



COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE
105 E. Anapamu St., Fourth Floor • Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-3400 • FAX (805) 568-3414
www.countyofsb.org

PRESS RELEASE

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News Media Contact:

Gina DePinto, APR
(805) 568-3428, cell: (805) 319-9155; gdepinto@countyofsb.org

PUBLIC INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN COUNTY BUDGET HEARING ***County's Balanced Recommended Budget Focuses on Renewal and Resilience***

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – The Santa Barbara County Fiscal Year 2018-19 Recommended Budget is posted on the County website for review. The County Board of Supervisors will make final decisions and adopt a \$1.1 billion balanced budget during a public hearing next week.

Overall, the operating budget reflects an increase of 2.5 percent over the prior year. Recommended staffing levels increased by 82.9 budgeted full time equivalent positions, primarily reflecting additional staff for the Northern Branch Jail.

The Recommended Budget reflects reductions that were required in certain program areas to ensure a balanced budget. Less than 1 percent of the total budget, about \$4 million, is proposed in ongoing service reductions, for which some departments requested restoration. Reductions in some departments are related to departmental restructuring and funding prioritization, for which no restorations are requested. No layoffs are anticipated as a result of reductions.

“More than 75 percent of County revenue is restricted for specified services, leaving less than 25 percent of the budget for discretionary spending on Board priorities,” explained Budget Director Jeff Frapwell. “Increasing expenditure demands challenge our ability to maintain a balanced budget.”

Frapwell added, “Due to the Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow, the recommended budget reflects anticipated losses to the County’s two largest discretionary revenue sources – property and transient occupancy taxes. While the property loss occurred in a relatively small portion of the county, Montecito constitutes a significant percentage of the County’s discretionary revenue base.”

The Governor’s May Revise Budget, released after development of the recommended budget, provides \$4.4 million in one-time funding to backfill the County’s property tax losses incurred because of the disasters. The CEO is recommending that the Board use these funds to repay a portion of the \$6.3 million pulled from the Strategic Reserve earlier this year for disaster response activities. This would close nearly half of the \$10 million gap between the current balance in the reserve and the amount advised by Board policy.

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COUNTY FY 2018-19 RECOMMENDED BUDGET AVAILABLE ONLINE ADD 1-1-1

The Recommended Budget does not rely on potential cannabis revenue to balance, according to Frapwell. The costs and revenues of establishing new programs and processes related to cannabis operations – for permitting, licensing and enforcement – is included in the budget, but both revenue and expenses would be removed if the County’s tax measure fails.

The budget process began in fall 2017 and led up to budget workshops held in April, which provided the Board and the public with an early opportunity to discuss preliminary department budgets, special issues, staffing plans, accomplishments, work objectives, service levels and budget enhancement requests.

County Executive Officer Mona Miyasato said, “In the aftermath of unprecedented fire and debris flow disasters, we developed a balanced budget that continues the Board of Supervisors’ highest priorities and addresses renewal and resilience. Our Renew ’22 initiative will continue to build a stronger and more vibrant organization to serve our community so that we can withstand and rebound from future uncertainties. In addition, we are continuing to take actions to help the community recover from the recent disasters while simultaneously planning and preparing for additional possible events.”

Miyasato added, “We will continue to focus on decisions that allow balancing of short-term needs with long-term impacts, strategic realignment of services and the costs to provide these services, and opportunities for new ways of doing business. We will continue to focus on doing the most essential and important things well to best serve our community.”

The budget hearings will convene at 9 a.m. Monday, June 11, and, if needed, continue at 9 a.m., Wednesday, June 13 in the County Administration Building, 105 East Anapamu Street. Remote testimony will be available at the Joseph Centeno Betteravia Government Administration Building at 511 East Lakeside Parkway, Santa Maria. Community members are encouraged to participate in the hearings.

To review the FY 18-19 Recommended Budget documents and a helpful “Budget At A Glance” brochure, go to <http://countyofsb.org/ceo/2018.sbc>. To review documents for the Budget Hearing on June 11, go to <http://countyofsb.org/ceo/budget/bh2018.sbc>.