



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ALEX VILLANUEVA, SHERIFF



May 8, 2020

The Honorable Kathryn Barger
Chair, Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
869 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisor Barger:

**YOUR LETTER DATED MAY 6, 2020 IN REGARD TO THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT BUDGET**

This letter is in response to your letter dated May 6, 2020 which, in turn, was in response to my letters to the Board of Supervisors (Board) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) dated May 4, 2020 entitled: Underfunded Mandate of Trial Court Security; Reduction of Academy Classes; Custody Services Division Budget Relating to Settlement Agreements; and letters to each supervisor regarding the reassignment of unfunded items in patrol.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Department) has done an in-depth and detailed analysis of how best to satisfy existing constitutional mandates, statutory requirements, court orders and consent decrees under both existing and anticipated financial conditions. The results of this analysis were presented to the Board and CEO in my earlier letters. As such, I will not repeat the Department's recent findings, analysis or plans for the Department to both function within its present and expected budgets and, at the same time, accomplish its mission and satisfy its core values.

The Department has continued, as best it can, and within the budgetary limitations placed upon it by the Board, to provide the quality of service which has made the Department a well-respected national leader in fair and effective law enforcement. The fact remains that your letter is unresponsive to the financial obligations of the Department, as detailed in part below:

- Trial Court Security Funding, \$77M
- Custody Division unfunded Consent Decree mandates, \$49.6M

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- Worker's Compensation unfunded healthcare costs, \$33.4M
- Retirement Payouts, \$28.8M
- Retiree Healthcare Costs, \$16.2M
- Court Liability Judgments, \$10.8M

It should be noted that our proposed budget contains only one notable expansion, that of the Homeless Outreach Services Team. The current model was increased by 10 deputies without funding, and the request was to expand it to 40 deputies with funding from the Board. The Department cannot sustain this obligation without funding, and that is your decision. Our proposed budget's only true aspiration is that you fund the actual cost of providing public safety to the County, not just partially. Every division chief was instructed to submit their proposal based on the cost of the activity their division is engaged in, not expanding it.

While I acknowledge that cuts to services can be painful to us all, I assure the Board that the Department has considered all the factors enumerated in your recent letter to me in deciding how, and when, to cut services to the community. Because our perspective must include a long-term component, it may not be obvious to non-law enforcement personnel why certain cuts, but not others, were implemented. One example of many, is that cuts to training and supervision will significantly diminish the Department's capabilities, both in the short-term and long-term. This will lead to increased costs because lack of staffing and adequate supervision will inevitably lead to increased litigation costs and large civil judgments. As noted in prior correspondence, personnel shortages invariably lead to significant and unexpected budget-busting overtime expenses.

These are the reasons why I have not further diminished the number of academy classes or department promotions because, in the long-term, the Department will better serve the community and, concomitantly, the County will save money, by enacting the cuts as I have outlined them in my letters.

Recognizing these limitations, I invite you to examine the methodology, analysis and recommended cuts as summarized in my multiple letters of May 4th, and I am open to any constructive, rational suggestions for cuts to services in lieu of the ones outlined in my letter.

Supervisor Barger

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May 8, 2020

Should you wish to speak to me directly about any of the matters discussed in this letter, or anything else, please do not hesitate to have your staff contact my Chief of Staff, Captain John Burcher, to set-up a telephone or video conference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alex Villanueva', with a stylized flourish at the end.

ALEX VILLANUEVA
SHERIFF

AV:JB:rj
(Office of the Sheriff)

c: Supervisor Hilda Solis, First District, Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Second District, Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Third District, Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Janice Hahn, Fourth District, Board of Supervisors
Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
Mary Wickham, County Counsel, Office of the County Counsel