

**From:** [Raymond Dussault](#)  
**To:** [City Council](#); [Suja Lowenthal](#); [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** City Attorney's confusing and mis-projected budget  
**Date:** Thursday, June 2, 2022 11:41:00 AM

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*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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