021 JUN 21 AM 8:33

CITY CLERK  
CITY OF PASADENA

SONJA K. BERNDT  
Pasadena, CA 91107

June 19, 2021

Mayor Victor Gordo  
Members of the Pasadena City Council  
Pasadena, CA  
(By email to [correspondence@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:correspondence@cityofpasadena.net))

Re: Agenda Item #11: The Recommended FY 2022 Operating Budget

Dear Mayor Gordo and Members of the City Council:

I. Introduction

Many others and I have submitted correspondence and live public comments at every budget meeting, urging you to re-allocate funds to help our most vulnerable and marginalized residents. I urge you not to simply rubber stamp the proposed operating budget, which allocates a massive portion of the General Fund to the Police Department **at the expense of our most vulnerable residents.**

II. The Gross Inequity in Departmental General Fund Allocations is Unconscionable

The Recommended FY 2022 Operating Budget shows the following funding from the General Fund: Police Department \$84,605,000; Housing Department: \$1,475,000; Public Health Department: \$0.00. Although the Housing and Public Health Departments receive grant funding from county, state, and/or federal governments, the undeniable fact is that **the non-local funding our Housing and Public Health Departments receive is far short of what our City actually needs to provide critical services to our most vulnerable residents.**

As of the January 2020 homeless count, we had over 500 unhoused persons, nearly 300 of which had no shelter at all. Experts have predicted that these numbers will rise due to the pandemic. While some of our unsheltered persons have obtained interim or permanent housing this past year, most did not. Further, how many more persons have fallen into homelessness this past year?

As for our Public Health Department, members of this Council have publicly agreed that our Public Health Department should get more money and expand its programs in order to improve the health of the community. According to Dr. Goh, the health department does not have enough money to pursue more ambitious solutions to problems like poverty and the health impacts that flow from it. The clear problem is that these Departments do not have sufficient staff or financial resources for programs that would end homelessness, achieve better health and mental health outcomes, and meet other critical community needs.

III. Possible Reallocations from the Police Department Budget to Address Critical Health, Mental Health, Housing and Other Community Needs

A. Possible Re-Allocations from Police Budget for Line Items that Lack Transparency and Remain Unexplained

As I have previously stated, there are a number of Police Department operating budget line items that lack transparency and leave many questions unanswered, including the following:

- The Police Department’s personnel costs (total) have risen over \$6 million from 2020 actual costs.
- The City’s portion for Police Department retirement benefits (SPERS) jumped from \$10,915,288 (2020 actual) to \$15,755,242 (FY 2022), **despite the fact there is no change in FTEs in the PPD from 2020 to 2022.**
- Personnel category 805000 (Benefits) rose from \$6,552,770 (2020 actual) to \$7,800,375 (FY 2022).
- Services and Supplies category 815600 (Insurance) soared from \$229,917 (2020 actual) to \$785,762 (FY 2022).
- “Other Contract Services” = \$3,055,641.
- “Internal Service Charges” = \$6,796,288 for “strategic services,” with no further explanation. Compare the Public Health Department’s “Internal Service Charges” of \$1,095,811 (“health administration”) and the Fire Department’s “Internal Service Charges” of \$3,117,205 (“fire operations”).

**The following line item also raises serious questions: “New Years Day General Fund Events” (Statement of Appropriations category 106) notes a FY 2021 Revised total of \$1,584,000, nearly as much as 2020 (actual costs), even though there was no Rose Parade or Rose Bowl in FY 2021.**

I have listened to the budget hearings, but have not heard any explanation of any of these items. **I urge you to scrutinize these line items, and the Police Department operating budget as a whole, and demand answers.**

B. Possible Re-Allocations of the \$2.3 Million in Police Operations “Savings”

The Police Department reported that it “saved” \$2.3 million in operations last year, which will be used for the remodel of its building and a mobile command center. **This money needs to be used for decent treatment of our unsheltered residents and to fund policing alternatives, outside of the Police Department, that counteract the disparate impact of policing on Black community members, not for remodeling a building.** Moreover, despite this purported savings last year, the recommended FY 2022 Police Department Operating Budget is almost the same as last year’s. **This makes no sense unless the Police Department plans to “save” more money in operations so it can pay for the remaining, currently unfunded, \$2 million in remodeling expenses in 2023 and 2024. How can the City Council, in good faith, allow this to happen?**

C. Possible Re-Allocations to Fund a CAHOOTS-Model Mobile Crisis Intervention Program

As other community members and I have explained, Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS) is an innovative community-based public safety system that provides mental health first-response for crises involving mental illness, homelessness, and addiction. CAHOOTS has been found to be safe and cost effective. **In 2017, the Eugene, Oregon CAHOOTS teams answered 17% of the Eugene Police Department’s overall call volume.<sup>1</sup> The program costs about \$2.1 million annually and saves the city of Eugene an estimated \$8.5 million in public safety spending annually. (Ibid.)**

How many **unnecessary** police interactions and arrests could be avoided if Pasadena employed such a system? **(Also, consider the associated taxpayer-funded criminal justice system costs).** Funds can be re-allocated from the Police Department to the Public Health Department for a CAHOOTS program since it will be unnecessary to deploy police officers in non-life-threatening situations involving persons suffering from mental illness or a substance use disorder.

