

**From:** [Raymond Dussault](#)  
**To:** [City Council](#); [Suja Lowenthal](#); [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Re: City Attorney's confusing and mis-projected budget  
**Date:** Thursday, June 2, 2022 2:16:09 PM

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Finally, to the City Clerk, please attach all of these comments to the agenda.

On Thu, Jun 2, 2022 at 2:14 PM Raymond Dussault <[Ray@33northpromotions.com](mailto:Ray@33northpromotions.com)> wrote:

I wanted to add, a week ago the City posted a bizarre, disruptive and unnecessary post to the City Facebook page encouraging residents to report their employers to various County agencies. That post was rightfully met with ridicule by the residents who saw it. No comments were aggressive but they were uniformly critical of the post. Within in hours, the City shut down comments on that post.

Is the same thing happening here? Some comments are posted to Speak Up Hermosa critical of Suja's management and immediately the ability to post comments has "technical difficulties"?

Don't criticise me for asking. It's something you should be asking.

Why is the City blocking critical comments on Facebook? Why is the City encouraging a Big Brother culture for residents to report employers and/or, as Suja encouraged at the last council meeting, anyone to report our businesses if they accidentally provide a plastic fork to a patron? Is the City purposely setting up technology and processes to intimidate and minimize community comment?

I look forward to hearing these questions addressed and answered in a public space.

Ray

On Thu, Jun 2, 2022 at 2:04 PM Raymond Dussault <[Ray@33northpromotions.com](mailto:Ray@33northpromotions.com)> wrote:

FYI that it is still not possible to post comments via Speak Up Hermosa. This is an extremely important meeting for the City Council and the residents' it represents.

As I am aware these technical blockages are a regularity on Speak Up Hermosa, maybe it's time to discuss returning to the previous method that has never had that problem despite being used for decades.

I suspect the City needs to add a motto my Dad was fond of, "**If it ain't broke, don't fix it.**"

Sincerely,

Ray

On Thu, Jun 2, 2022 at 11:40 AM Raymond Dussault <[Ray@33northpromotions.com](mailto:Ray@33northpromotions.com)> wrote:

*Good morning. I tried to submit this through the Speak Up Hermosa portal but keep receiving a server error message. Please attach it to the agenda and to the Speak Up Hermosa portal. (Perhaps the simple system was better.)*

It is difficult to decipher a lot of what is in the budgets so if I make a mistake that is why.

To build on the below comments in terms of our City Attorney budget, it appears we spent **\$1.262 million dollars** on the city attorney last year. Based on Carolyn Petty's numbers, we are on track to meet or exceed that number again this year despite the City's proposed budget only showing a \$300,000 projection.

Manhattan Beach appears to have spent only **\$1.133 million dollars** (again we are spending more than a town twice our size with dozens and dozens of more businesses) on that budget last year.

Their budget projections seem more honest than ours as well. They project \$933,000 for the upcoming year.

Why would we project \$300,000 when we regularly spend \$1.25 million? Why would it appear that the actual City Attorney budget is around **2.5%** of our total city budget? That's almost as much as the entire, already bloated, City Manager's office! It makes no sense. No wonder the City is hurting for money. Is anyone making any prudent financial decisions at all?

Suja continues to live a charmed and unquestioned life under the current City Council but it is time we, the residents, start demanding that difficult questions be asked. I am sure it is easy to make excuses about this but even if one says, "We have more litigation," why do we have more litigation here than in communities multiple times our size? These are the kinds of questions that should be asked and the City Council should demand answers to. Suja works for you and us; it's not the other way around.

Are we wasting money on non-controversial and simple records requests? I know I never receive simple and complete answers to my questions with Suja. Every approach seems to be, "Ignore, respond without answering the question, ignore, repeat."

Is Mike Jenkins taking advantage of the City? (I'm not saying he is but it's appropriate to ask the question if we budget \$300K and spend \$1.25 million.) If that isn't the case, are City staff misusing the attorney services? Are City Staff or City Council unnecessarily putting us in the way of litigation?

If someone trips on a cracked street or sidewalk, is it appropriate to ask why we spent money paving the greenbelt before we fixed that crack and cost the city tens of thousands of dollars?

These seem like appropriate questions and, possibly, the actual reason you were elected.

Sincerely,

Ray

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