



**CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH
SUPPLEMENTAL COMMUNICATION
Joan L. Flynn, City Clerk
Office of the City Clerk**

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Joan L. Flynn, City Clerk *JLF*
DATE: September 24, 2012
**SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE SEPTEMBER 24, 2012,
CITY COUNCIL/PFA SPECIAL MEETING**

Attached is Supplemental Communications to the City Council (received after distribution of the Agenda Packet):

Councilmember Items

#3. Communication submitted by Mary Urashima, dated September 24, 2012 and entitled *Outsourcing City Attorney Office*.

Esparza, Patty

From: Surf City Pipeline [noreply@user.govoutreach.com]
Sent: Monday, September 24, 2012 2:19 PM
To: CITY COUNCIL; agendaalerts@surfcity-hb.org
Subject: Surf City Pipeline: Comment on an Agenda Item (notification)

Request # 12416 from the Government Outreach System has been assigned to Johanna Stephenson.

Request type: Comment

Request area: City Council - Agenda & Public Hearing Comments

Citizen name: Mary Urashima

Description: SEPTEMBER 24, 2012 - AGENDA ITEM #3 - OUTSOURCING CITY ATTORNEY OFFICE

Honorable Mayor Hansen and Members of the City Council,

I am writing as a private citizen to voice my support for an elected city attorney and for providing that elected official with the ability to hire and fire staff within his/her office.

The concern regarding outsourcing lies in the divided loyalties that may occur. An elected, independent city attorney has a larger constituency---the City, as municipal corporation---and must represent all interests. Maintaining the office as an elected position provides stronger public accountability, or check and balance. An elected city attorney also ensures the attorney is a resident of and intimately familiar with the city. The majority of California's large cities have elected city attorneys for these reasons.

A recent review conducted by Albany, California on this issue stated "the costs of a City Attorney depends more on the issues facing a city than on whether the City Attorney is appointed or elected." When Oakland, California cut their in-house legal staff, their outsourced counsel costs skyrocketed. Anaheim has an appointed city attorney with a staff of approximately 23 as compared to Santa Ana (similar population) which has an appointed city attorney and a staff of 8.5. Newport Beach, with an appointed city attorney and half the population of Huntington Beach, has a staff of 5.7, only one staff person less than Huntington Beach. Cost comparisons are difficult as some cities handle their accounting differently, some are full service while others are not, some own their own utilities, some have coastal land and deal with the Coastal Commission, some cities have years with a high number of legal claim payouts, etc.

Considering the complexity of cost comparisons, the proposed solution to outsource may not be the answer. It would seem logical to study the actions taken at cities that have reduced legal costs and also to allow the existing city attorney's office to present their recommendations to reduce costs.

Regards,
Mary Urashima
Huntington Beach, CA

Expected Close Date: 09/25/2012

[Click here to access the request](#)

**SUPPLEMENTAL
COMMUNICATION**

Meeting Date: 9/24/12

Agenda Item No. 3