

January 14, 2020

Re: Measure A Amended PSEP

Dear Honorable Mayor & Councilmembers:

First, I'd like to extend my apologies for being unable to attend today's Council meeting. Although I would have preferred to address the Council personally today, work and family commitments will keep me from attending today's Council meeting. Nevertheless, I wanted to take a moment to share with you a few thoughts regarding today's proposed amended Measure A expenditure plan.

I agree that the campaign narrative formed around Measure A consistently highlighted to voters the proposed increase of "boots on the ground" to hire additional officers and firefighters. The approved expenditure plan also went on to highlight a detailed number of how many sworn and civilian officers would be hired. However, the ballot statement highlighted improved response times, patrols and an overall reduction of crime. I understand why highlighting the increase in officers would be used as one of many approaches to reaching the overall goals of improving public safety, however, hiring officers is not the goal of Measure A – hiring officers is simply one of many tactics to reach the goal of improving Public Safety.

If I have learned anything by serving on the City's Public Safety Advisory Committee and now, as the District 2 Representative for the Measure A Subcommittee, is that Public Safety and its staffing and implementation is complex. From the inception of Measure A, we always knew that this would not be the solution to our Public Safety crisis and would instead need to be part of a larger strategy. Measure A provided us a resource to apply to Public Safety holistically. Public Safety is not something that lives in a vacuum, rather, it is connected and interwoven into many different areas. The measure ballot language identifies this when it lists out all the possible ways to improve public safety:

*...faster responses to 9-1-1 emergency calls, increase neighborhood police patrols, reduce gang and drug-related crimes, address homelessness, improve firefighter, paramedic and emergency medical response, and general city services...*

This language has provided the flexibility needed to explore beyond just one approach and the flexibility to continue to adapt as new issues and strategies arise. Just five years ago would we have envisioned a drone program be part of our public safety strategy for the City. Measure A allows for us to look at the "here and now" and not be tied down to one strategy.

I would ask the Council to be careful in its discussion and not to limit Measure A to simply providing "boots on the ground." I strongly believe it's the Oversight Committee's responsibility to explore all possibilities with the overall goal of improving Public Safety. By increasing the number of officers, more officers will be readily available to respond to calls or

in the case of the proposed addition of a Neighborhood Protection Unit, limit repeat offenders in certain areas, thus freeing up officers.

I believe myself to be an active supporter of our Public Safety departments. From the officers and firefighters, to the dispatchers, the IT, Human Resource and mechanics that all provide the necessary infrastructure for our City to be safe. I even believe social programs can and are part of these efforts, which was discussed in the Public Safety Committee at length prior to Measure A. I will never forget my ride-along with Police and Fire where I personally witnessed that they had no time for lunch or even a bathroom break. That is why when any proposal or amendment has come forward, I first ask what the impact on those sworn and civilian positions that have been listed in the expenditure plan will be (43 police/36 Fire). I believe the spirit and will of the voters is to protect those positions, and I also believe that the spirit includes adding value to those positions, when possible, which is something that the City Attorney's proposal does without a loss to those positions proposed.

If we limit the conversations just to the hiring of Police and Fire, we run the danger of being short-sighted. In fact, if that is the entire conversation, then that defeats the sole purpose of an Oversight Committee. The Citizens Oversight Committee's mission is to review and report compliance with the Intended Public Safety expenditure plan, not compliance with the campaign narrative. In that light, I believe the proposal being brought forth is something that can be considered. Of course, that is not to say that other sources or compromises can't be explored to the fund the existing proposal.

I understand the need there is for the different groups advocating directly for our police officers and firefighters to continue to push for more. However, it is our role to look at the bigger picture which encompasses much more than just officers and firefighters in our public safety universe. The narrative today, Measure A, does not just imply more officers or firefighters, but rather improved Public Safety and response times. I am concerned that our current Oversight Committee composition is made up individuals with perceived conflict of interests. I do believe Council should explore modifying the committee to have a stronger community representation and those groups representing individuals with financial interests shifted to non-voting seats. If this were a planning commission, those with a financial interest would most likely be conflicted out.

As a resident in the City of Chula Vista who serves on the Measure A Citizens Oversight Committee, I believe the following:

1. Measure A is more than just "boots on the ground"
2. Measure A has created both a resource and mechanism to continue to explore ways to improve all aspects of public safety, not just one
3. We need to maintain and/or increase the hiring of police and fire positions as identified in the expenditure plan

4. Amending the expenditure plan to continue to improve our public safety including the recent proposal by the City attorney will ensure the plan continues to be responsive with the City's evolving needs
5. The Measure A Oversight Committee needs to be revisited and observed to identify real or perceived conflicts of interest and require a stronger community representation
6. If we allow the conversation to turn into "boots on the ground" versus everything else, we will be constricted in a box for the life of Measure A

I would like to admit that I have conflict of interest when it comes to this matter. I have six-year-old and twelve-year-old little girls at home who I want to have the confidence that they will be safe. I think our Fire and Police department under both Chief Kennedy and Gering do an amazing job. I want to continue to provide EVERYONE in Public Safety with the tools to continue to do their job selfishly for my girls.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss further, I can make myself available anytime.

Thank you,

Pedro Anaya



CC:

Mayor Mary Salas  
Councilmember Jill Galvez  
Councilmember Steve Padilla  
Councilmember Mike Diaz  
Councilmember John McCann  
City Attorney Glenn Googins  
City Manager Gary Halbert