

From: Justin Ruhge <jaruhge@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 25, 2019 9:57 AM
To: Haddon, Stacey <S_HADDON@ci.lompoc.ca.us>
Subject: Lompoc needs help

Hello Stacey Haddon
please pass on as public comment this letter.

The City of Lompoc Continues in Trouble

City Council member, Jenelle Osborne, was elected mayor in the November 6, 2018 election. She has been supporting sound financial budgets for years. However, now the City of Lompoc is floating into financial oblivion with Jim Mosby, Dirk Starbuck, and Victor Vega as Lompoc City Councilmen. This triad has done untold damage to the future of Lompoc. The problem the City faces is the CalPERS financial disaster for cities all over California. Lompoc's "bill" for CalPERS is more than \$70 million and growing.

Two years ago, in presenting the former 2017 city budget, then City Manager Patrick Wiemiller pointed out the problems for the city in graphic details. Mosby, Starbuck and Vega—did not grasp the finality of the situation. Then Councilmember Osborne and now mayor, "got it."

The City choice is to temporarily raise the sales taxes 1% to pay for the \$70M debt over 10 years, or not raise taxes and put the City in possible bankruptcy. The "bill" is not going away, we have to pay for it one way or another. You taxpayers may say "I do not want to pay for someone's retirement" but you will now and in the future whether you like it or not. Your option is to raise the sales tax or eliminate all City services. Now before the City was given the CalPERS "bill" the city was on firm financial ground and had a surplus. Now that surplus is being spent on paying the interest on that "bill."

Councilmember Mosby and his two befuddled followers, Starbuck and Vega (the Triad) would not listen to the city staff members. The result is cutting everything, from police, fire, parks, the library, and administrative and employees staff. In the meantime we still have to pay "the bill" with interest. Mosby is a volunteer, an amateur who does not know anything about city finances but he will not listen to the experts employed by the City who are way above his paygrade. He even thinks the staff are overpaid. From where does Mosby get his budget info? Maybe ex-mayor John Linn. Mosby sits there flailing around with the budget book acting like he knows something and clearly shows he is not willing to deal with the big bill but looks for small cures. We need millions, he looks for thousands. And we need millions "Right now" not in the distant future. Now there is no downside to placing a sales tax increase on the ballot. Why are the Triad opposing it so deliberately?

In the last budget, the Triad cut the police budget drastically while promoting an open door policy on the sale of dope—in Lompoc. Who profits from this weak police policy? Why the drug dealers do and the chaos they bring. One cannot help but wonder whether the Triad are being "paid off" by the drug czars.

The Mosby Triad's disdain for the city employees—they make too much money—lead to many experienced employees leaving, including Patrick Wiemiller- the city manager who brought up the CalPERS issue and promoted a sales tax. The past police chief submitted his resignation and got a good job elsewhere.

However, a new city manager, Jim Throop, was hired.

A recent "Budget Review" on March 9, 2019 by the new city manager, Jim Throop, and Mayor Osborne shows a financial deficit that cannot be solved by cuts. The Triad demanded that they investigate a budget that includes another budget cut of 8.7% across the board. The results of this study were presented to the Council on April 17. Again the results are disastrous for the City Services and Safety. All savings are going into the yearly interest that needs to be paid on the CalPERS \$70 million bill. But again, the Triad refused to deal with a Sales tax and instead Mosby again flayed around with the budget book numbers to look like he was trying to solve the problem with his chicken feed ideas. Again more cuts were suggested and the City Manager was sent away to look into more cuts to be presented at a future City Council meeting. The actions of this Triad have endangered all citizens.

A sales tax needs to be approved by voters to solve this problem. The Triad stopped it in 2017. The next chance is in March 2020. The voters must take action then or suffer the consequences of a bankrupt, collapsed Lompoc from which there will be NO RETURN. The general fund sales tax will generate about \$5 million per year in new funds for the City with which to pay the CalPERS debt and support the city Fire and Police. It needs a 50% plus 1 vote to pass. The 5 members of the Lompoc Council need to vote to place it on the ballot for March to save hundreds of thousands of dollars that it would cost to wait for the November election. The cost to the average citizen will be \$10 per month.

Cities and counties around Lompoc have passed such sales taxes for the same reasons with the active support of their councils. There is no reason why the Lompoc ballot measure would not succeed. The Council must work together proactively to make this happen. There is no other option. The Citizens of Lompoc should be given a chance to review their options and make a decision on these issues at the ballot box. Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, Guadalupe, and the county have made this decision, why not Lompoc?

Justin M. Ruhge, Lompoc CA 93436, 7379536, 25 years resident, senior