



DEPUTY SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

OF SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

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PRESS RELEASE

Public Safety Takes Low Priority with Goleta City Council

At a City of Goleta Council Meeting on May 31st, 2011, Council members voted unanimously to de-prioritize public safety by reducing the size of their police force in the face of a dwindling budget. The City of Goleta contracts their Law Enforcement services with the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Department contract provides for general law enforcement, traffic enforcement, investigations, supervision and management, as well as community resource and school resource deputies. The numbers of Sheriff's Deputies dedicated to the Goleta City Contract were determined to maximize the effectiveness of the law enforcement services and maintain a safe environment for the Deputies on the street.

In budget workshops and council meetings, council members and Mayor Margaret Connell have blamed the Deputy Sheriff's Association and their salaries and benefits, for the increased cost of law enforcement services the Sheriff's Department provides. The contract for services allows for an approximate 5% increase annually to account for unforeseen variables in operational and employee costs. The estimated increase for the 2011/12 fiscal year is closer to 11%. The City indicated early on that it did not have the means to pay the increase in costs to maintain the current level of service. Much of the increase in cost is due to the County Retirement Fund's rate of return due to the weak economy. The county no longer enjoys a super funded retirement system, and must infuse money into the system to make it whole, thus increasing individual employee costs. Those costs have been passed on to the cities that employ the Sheriff's Department for their law enforcement services.

On Tuesday May 31st, the City Council voted unanimously to reduce the number of Deputies on the streets of Goleta. The council decreased the contract by two full-time Deputy Sheriff's, saving the city just over \$400,000. In the same swipe of the pen that slashed the public safety budget, the City of Goleta allocated funding for document imaging for the City's planning department at a cost of \$95,000.

It also allocated funding to upgrade the city's phone systems at a cost of \$80,000. The city attorney's office had its funding increased by \$138,530 to hire an additional assistant city attorney. In addition, the Council voted to move \$140,000 into the city's litigation reserve.

The Deputy Sheriff's Association (DSA) is disappointed at the City Council's apparent lack of concern for the safety of its community. Decreasing public safety in the wake of incidents such as the recent Market Place Deputy Involved Shooting sends a strong message to the community about the City Council's priorities. The State Supreme Court's decision to release 33,000 inmates back into the communities requires an increase in law enforcement presence, not a decrease. Decreasing the number of Deputies on the streets despite this being the deadliest year for law enforcement officers across the nation sends a message to the Association about the Council's priorities. The Council's decision also has an impact county wide. With the County's own budget shortfalls, any reduction in services with our contract cities will likely mean additional layoffs of Deputy Sheriff's Association members, further decreasing the Sheriff's Department's abilities to provide law enforcement services to the communities it serves. The DSA continues to have discussions with the County regarding modifications to its existing contract that might decrease employee costs. The Deputy Sheriff's Association urges members of the public to bring their concerns to the Goleta City Council at their next scheduled meeting on June 7th, 2011 at 9am; held at the Goleta City Hall, 130 Cremona Drive Suite B, Goleta Ca.

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