

Lawndale Tribune

AND LAWNDALE NEWS

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SBWIB Hosts Teen Center's Ninth Anniversary Celebration



Neighboring Hawthorne Teen Center's outstanding youth volunteers were honored during the ninth anniversary celebration hosted by the South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) on December 7 at the Hawthorne Memorial Center. More than 100 youth, parents and civic and educational leaders attended the event. Pictured with the students are, from left, Dr. Greg O'Brien, Superintendent of the Lawndale-based Centinela Valley Union High School District; City of Hawthorne Mayor Alex Vargas; SBWIB CEO Jan Vogel; and Gloria Garcia, Teen Center Director. Photo Courtesy of SBWIB

Council Aims to Balance Budget

By Haleemon Anderson

The Lawndale City Council ended the year with a look to the future, making plans at Monday's meeting to tighten spending for the 2018-19 fiscal year. Staff requested and received unanimous approval to begin looking for ways to ensure a balanced budget, including cutting back or eliminating some City-provided amenities.

City Manager Steve Mandoki explained the request. "Since 2015, we've had significant increases in our law enforcement budget, just to maintain the status quo," he said.

Mandoki gave figures that suggest a ballooning trend. In 2015-16, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department budget jumped an additional \$470,000, said Mandoki. The projected increase in the 2018-19 fiscal year is \$361,000, bringing the total cost of the annual contract with the Sheriff's Department to well over \$6 million.

Included in the action was a request to secure Edward F. Rogner as a consultant to review service levels in the Sheriff's Department. The retired commander has worked in contract law, according to the staff report, and performs this service for cities at a nominal fee.

Mandoki pointed to another significant increase in next year's budget--pension liability funding for the Sheriff's Department. The CalPERS payout is projected to increase by \$87,000.

Several other areas are targeted for review. Staff recommendations include reducing or eliminating several non-essential City services,

and implementing a cost-sharing arrangement with Lawndale and Centinela Valley school districts. Staff also suggested running two ballot measures, noting a one-quarter-cent sales tax could generate \$700,000. A two-percent increase to the transient occupancy tax would result in a \$140,000 increase.

Council members generally rejected the idea of a ballot measure of any kind, but were amenable to other suggestions. "A sales tax increase should be a last resort," said Councilmember Bernadette Suarez. She expressed support for bringing in the consultant to review the Sheriff's budget.

Councilmember Jim Osborne said, "The liability trust fund is an issue. The county is settling these cases and they know they can pass the cost on to the cities."

Mayor Robert Pullen-Miles expressed interest in the Sheriff's Department contract review process. "My question would be, 'What is the appropriate level of police protection for a city of our size?'" he said. The Mayor also agreed with negotiating a cost-sharing arrangement with the local schools. Currently, Lawndale provides videotaping services for the sports programs at Centinela Valley Unified School District. The budget for staff and equipment is \$75,000. The City funds another \$70,000 for crossing guard contracts at Lawndale elementary schools.

Other staff proposals to balance the budget include returning control and support of local parks to Lawndale Elementary School District; fast-tracking development projects; reducing or eliminating dispute resolution

services; and dropping City Attorney notices from four to one.

In other action, the Council approved two nominees for the 2017 Lawndale Wall of Distinction. The nomination packets of two longtime residents, Lertis R. Ellett and Ella Travers, both deceased, will be reviewed in committee and moved forward for induction.

The closure of the Blue Bonnet Mobile Home was approved by unanimous vote. Craig Justice reported on the relocation and conversion impact, saying that eligible occupants have 18 months to file a claim, regarding resettling costs. "If there is a price differential [between former housing costs and current], they will get the difference for a 42-month period," said Justice.

Director of Community Development Shawn Moore announced the projects for next year's Block Grant funding. Forty-five thousand will be allocated to the Senior Activities Program for the nutrition program. Also Grevillea Avenue will be resurfaced, between Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Marine Avenue. The cost estimate is \$450,000.

The Council also approved a Climate Action Plan, bringing Lawndale in line with state initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Lawndale City Council meets the first and third Mondays of every month, unless otherwise noted. The first meeting of 2018 will be held on Tuesday, January 16, at 6:30 p.m., in the Lawndale City Hall Council Chambers. •

Weekend Forecast

Friday

Mostly Sunny
63°/48°



Saturday

Partly Cloudy
64°/50°



Sunday

AM Clouds/
PM Sun
66°/52°

