

SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



ITEM: 3.29
(ID # 23682)

MEETING DATE:
Tuesday, December 05, 2023

FROM : SUPERVISOR KEVIN JEFFRIES AND SUPERVISOR V. MANUEL PEREZ :

SUBJECT: SUPERVISOR KEVIN JEFFRIES AND SUPERVISOR V. MANUEL PEREZ:
Evaluation of Separating the Offices of the Coroner and Public Administrator from the Sheriff

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. That the Board of Supervisors direct the CEO to evaluate potential costs and benefits of a separation of the Offices of the Sheriff from the Coroner and Public Administrator, as well as other options.

ACTION: Consent

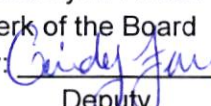

Supervisor Kevin Jeffries, Chair 11/29/2023


Supervisor V. Manuel Perez, Supervisor 4th. District 11/29/2023

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Jeffries, seconded by Supervisor Spiegel and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is approved as recommended.

Ayes: Jeffries, Spiegel, Washington and Perez and Gutierrez
Nays: None
Absent: None
Date: December 5, 2023
xc: BOS-Dist. 1, BOS-Dist. 4, E.O.

Kimberly A. Rector
Clerk of the Board
By: 
Deputy

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE,
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

BACKGROUND:

Summary

In recent discussions and public comment, a recurring theme has been the potential conflict of interest (or even the perception of a conflict of interest) involved in having the Coroner and the Sheriff as one entity.

The Sheriff and the Coroner's Offices had been separated in Riverside County for most of the County's history. In December 1995, however, the Board adopted a recommendation from the Riverside County Commission on Reorganization and Structure to consolidate the office of County Coroner-Public Administrator under the office of County Sheriff. The ordinance was adopted in 1996, with the integration occurring January 1st, 1999.

California is one of only three states that does not require the Sheriff and Coroner to be independent of each other. While there is no evidence of any improprieties in Riverside County regarding the operations of the Coroner's Office under the Sheriff, the optics of a potential conflict of interest can lead to a loss of confidence in our institutions.

The 2017-2018 Riverside County Grand Jury also looked at this issue, and recommended that as an alternative to separation, the Sheriff re-establish "an agreement with acceptable terms, with an adjacent County, to perform autopsies of in-custody deaths." Such an agreement had previously been in existence but had been allowed to lapse.

If passed, this item would ask the County Executive Office to evaluate options for separating the Office of the Sheriff and Coroner/Public Administrator again. This report would include potential costs, savings, legal issues, organizational structure, and labor considerations, and be returned to the Board within 90 days.

Impact on Residents and Businesses

Confidence in our law enforcement institutions and the perception of fairness are important goals, but before taking further specific steps, a complete cost/benefit analysis of options should be performed.



Riverside County Board of Supervisors Request to Speak

Submit request to Clerk of Board (right of podium), Speakers are entitled to three (3) minutes, subject to Board Rules listed on the reverse side of this form.

SPEAKER'S NAME: Vonya Quarles

Address: 15799 Camino Real

City: Moreno Valley Zip: 92555

Phone #: 562618 3940

Date: 12/5/2023 Agenda # 3.29

PLEASE STATE YOUR POSITION BELOW:

Position on "Regular" (non-appealed) Agenda Item:

Support Oppose Neutral

Note: If you are here for an agenda item that is filed for "Appeal", please state separately your position on the appeal below:

Support Oppose Neutral

I give my 3 minutes to: _____

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SPEAKER'S NAME: LOUIS NOLASCO

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

Date: 12/5/23 Agenda # 3.29

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Support _____ Oppose _____ Neutral

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SPEAKER'S NAME: Lisa Matus

Address: 36892 Gallery Lane

City: Beaumont Zip: 92223

Phone #: 951 783 8624

Date: 12-5-2022 Agenda # 329

PLEASE STATE YOUR POSITION BELOW:

Position on "Regular" (non-appealed) Agenda Item:

Support Oppose Neutral

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SPEAKER'S NAME: Channi Beeman

Address: 4428 Houghton Ave

City: Riverside Zip: 92501

Phone #: 909/537-1518

Date: 12/5/23 Agenda # 329

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X Support _____ Oppose _____ Neutral

