



# CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

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MEETING DATE: JUNE 16, 2015

ITEM NUMBER: **NB-1**

**SUBJECT: 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY PUBLIC SAFETY LETTER FROM THE CITY COUNCIL AND PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS TO THE COMMUNITY**

**DATE: JUNE 8, 2015**

**FROM: THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

**PRESENTATION BY: STEPHEN MENSINGER, MAYOR**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: DANIEL A. STEFANO, FIRE CHIEF, (714) 754-5144  
ROBERT SHARPBACK, CAPTAIN, (714) 754-5117**

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1) Authorize the Fire Department and Police Department to prepare a joint public safety message letter from the City to help mitigate the use of illegal fireworks in the City of Costa Mesa during this year's Independence Day celebration (July 2-4, 2015).
- 2) Authorize the Office of the CEO to mail it to all of the residents in Costa Mesa.

## **BACKGROUND:**

In preparation for this year's Independence Day celebrations and building on the extensive community outreach and enforcement efforts that took place last year, the Costa Mesa Fire and Police Departments, along with support from the Public Services Department and the Office of the CEO, are actively working together on an aggressive "no tolerance" campaign that is focused on mitigating the use of illegal fireworks in the City of Costa Mesa. In addition, the messages of being a good neighbor and reporting illegal fireworks use and suspicious activity will be highlighted as well.

To that end, Mayor Stephen Mensinger has requested a mailing to be sent out to the residents of Costa Mesa that emphasizes the safety message from the entire City.

## **ANALYSIS:**

The collaborative public safety work has already begun this year and will include increased staffing, in addition to a strong community outreach and education effort throughout the City.

Moreover, this year's message is "zero tolerance" of illegal fireworks. Preparations are underway for a significant increase to the level and extent of enforcement that will take place and this will be the focus of the public outreach, in addition to the key elements that follow:

- *The City of Costa Mesa needs the community's help by being a good neighbor this 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday – which includes reporting those persons who are selling or discharging illegal fireworks. By reporting this type of illegal activity, it can help save someone from injury or loss of property; by phone (714-754-5252) or by internet (Costa Mesa Connect).*

- *The alteration of a safe and sane firework is also a crime and could be punishable by a fine or imprisonment. The police and fire department will also join together as an enforcement team throughout this year's celebrations to target illegal fireworks in Costa Mesa. A firework purchased outside California will not have a seal of approval from the California State Fire Marshal and is illegal.*
- *Fireworks displays are not permitted in the City's parks, any public parking lots, or any area of school property. Illegal fireworks are also those that you purchase over the internet or from someone's home, car or garage. The selling of illegal fireworks is a felony, and possession of even just one illegal firework is a misdemeanor and is punishable by fine or imprisonment.*

With all of this in mind, it is evident that a more extensive community outreach is intrinsically important and the letter to the community will work extremely well to that end.

**ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:**

One alternative would be to not authorize the Fire and Police Departments to move forward on this component of the "zero tolerance" community outreach.

A second alternative would be to authorize the preparation of the letter at this time and limit distribution to electronic communications, with hard copy communication available at City Hall.

**FISCAL REVIEW:**

The cost for the mailing of the public safety letter from the City to the residents will cost approximately \$9,000. Funding for the mailing will be provided through the CEO's office.

**LEGAL REVIEW:**

The City Attorney's office has worked with staff to ensure that this mailing complies with all legal requirements, including those related to mass mailing restrictions.

**CONCLUSION:**

Staff recommends to authorize the Fire Department and Police Department to move forward on a joint public safety message letter from the City to help mitigate the use of illegal fireworks in the City of Costa Mesa during this year's Independence Day celebration (July 2-4, 2015) and to mail the letter out to community residents.

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DANIEL A. STEFANO  
Fire Chief

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ROBERT SHARPBACK  
Police Captain

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THOMAS R. HATCH  
Chief Executive Officer

ATTACHMENTS: 1) [Zero Tolerance Flyer](#)