

May 14, 2016

Budget and Finance Committee Members
Los Angeles City Council

Dear Committee Members:

Mr. Jorge Villegas' letter of May 4, 2016 to the Budget and Finance Committee, "Budget Impact Letter No. 627-Prioritized List of Civilian Positions with Associated Costs and Discussion of Coalition Recommendation," notes that the Police Department is "awaiting results of our internal survey to determine the numbers (sic) of officers working in civilian positions." The LA Controller's recent audit found that number of inappropriately assigned sworn officers to be at least 458. This audit further found the money wasted by this use of sworn officers to staff civilian positions to be \$20 million per year. A draft of this audit report was provided to LAPD on March 17, 2016. The Controller staff met with LAPD representatives for an exit conference regarding this audit on April 4, 2016. And, Mr. Villegas says that as of May 4th the department is still waiting for survey results to determine how many civilian positions are staffed by more expensive sworn officers. Is the department just stalling? Is wasting \$20 million a year a low priority? Is this survey being conducted in 2016 by sending a single cop from the department's equestrian unit on horseback from station to station with paper and pencil?

Mr. Villegas' letter states that the Department has requested hiring 300 civilian employees of whom 175 will replace civilian positions lost to attrition. I assume that the additional 125 civilian hires will be to replace sworn officers lost to attrition. It appears on the surface that this would allow 125 of the 458 civilian positions currently inappropriately staffed by sworn personal to return to proper staffing. A quick look at the Supplement to Proposed Budget, Detail of Department Programs for Police, Vol II, pages 495-500, on your website, reveals that the total number of sworn officers will not increase in 2016-2017, but that the number of civilian employees will increase by 40. An increase of 40 civilian positions means that 40 of the 125 new hires will fill these new positions and therefore of the 458 improperly staffed positions, only 85 will actually be available to return to appropriate assignments.

Replacing 85 sworn officers with civilian employees will save \$3.74 million. (85 X \$44,000, the figure the Controller's audit identifies as the salary difference) And, it , important to note, this savings will occur every year going forward. A Coalition of City Unions has recommended hiring 250 civilian employees in lieu of hiring sworn personnel. Is that a better idea? Again, if 40 new civilian positions are being created that may mean only 210 sworn personnel will be available to be replaced under the Coalition's recommendation. I will assume that likely fact for this discussion. Replacing 210 sworn officers with civilian employees will save \$9.24 million using the Controller's figures. And again, that figure will be saved yearly.

I am including an August 25, 2016 letter I wrote to the Mayor expressing my anger at the waste revealed by the Controller's recent audit. My recommendation was to not hire another sworn employee until all of the 458 inappropriately staffed positions were filled with civilian employees. Presumably, my solution would save more money that either of the other recommendations. However, what is missing in the data that I have seen so far is the expected attrition in sworn employees for the budget year. That figure is needed in order to be able to draw sensible conclusions here. The Supplement to Proposed Budget mentioned above identified 3290 civilian or General positions if I understand it correctly. Mr. Villegas expected attrition of 175

from these 3290 employees. This same Supplement to Proposed Budget reports that the Department has 10,545 sworn employees. If attrition is roughly the same for both categories of employee the expected attrition in sworn employees would be about 560.

Using 560 as the number for sworn attrition the savings from my suggestion would be as stated in my letter, \$20 million, yearly going forward. This is money the city could probably use, so shouldn't some pressure be brought to bear on LAPD? Mr. Villegas, unaware of my suggestion, argues that following the Coalition's suggestion would involve stopping the sworn hiring process which would adversely impact hiring in the future. Is that true? Shouldn't that claim be carefully examined? Don't we need to know the overall attrition expectation for the whole department, or at least for sworn officers, before reaching that conclusion? If my figure of 560 for sworn attrition is correct there would still be a need to hire sworn officers under the Coalition's recommendation or even under mine. Is slowing the sworn hiring process as potentially damaging as stopping it?

But also, don't we need more detail about how this sworn hiring process works? Maybe that process needs to be adjusted or improved so that it can better respond to particular needs of particular times. LAPD seems to expect you to accept their assertions at face value, but this is a Department that has shown itself to be far too careless with large sums of money. LAPD was told in a 2008 audit report that 402 positions should be civilianized which would have produced savings of just under \$12 million yearly thereafter. In the face of that recommendation the Department civilianized one position.

Mr Villegas points out that the cost of implementing the Department's plan will be \$5.1 million. That is not a one time expense but a yearly cost going forward. That is how big bureaucracies grow. Government bureaucracies see growth in itself as positive. Growth increases their political influence and power. I notice that the Budget and Finance Committee asked the Department for prioritization of its requests but nothing in this letter from Mr. Villegas really explains their prioritization. Was their prioritizing done with a view to saving money, to responding to truly urgent needs or to fulfilling some simple wish list? The Department should be required to provide further explanation.

Taxpayers pay for these salaries and expenses. As a taxpayer I want to know our money is wisely spent and I cannot tell from this letter whether that is occurring. Furthermore, shouldn't there be some thorough outside review of how the department deploys its personnel? I mentioned the equestrian unit above. I seriously doubt that in 2016 it is a wise use of funds to have 20 or 30 officers assigned to such a unit. I recently saw 2 officers on horseback on Hollywood or Sunset Boulevard interacting with a homeless man on the sidewalk. Is that a sensible way to do police work? Where else can this department be reduced and become more efficient? Why weren't the potential savings identified in the 2008 audit achieved?