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SPEAKER'S NAME: Anthony NORIEGA

Address: 8241 BARNWOOD LN

City: RIVERSIDE Zip: 92508

Phone #: 951-236-5684

Date: 12/5/2023 Agenda # 13.79

PLEASE STATE YOUR POSITION BELOW:

Position on "Regular" (non-appealed) Agenda Item:

Support Oppose Neutral
Splat

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Online



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SPEAKER'S NAME: Candace Cortez

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

Date: _____ Agenda # 3,29

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SPEAKER'S NAME: Ivami Bravo

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

Date: _____ Agenda # 3.29

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DECEMBER 5, 2023

RIVERSIDE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ladies and gentlemen,

I appreciate the opportunity to address you today as I advocate for the separation of the Coroner's office from the Sheriff's office in Riverside County. This issue is of paramount importance, impacting transparency, accountability, and the pursuit of justice.

The urgency of this matter is underscored by a distressing incident involving Mr. Ernie Serrano, who tragically lost his life on December 15, 2020. Following this event, Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco attributed blame to Mr. Serrano based on a preliminary autopsy report. Unfortunately, the Connor's Report, crucial for understanding the circumstances of Mr. Serrano's death, remains undisclosed to this day.

My efforts to obtain the autopsy report have unveiled systemic issues within the current structure. A formal request was submitted to the Riverside County Coroner's office on May 7, 2021. However, subsequent inquiries on June 15 and August 4, 2021, revealed a concerning pattern of delays, with assurances that the report would be ready in two weeks, then two months. As we approach the three-year mark since Mr. Serrano's passing on December 15, 2021, the report remains elusive, prompting the troubling question of when justice will prevail.

The current structure, where the Coroner's office falls under the jurisdiction of the Sheriff's department, presents significant challenges to transparency and accountability. When the entity responsible for an investigation also determines the release of vital information, it creates an inherent conflict of interest.

Separating the Coroner's office from the Sheriff's office is not solely about this specific case; it's about ensuring a fair and impartial process for all. We need a system where investigations and reports are conducted without the specter of bias, where accountability is paramount, and where the public can trust that justice is diligently pursued.

This separation is a vital step toward rebuilding trust between the community and law enforcement. It empowers the Coroner's office to operate independently, enhancing the credibility of investigations and reports and fostering the transparency fundamental to a just society.

In conclusion, the time has come to reassess and restructure our current system. Separating the Coroner's office from the Sheriff's office is a necessary stride toward justice, accountability, and the rebuilding of community trust. Together, let us work towards a system that upholds the principles of fairness, transparency, and, above all, justice for all.

Item 3.29

Anthony Noriega.
Director, District 5, LULAC de Inland Empire
1(951)236-5684

Thank you for submitting your request to speak. The Clerk of the Board office has received your request and will be prepared to allow you to speak when your item is called. To attend the meeting, please call (669) 900-6833 and use **Meeting ID # 864 4411 6015 . Password is 20231205**. You will be muted until your item is pulled and your name is called. Please dial in at 9:00 am with the phone number you provided in the form so you can be identified during the meeting.

Submitted on December 5, 2023

First Name

Anthony

Last Name

Noriega

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8241 Barnwood Lane

Phone

1(951)236-5684

Email

anoriega1947@gmail.com

Agenda Date

12/05/2023

Agenda Item # or Public Comment

Split od Corners office

State your position below

Support

Comments

DECEMBER 5, 2023

RIVERSIDE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ladies and gentlemen,

I appreciate the opportunity to address you today as I advocate for the separation of the Coroner's office from the Sheriff's office in Riverside County. This issue is of paramount importance, impacting transparency, accountability, and the pursuit of justice.

The urgency of this matter is underscored by a distressing incident involving Mr. Ernie Serrano, who tragically lost his life on December 15, 2020. Following this event, Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco attributed blame to Mr. Serrano based on a preliminary autopsy report. Unfortunately, the Connor's Report, crucial for understanding the circumstances of Mr. Serrano's death, remains undisclosed to this day.

