



## **Supervisor Jeffries' Board Report**

**February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

This week's Board meeting featured a number of items of interest for the 1<sup>st</sup> District and Riverside County as a whole:

**Proclamation of Local Emergency in Riverside County Due to the Severe Weather Conditions—Item 3.18, Video Time Stamp 58:40** The storms that hit Riverside County two weeks ago, culminating in the Valentine's Day Deluge caused damage and evacuations throughout the county, well beyond what we have already been suffering in the Holy Fire Burn Scar areas. This local declaration will allow us to apply for a state emergency declaration, which would make us eligible for Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) funding. Furthermore, it will then allow the state to request a federal declaration, which would make us eligible for other reimbursements, and would also allow private property owners to submit claims. Total estimated costs for that storm county-wide are approximately \$47 million, including \$20 million in state highway damage (which will be covered by Caltrans), \$8 million for county-maintained roads, and \$10 million in Flood Control facilities---on top of the \$9 million Flood Control had spent in the burn scar areas prior to this latest storm event, building facilities to limit damage to our communities. Emergency Management Department Director Bruce Colbert and Flood Control General Manager Jason Uhley briefed the board on the damage and showed a brief video highlighting some of the scary flash floods and road and property damage that came from the storm. The good news is, they do not expect this weekend's storms to produce any further damage or require evacuations in the Burn Scar areas.

**Riverside Auto-Theft Interdiction Detail (RAID) MOU—Item 3.29, Video Time Stamp 1:11:25** Supervisor Jeff Hewitt (5<sup>th</sup> District) asked for a report on the RAID auto-theft program, and representatives from the Sheriff's Department gave a brief presentation on the coordinated effort between the county and the cities and their designated funding source.

**Financial Responsibility for Future Litigation and Claims Against County Agencies—Item 3.41, Video Time Stamp 1:22:45** I introduced this item because of long-standing concerns I have had with the significant financial cost of liability claims against the county. In 2014 I

introduced two items regarding this issue, one of which was adopted, but over \$100 million in claims paid by the county since then have convinced me there is more that we can do to improve training, management, and accountability to mitigate these losses. My proposal would have had settlement costs come directly from the agency or department who was responsible for the claim against the county, and then allow them to later be reimbursed for those costs by the county, creating more transparency in the true costs of liability to the county. In the end, we passed a motion directing the Executive Office to develop more rigorous strategies for reducing claims against the county, potentially still including holding departments responsible for their own losses.

**Commercial Cannabis Implementation Process Ad Hoc Committee—Item 3.42, Video Time Stamp 1:35:00** At a previous meeting, Supervisor Jeff Hewitt asked that I create an Ad Hoc Committee of the Board to evaluate our commercial cannabis implementation process. In this item, it was announced that Supervisor Hewitt and Supervisor Karen Spiegel (2<sup>nd</sup> District) would serve on this Ad Hoc Committee to make any recommendations they think necessary to the permitting process. TLMA Director Juan Perez and Assistant TLMA Director Charissa Leach gave an update on the process to date. In the window of opportunity for interested parties to pre-register for the application process, we received interest for 118 retail permits, 62 cultivation, and 65 “micro-business” (a combination license) permits throughout unincorporated Riverside County. Of those, 50 cultivation and 19 retail permit applications will be chosen through an RFP process to move forward through the standard Conditional Use Permit process (including public Planning Commission and BOS hearings).

**Lobbyist Contracts—Item 3.43, Video Time Stamp 1:39:25** While Riverside County has cut back significantly on the amount of money we pay for lobbyists in Sacramento and Washington DC, and now spends less than our neighboring counties, I am still not convinced we are getting a return on our investment. As a result of concerns about our existing contracts, the Executive Office asked for new RFPs from state lobbying firms, and has recommended we retain our existing lobbying firm (Hurst, Brooks, Espinoza, LLC) with a reduced contract amount to keep us informed on the legislative process generally, and hire a new firm (Lang, Hansen, O’Malley, and Miller) to pursue specific legislative priorities---like attempting to gain a fairer share of state Mental Health funds. Riverside County receives \$140 million less PER YEAR in Mental Health funding than the state average (per capita), and a success in recovering some of those funds would be a tremendous victory for our communities. In the end, while I support the new contract, I did not support renewing the old one, so I voted no. The contract passed on a 4-1 vote.

You can see all the agenda items and staff reports, and watch the video of the meeting at this link here:

<http://riversidecountycalifornia.com/Citizens/SplitView.aspx?Mode=Video&MeetingID=2031&MinutesID=2048&Format=Minutes&MediaFileFormat=mpeg4>

Our next Board Meeting is March 12<sup>th</sup>.