Also, are there core police functions that are being ignored? I note, for example, that there seems to be no money in these identified civilian positions to hire fingerprint technicians who can run crime scene fingerprints through AFIS. Perhaps you are unaware that in the residential burglaries which are rampant throughout many neighborhoods in Los Angeles, LAPD typically sends an ID tech to the crime scene to look for and lift fingerprints. That work requires time and effort. That time and effort is usually wasted, however, because the Department doesn't run this fingerprint evidence through AFIS, its automated fingerprint matching system. The Department claims it lacks the manpower to do so. I have written letters describing the lack of effective

investigations in residential burglaries and have basically been ignored. I would be happy to forward copies of those letters if you are interested.

It seems to me that LAPD needs considerably more oversight both in how it deploys its personnel and how it manages its huge budget. More attention needs to be paid to the needs of the citizenry. My view is that the City Controller should be more far more involved in these issues.

I recognize that I have made assumptions in reviewing these documents that may or may not be accurate. If my assumptions are incorrect or if there are additional documents I need to review in order to have a fuller understanding I would appreciate your having someone correct me or direct me to whatever additional documents which will provide the needed information. I can be reached at (323)962-5986 or by e-mail at brockja@sbcglobal.net.

Yours truly,

John A Brock

C: Mayor Eric Garcetti
Councilman David Ryu
Ron Galperin, LA City Controller
Charlie Beck, Chief of Police
Matthew Johnson, President, LA Police Commission
Richard Winton, LA Times
Steve Lopez, LA Times

April 25, 2016

Mayor Eric Garcetti
City of Los Angeles

Dear Mayor Garcetti:

The recent audit of LAPD by the city controller appears to reveal a shameful disregard for effective use of taxpayer money. This audit identified 458 positions in the police department that are currently staffed with sworn officers but which can appropriately be staffed with less costly civilian personnel. Is this a big deal? The audit points out that on average, individual sworn officers' yearly salaries are \$44,000 higher than the salaries of civilian employees. The audit recommends filling these positions with civilians and putting the sworn personnel back into the field where their duties justify their higher salaries. The savings? $458 \times \$44,000 = \$20,152,000$. Per year! Yes, \$20 million

What's the shameful part of this audit story? A 2008 audit by the city controller's office made the same or similar recommendations and nothing was done. Well, not really nothing; one position since that 2008 recommendation has been "civilianized," to use the controller's term. The current audit also notes that the 2012-2013 LAPD budget request included hiring 73 civilians to fill positions which would permit 73 sworn officers to return to the field and a very similar request was included in the 2013-2014 budget request. These particular requests did not make it into those years' budgets so these changes did not occur. $73 \times \$44,000 = \$3,212,000$. Don't you wonder what these requests looked like? Did they really identify savings of \$3 million and no one was interested?

I'm neither an accountant nor an auditor and I recognize that there is a good deal of information I lack as I review this report. I suspect that the plans to hire 73 civilians involved adding an additional 73 employees to the department. To save the \$3 million this way you have to pay 73 new salaries and so you actually end up spending more money not less. It is difficult to call that savings. However, in an agency with nearly 10,000 sworn employees and, per the audit, 2825 civilian employees, surely people leave; normal attrition occurs. The current audit notes that in 2008 the controller proposed that the suggested civilianization occur not abruptly but over time. Let me suggest a simple basic approach. Every time an individual employee at LAPD leaves for whatever reason, if that person is to be replaced, he or she is replaced by a civilian employee until the time that there are no sworn officers sitting on positions that can be filled with a civilian except for those situations where limited-duty officers (injured, etc.) are in such a position. This approach will achieve intended savings without increasing the size of the department and incurring the huge expense of added salaries for added employees.

But let me also suggest, or as a taxpayer citizen let me demand, that we determine why we have been wasting between 9 and 20 million dollars a year for 7 years by ignoring the 2008 controller's recommendation to use less expensive civilian employees to do tasks that are appropriate for them. Is it because the LAPD always wants to increase sworn personnel numbers and doesn't care about efficiency and taxpayer money? It seems a characteristic of large bureaucracies that they always see growing even larger as something positive. And, since someone else actually pays they don't need to factor in the cost. Or is this waste the product of a budgeting process that involves too many players who don't know what they are doing or don't understand and/or are intimidated by LAPD? 1

1. Whatever the cause, this kind of waste fuels anti progressive attitudes that view government itself as the problem.

It certainly seems that Mr. Galperin's office understands these issues; he and his staff need to be much more involved and on a continuing basis. LAPD's budget is too big to not be subject to regular independent review from the outside. The Controller's analysis of best police practices at LAPD should also be expanded. Finally, Chief Beck has been Chief since November 2009. Prior to that he was close to the top in Bratton's administration. Shouldn't he be held accountable for this waste? The savings described as available in the 2008 audit was \$11.8 million per year; in 2016 that savings is \$20.1 million per year. Using the average figure of \$14.5 million, the city has wasted \$101.5 million in 7 years.

The Controller has done his job and set out the data. Is that the end of this?

Yours truly,

John Brock

C: Ron Galperin, LA City Controller
Matthew Johnson, President, LA Police Commission
David Ryu, Councilman
Charlie Beck, Chief of Police
Richard Winton, LA Times
Steve Lopez, LA Times