



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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SACHI A. HAMAI
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

December 4, 2007

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

RECOMMENDATION REGARDING ALLOCATION OF REWARD FUNDS
IN THE MATTER OF SHOTS BEING FIRED AT SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES
AT A MAZDA DEALERSHIP LOCATED IN LANCASTER
(ALL DISTRICTS)
(3-VOTE)

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

Approve the recommendation of the Reward Committee to distribute reward funds in total amount of \$10,000, to be paid from the Board's discretionary funds, to the individual who provided information to law enforcement that led to the arrest of Samuel Martinez and Val Lamar Smith, who were responsible for the attack upon Sheriff's Deputies at a Mazda Dealership located in Lancaster on January 5, 2006; and who also provided testimony in court that lead to the subsequent conviction of Mr. Smith.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

On January 17, 2006, your Board offered a \$10,000 reward on motion of Supervisor Antonovich relating to shots being fired at Sheriff's Deputies who were conducting an investigation of a shooting at a Mazda Dealership located in Lancaster on January 5, 2006. The filing period to submit a claim to the Executive Office for the reward money expired on June 16, 2006. Prior to the June 16, 2006 claim filing period, the Executive Office of the Board received a claim from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department on behalf of an individual who wishes to remain anonymous (Claimant), for the \$10,000 reward. In accordance with provisions of the County Code, Title 4 – Revenue and Finance relating to rewards, your Board must now consider the claim and make a final determination for distribution of the reward funds.

A panel made up of individuals representing the Sheriff, Chief Executive Officer, County Counsel and the Executive Officer of the Board met and reviewed the claim filed for the reward funds. The panel is recommending that the reward funds in total amount of \$10,000 be awarded to the Claimant for the provision of information which led to the arrest of both suspects, Smith and Martinez, and the testimony which led to the conviction of Mr. Smith. Note that suspect Martinez signed a confession for his involvement in the crime, his case is pending in court.

The chronological events in this case are as follows:

- On January 5, 2006, at approximately 10:45 p.m., 10 to 15 rounds were fired at Sheriff's Deputies who were conducting an investigation of a shooting at a Mazda Dealership in Lancaster.
- On January 17, 2006, the Board, on motion of Supervisor Antonovich, approved the establishment of a \$10,000 reward to encourage citizens to come forward and assist law enforcement in the investigation of the case.
- Shortly after the reward was posted, the Claimant contacted the Lancaster Sheriff's Department and provided the investigating Lieutenant with information about the shooting, suspect information and locations of their residence. The Claimant was also an eye witness to the shooting and agreed to provide testimony if the case went to trial.
- On January 25, 2007, warrants were served on both suspects (Smith and Martinez) and arrests were made. The two suspects were each charged with nine felony counts.
- On March 30, 2006, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department filed a claim with the Executive Office of the Board on behalf of the Claimant for the \$10,000 reward.
- In June 2007, the case against Smith went to a jury trial where the claimant testified as a witness to the incident. The jury trial was completed and suspect Smith was found guilty of four felony counts which include assault with a deadly weapon, shooting at an inhabited dwelling, shooting at an occupied vehicle and felony possession of a firearm.

- On July 24, 2007, the suspect Smith returned to court for sentencing. During the sentencing hearing, suspect Smith pled guilty to an additional felony count of assault with a firearm upon a peace officer and was sentenced to 21 years in state prison.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

Approval of the above recommendation supports the County Strategic Goal of Service Excellence. Publication in local newspapers and posting of reward notices on the County website may encourage persons to provide information to law enforcement, which could lead to the arrest and/or conviction of the individuals who commit crimes, thereby improving the quality of life to residents of Los Angeles County by removing such individuals from the community.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The Board of Supervisors established a \$10,000 reward fund. Pursuant to provisions in the County Code, the reward is to be paid from the Board of Supervisors' discretionary funds in equal shares of \$2,000 from each member's account.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

In 1993, the Board of Supervisors adopted an amendment to the County Code establishing procedures for offering cash rewards for information leading to the apprehension and/or conviction of persons guilty of criminal acts. Your Board, from time to time has offered such rewards to encourage citizens to come forward and assist law enforcement with their investigations.

The action recommended is in compliance with the County Code, Title 4 - Revenue and Finance relating to rewards; and specifically Section 4.50.010B which states, "conviction of the person or persons responsible for the crime shall be required for payment of a reward unless the Board of Supervisors makes a finding of impossibility of conviction due to the death or incapacity of such person or persons."

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The Notice of Reward Offered was posted on the Board of Supervisors' web site and published in The Antelope Valley Press Newspaper. In addition, copies were provided to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

There is no impact on current County services.

Respectfully submitted,


SACHI A. HAMAI
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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c: Sheriff
Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Auditor-Controller