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<sup>1</sup> ([https://whitebirdclinic.org/what-is-cahoots/.](https://whitebirdclinic.org/what-is-cahoots/))

I am grateful that Vice Mayor Wilson and Councilmember Madison have asked that CAHOOTS be agendized at a Public Safety Committee meeting. I urge the Committee to promptly agendize this issue and to hear from persons who have experience in a CAHOOTS program, such as Ben Adam Climer, a local consultant.

#### IV. The City Council Should Approve Funding for a Second PORT Unit

The Pasadena Outreach Response Team (PORT) provides field-based support and advocacy for people who are experiencing homelessness, living with chronic health conditions, and/or diagnosed with mental health and/or substance use disorders. I am familiar with the important role the PORT plays in assisting our residents experiencing homelessness. I strongly support the requested funding for a second PORT unit, **but through the Public Health Department, not the Police Department since this is public health program**. But the addition of a second PORT unit is not a reason to forego a CAHOOTS model crisis intervention program. In April 2021, PPD received **9,707** calls for service, including **4,684** 9-1-1 calls. It is unclear how many of these calls were non-life-threatening calls that should have been responded to by someone other than a uniformed police officer. But Mr. Mermell says, in his budget transmittal letter, that it is believed that thousands of calls for service annually might be redirected away from the Police Department “to PORT or some successor model.”

#### V. Conclusion

The staff report dated June 21, 2021, states that the recommended operating budget for FY 2022 “furthers the City’s mission to deliver exemplary municipal services responsive to our entire community.” On the contrary, it does not. The recommended budget **precludes** our City from protecting its most vulnerable residents and from instituting critical programs needed in our marginalized communities. Despite numerous public comments and correspondence urging the Council to adopt a smarter, fairer budget that really **is** responsive to the needs of our entire community, staff has ignored those pleas. So it is up to you, members of our City Council. Please do the right, fair and moral thing and insist on the re-allocations requested by community members. Please re-fund our community. Thank you.

Sincerely,

/s/

Sonja K. Berndt, Esq. (retired)

Cc: Local News Organizations

## Martinez, Ruben

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**From:** Kenichi Yoshida <l  
**Sent:** Monday, June 21, 2021 8:28 AM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** June 21, 2021 City Council Meeting, Agenda Item 11

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Hello,

My name is Kenichi Yoshida, a Japanese immigrant, higher education administrator in Pasadena and faith leader of this community. I live in District 4.

Mr. Gene Masuda, you are my Council Member, and Mr. Gordo, you are my Mayor. City Council Members, you represent our community as a whole. I am asking you to direct City Staff to answer the following important questions during the discussion of Agenda Item #11, **BEFORE VOTING** to approve the Recommended City Budget:

- 1) Why have the Pasadena Police Department's (PPD) **personnel costs** (total) **risen over \$6 million** from 2020 actual costs?
- 2) Why did PPD have a Revised total of **\$1,584,000** for "**New Years Day General Fund Events,**" nearly as much as 2020 (actual costs), **even though there was no Rose Parade or Rose Bowl in FY 2021?**
- 3) Does the Council intend to **overfund PPD** in FY 2022, the way it did in FY2021, so that PPD can use reported "savings" on controversial projects?
  - (Note: PPD reportedly saved \$2.3 million from its FY2021 Operating Budget, and the Council recently approved some of these funds for PPD's new Mobile Command Center.)
  - Instead, why not **reduce PPD's budget by the \$2.3 million they did not need or use for its operations in FY 2021 to fund vital community projects** for FY 2022?
- 4) Why did **Personnel category 805000 (Benefits)** rise by over a million dollars, from \$6,552,770 (2020 actual) to \$7,800,375 (FY 2022)?
- 5) Why did **Services and Supplies category 815600 (Insurance)** more than triple from \$229,917 (2020 actual) to \$785,762 (FY 2022)?
- 6) What **EXACTLY** is included in the **vague category, "Other Contract Services,"** which totals **\$3,055,641?**
- 7) What **EXACTLY** is included in the **vague category, "Internal Service Charges,"** which totals **\$6,796,288** for "**strategic services,**" with **no further explanation.**
  - Compare this to the **Public Health Department's** "Internal Service Charges" of \$1,095,811 ("health administration") and the **Fire Department's** "Internal Service Charges" of \$3,117,205 ("fire operations").

Many Council Members promised **Transparency** while campaigning. Voting on the budget without answering pertinent questions is *not* transparent. Residents have not been afforded the opportunity to seek answers to highly relevant questions during these Budget Hearings.

Today, I call on Council Member Gene Masuda, Mayor Victor Gordo, and allelected officials to provide answers to these pertinent questions **now**, BEFORE Voting on the Budget.

If Staff cannot answer the questions or if the answers provided are *not* in line with good stewardship over our community's funds, I request that you Reject the proposed budget. Until good stewardship over our City Budget funds can be proven, this budget must be rejected.