My efforts to obtain the autopsy report have unveiled systemic issues within the current structure. A

formal request was submitted to the Riverside County Coroner's office on May 7, 2021. However, subsequent inquiries on June 15 and August 4, 2021, revealed a concerning pattern of delays, with assurances that the report would be ready in two weeks, then two months. As we approach the three-year mark since Mr. Serrano's passing on December 15, 2021, the report remains elusive, prompting the troubling question of when justice will prevail.

The current structure, where the Coroner's office falls under the jurisdiction of the Sheriff's department, presents significant challenges to transparency and accountability. When the entity responsible for an investigation also determines the release of vital information, it creates an inherent conflict of interest. Separating the Coroner's office from the Sheriff's office is not solely about this specific case; it's about ensuring a fair and impartial process for all. We need a system where investigations and reports are conducted without the specter of bias, where accountability is paramount, and where the public can trust that justice is diligently pursued.

This separation is a vital step toward rebuilding trust between the community and law enforcement. It empowers the Coroner's office to operate independently, enhancing the credibility of investigations and reports and fostering the transparency fundamental to a just society.

In conclusion, the time has come to reassess and restructure our current system. Separating the Coroner's office from the Sheriff's office is a necessary stride toward justice, accountability, and the rebuilding of community trust. Together, let us work towards a system that upholds the principles of fairness, transparency, and, above all, justice for all.

Anthony Noriega.
Director, District 5, LULAC de Inland Empire
1(951)23

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Submitted on December 4, 2023

Submitted values are:

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Shelby

Last Name

Bunch

Address (Street, City and Zip)

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Phone

9512849412

Email

Shelbysings@msn.com

Agenda Date

12/05/2023

Agenda Item # or Public Comment

Public Comment

Comments

General Election Issues

3.29

Lopez, Daniel

From: Aquia Mail
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 4:08 PM
To: cccortezcandace@gmail.com
Cc: Clerk of the Board
Subject: Request to Speak Web Submission



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Submitted on December 4, 2023

Submitted values are:

First Name

Candace

Last Name

Cortez

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36892 gallery ln Beaumont 92224

Phone

9092312617

Email

cccortezcandace@gmail.com

Agenda Date

12/05/2023

Agenda Item # or Public Comment

Separation of Coroner/Sheriff proposal

State your position below

Support

3.29

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Submitted on December 5, 2023

Submitted values are:

First Name

Noemi

Last Name

Bravo

Address (Street, City and Zip)

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9515316694

Email

memimartinez96@gmail.com

Agenda Date

12/05/2023

Agenda Item # or Public Comment

#29

Thank you for submitting your request to speak. The Clerk of the Board office has received your request and will be prepared to allow you to speak when your item is called. To attend the meeting, please call (669) 900-6833 and use **Meeting ID # 864 4411 6015 . Password is 20231205**. You will be muted until your item is pulled and your name is called. Please dial in at 9:00 am with the phone number you provided in the form so you can be identified during the meeting.

Submitted on December 4, 2023

First Name

Eddie

Last Name

Torres

Phone

9514645308

Agenda Date

12/05/2023

Agenda Item # or Public Comment

29

State your position below

Support

Comments

Hello,

My name is Eddie Torres, I'm a resident of Moreno Valley, and have lived in Riverside County for 13 years. I am calling in to support of item number 29 because we cannot let our community members continue to suffer at the hands of the Riverside County Sheriff. One step in accomplishing this is by taking steps to separate the sheriff and coroner's office and improve access to unbiased and accurate information regarding in-custody deaths.

To add, the attorney general's office released data bringing last year's total in-custody deaths to 19. The sheriff's department had not logged more than 12 deaths in a year since 2005, the earliest year for which records are publicly available. Last year's death toll was also slightly higher than the number that triggered a state investigation in the more populous San Diego County the year before. Some of these deaths were not properly reported within the timeframe required by law to the California Department of Justice.

As our Board of Supervisors, it is your duty to act in the best interest of the community you serve and prevent more harm from being inflicted by the Sheriff.

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Submitted on December 4, 2023

Submitted values are:

First Name

Nathan

Last Name

Kempe

Address (Street, City and Zip)

Riverside

Phone

8187496856

Email

nathan@npkdp.com

Agenda Date

12/05/2023

Agenda Item # or Public Comment

~~24~~

State your position below

Support

Comments

I support the separation of the Corner from the Sherriff Department, because it's a conflict of interest.

3.29