Thank you.

## Martinez, Ruben

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**From:** Margaret Starbuck <[redacted]>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 21, 2021 1:10 PM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** Public Comment City Council Meeting 6/21/21 Agenda Item #11

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My name is Margaret Starbuck. I live in District 5. Jessica Rivas you are my Council Member, and Mr. Gordo, you are my Mayor. I am asking you to direct City Staff to answer the following important questions during the discussion of Agenda Item #11, **BEFORE VOTING** to approve the Recommended City Budget:

- 1) Why has the City's portion for PPD Retirement Benefits (SPERS) jumped from \$10,915,288 (2020 actual) to \$15,755,242 (FY 2022), despite the fact that there is no change in Full Time Equivalent (also known as FTEs or work hours) in PPD from 2020 to 2022?
- 2) What **EXACTLY** is included in the *vague* category, "Other Contract Services," which totals \$3,055,641?
- 3) What **EXACTLY** is included in the *vague* category, "Internal Service Charges," which totals \$6,796,288 for "strategic services," with no further explanation.
- 4) Does the Council intend to overfund PPD in FY 2022, the way it did in FY2021, so that PPD can use reported "savings" on controversial projects? Instead, why not reduce PPD's budget by the \$2.3 million they did not need or use for its operations in FY 2021 to fund vital community projects for FY 2022? Our Pasadena community is in urgent need of investment in affordable housing, our public schools, and mental health services.

Many Council Members promised **Transparency** while campaigning. Voting on the budget without answering pertinent questions is *not* transparent. Residents have not been afforded the opportunity to seek answers to highly relevant questions during these Budget Hearings.

Today, I call on Council Member Rivas, Mayor Victor Gordo, and all elected officials to provide answers to these pertinent questions **now**, **BEFORE** Voting on the Budget.

If Staff cannot answer the questions or if the answers provided are *not* in line with good stewardship over our community's funds, I request that you **Reject** the proposed budget. Until good stewardship over our City Budget funds can be proven, this budget must be rejected.

Sincerely,  
Margaret Starbuck

06/21/2021  
Item 11



## Martinez, Ruben

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**From:** Eloise Kaeck  
**Sent:** Monday, June 21, 2021 2:45 PM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** thank you

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Thanks to City Council for adding money for homeless shelters and the loan to Heritage Housing. We appreciate your good work in this area.

eloise kaeck

06/21/2021  
Item 11

**Jomsky, Mark**

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, June 21, 2021 2:35 PM  
**To:** Novelo, Lilia; Jomsky, Mark  
**Subject:** Comment on City Council Agenda Item #11 - June 21, 2021

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Lila and/Mark-

I apologize if sending you this email is an manner in which to comment on tonight’s agenda. I promise to learn the process and send future emails in the proper form. See forward the below comment on item #11 to the City Council members.

Michelle White

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City Council Members-

City staff has not recommended setting aside funding to assist low wage workers, who, because of the loss of their jobs, are at risk of eviction and permanent displacement out of Pasadena starting July 1. The units presently occupied by low income tenants – because of vacancy decontrol of rents – will thereafter be occupied by higher income tenants and Northwest and other lower income communities will be gentrified and existing households of color will be displaced.

According to the Eviction Defense Network, 500,000 households in Los Angeles County are presently behind on their rent because of COVID and are subject to eviction beginning July 1, 2021. The American Census Survey estimates that tenants constitute 62% of Pasadena’s residents. At present, neither Housing nor Planning Departments know how many Pasadena tenants are behind in their rent and are therefore at risk of eviction. Once low wage tenants fall behind in their rent, it is virtually impossible to catch up. At this point, there is a moratorium on COVID related evictions. Tenants affected by COVID related loss of income need rent forgiveness, not a moratorium. The City should use the monies that it has/will receive to address COVID concerns to forgive the rent burdens that its tenants now owe through no fault of their own. The City should also fund legal services for tenants who will be facing eviction starting July 1.

Michelle White  
Tenant, District #5

06/21/2021  
Item 11



- Why did **Personnel category 805000 (Benefits)** rise by over a million dollars, from \$6,552,770 (2020 actual) to \$7,800,375 (FY 2022)?
- Why did **Services and Supplies category 815600 (Insurance)** more than triple from \$229,917 (2020 actual) to \$785,762 (FY 2022)?
- What **EXACTLY** is included in the *vague* category, “**Other Contract Services,**” which totals **\$3,055,641**?
- What **EXACTLY** is included in the *vague* category, “**Internal Service Charges,**” which totals **\$6,796,288** for “**strategic services,**” with **no further explanation.**
  - Compare this to the **Public Health Department’s** “Internal Service Charges” of \$1,095,811 (“health administration”) and the **Fire Department’s** “Internal Service Charges” of \$3,117,205 (“fire operations”).

We deserve **REAL CONSIDERATION** from the city's leadership. What has been done cannot be undone. Please PLEASE don't make this worse for us.

Regards,  
Esprit Loren Jones  
District 1 resident